



Center for
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HIGHER EDUCATION TRENDSPOTTER 2011

*An inventory of policy developments in higher education
in Europe and beyond*

Report by

CHEPS

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Contact:

Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS)

University of Twente

P.O. Box 217 7500 AE Enschede

The Netherlands

T +31 53 – 4893263

F +31 53 – 4340392

E

W www.utwente.nl/cheps

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Inleiding

Als onderdeel van de *Hoger Onderwijs Monitor* worden in deze *Higher Education Trendspotter 2011* beleidsontwikkelingen in hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek en innovatie in kaart gebracht in een flink aantal landen. Het rapport biedt geen uitputtend overzicht maar inventariseert, vaak puntsgewijs, beleidsontwikkelingen op nationaal niveau. Hierbij gaat het niet om een statistische presentatie van de ontwikkelingen, maar eerder om een beleidsmatige, kwalitatieve insteek. Het rapport heeft een signaleringsfunctie dat kan dienen voor beleidsdiscussies binnen MOCW. Het rapport wordt dan ook in eerste instantie geschreven voor intern gebruik ('werkdokument').

Bij het presenteren van de beleidsontwikkelingen in de verschillende landen is geprobeerd zoveel mogelijk hetzelfde format te gebruiken. Dat is gezien het verschil in beschikbaarheid van informatie alsmede de variëteit aan beleidsontwikkelingen die spelen niet overal gelukt. Praktisch alle CHEPS-medewerkers hebben meegewerkt aan de totstandkoming van dit rapport. Zij hebben diverse bronnen geraadpleegd: beleidsdocumenten en websites van ministeries en relevante stakeholders, wetenschappelijke artikelen en congresbijdragen en persoonlijke contacten en correspondentie met nationale deskundigen.

Het rapport dat voor ligt is een conceptversie met beleidsontwikkelingen in veertien landen (exclusief de Europese Unie). Het aantal landen zal de komende weken verder worden uitgebreid. Bovendien zal als inleiding een beknopte samenvatting worden geschreven waarin de in het oog springende trends worden aangehaald.

Een eerste aanblik van de krappe 100 pagina's van de *HET 2011* laten zien dat kwaliteit van onderwijs en onderzoek hoog op de beleidsagenda's staat en dat vele initiatieven worden ontplooid om deze kwaliteit adequaat te bewaken en te meten. Enerzijds moet een minimum kwaliteit worden gegarandeerd, liefst op een zo hoog mogelijk niveau, anderzijds worden excellentie en relevantie van onderwijs en onderzoek van groot belang geacht. Instellingen worden geprikkeld om te presenteren en ook om dat aan te tonen. Prestaties worden vaker meegenomen in de bekostiging. Studierendement krijgt in een aantal landen expliciet aandacht. Verder valt op dat in veel landen, ondanks of juist dankzij de economische crises, wordt gerept over de behoefte aan extra middelen en wordt gemeld dat begrotingen worden verruimd. Of het hier daadwerkelijk gaat om extra middelen of om het wegwerken van achterstallig onderhoud dan wel een herverdeling, is niet duidelijk. Dit zou nader onderzoek vergen. Excellentie en innovatie zijn kernbegrippen bij onderzoek. Schaalvergroting en samenwerking (fusies, netwerken) worden vaak als wenselijk gezien en in een aantal gevallen met financiële middelen gefaciliteerd. Internationalisering blijft een belangrijk beleidsdoel in veel landen. Ook autonomievergroting van hoger onderwijsinstellingen prijkt op menig beleidsagenda. Tot slot blijken veel beleidsontwikkelingen en -behoeften behoorlijk goed aan te sluiten bij de beleidsagenda van de Europese Commissie. Naast de bovengenoemde thema's staat een

intensievere relatie tussen hoger onderwijsinstellingen en het bedrijfsleven – zowel op het gebied van onderwijs als onderzoek – hoog op veel beleidsagenda's.

Enschede, 23 december 2011.

Harry de Boer

1 China

In July 2010, the Chinese government issued the *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*¹, a comprehensive and strategic policy plan for education in the new century. Based on this plan and other related policies, a great many projects and experiments in higher education have been put into practice. They are mainly focusing on six areas: structure, quality, access, governance, funding and internationalization.

Structure of Higher Education System

Revising the Discipline System

To adapt to the fast developments in society and especially the needs of developing emerging industries of strategic importance, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in China added 21 disciplines² and created 25 new majors into the discipline system. Meanwhile, the majors on the undergraduate level have been cut down from 621 to 443 last year³, which may contribute to general education.

Adjusting the Postgraduate Structure

Postgraduate education in China has been more academically oriented for a long time. But aiming at training more application-oriented talents, universities are encouraged to offer more professionally oriented postgraduate programs in recent years, and accordingly improve the professional degree system. Thus, a clearer dual-track of academic and professional postgraduate education is being implemented, which will contribute to the talents' diversity on a higher level. To further support a professional degree education, the Chinese government set up a National Steering Committee on Professional Degree Graduate Education in March 2011. Moreover, 20 pilots on engineering doctoral degree have been set up to cultivate specialized talents for significant national projects in science and technology, while another 60 pilots on professional master degree have been started to explore the new integrated training model. With the supportive policies and organizations, the enrolment of full-time professional degree postgraduates has increased by 11% last year, and this number will keep growing in the following years according to the MOE's estimation.⁴

¹ *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)*.
http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_177/201008/93785.html

² http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_834/201104/xxgk_116439.html

³ <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5794/201107/122487.html>

⁴ <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5794/201108/122903.html>

Optimizing the Regional Structure

In China, higher education is more advanced in eastern areas than in the central and western regions. A great majority of high-quality universities under the *211 Project* are located in Eastern China, which obviously enlarges the regional gap. To narrow the gap, the *Project of Invigorating Higher Education in Central and Western Regions* was taken into practice in 2011. The aims of the project are to make up for the negative effect caused by *211 Project* and *985 Project*, to balance the distribution of high-quality educational resources and to improve the higher education in poverty central and western regions.

Quality of Higher Education

Instructional Quality Assurance

Instruction quality in undergraduate education has become a key word in the discussions. In recent years, related policies and reforms are mainly concentrated on the following areas.

- Supported by the MOE and Ministry of Finance, the *Undergraduate Instructional Quality and Reform Project*⁵ will be continued in the next five years. The project has five significant missions in the new round of implementation:

- Institute the national standards of instruction quality for all specialized subjects, and form the nation's educational and instructional quality criterion system.
- Carry out comprehensive reforms on some 1500 subjects, and take especial support to the reformatory subjects under hard conditions (such as agriculture, geology and water conservancy) and reforms in some poor western regions. Start projects in training excellent talents in law, medical science, engineering, agriculture and liberal arts.
- Further develop the system of outstanding open courses, create high-quality courses and share them through the internet extensively.
- Improve the students' abilities in practice and innovation. Aimed at this, the MOE intends to set up several demonstration centres for instruction, encourage the cooperation among universities, research institutes, companies and other organizations, and form a set of educational bases of off-campus practice to the undergraduates.
- Improve the teachers' teaching abilities, and set up various demonstration centres on training practice.

- Based on the first five-year round instructional assessment, a regular and standard evaluation system will be carried out. The MOE not only requires the universities to well organize and practice internal self-assessment, but also encourages the intermediary organizations to take part in the evaluations. Besides, it is important to make professional certificates to meet the international evaluation standards. Furthermore, the MOE indicates to create a set of quality categories adapting to the national condition, set up corresponding criterion system and institute classified assessment system on different levels.

⁵ <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5794/201108/122784.html>

- In order to highlight the importance of instruction and encourage the teachers to put more energy in teaching, the quality of teaching turns out to be the prime part in faculty evaluation. And to ensure outstanding teachers could take more shares in teaching, professors are encouraged to give more lessons to low-grade undergraduate students. This requirement has been institutionalized in some universities.

Research Quality and Its Supervision

The policies greatly emphasize the quality of research, especially in postgraduate education. The reforms are mainly in three areas:

- The MOE supports the establishment of a close relationship between universities and research institutes, and encourages them to educate postgraduate students jointly. In this way, the resources will be better shared, the research will be more open, and the students' creativity will be better aroused. Under the new round of *985 Project*, the MOE indicated to further prompt the joint work in developing universities with local government and industrial department. This is targeted at the quality and effectiveness of research (as well as instruction and administration) in the long run. New projects of cultivating excellent doctor, agronomist and lawyer candidates all emphasize the importance of such cooperative training models.
- The government pays more and more attention to the supervision and evaluation of research quality. The MOE has randomly checked some doctoral thesis kept by National Library last year, and sent the evaluation results back to respective cultivation institutions. In order to advance the assessment mechanism, reform on online-evaluation system is being proposed by the MOE. The purpose is to make the process and results of the research evaluation more open, effective and realistic.

Priority for Innovative Talents

"How to educate more innovative talents" has become a central issue in the debates. Several reforms on both national and institutional levels are being prepared.

- The Chinese government has instituted many programs to support innovative talents in universities. The *Pilot Program of Cultivating Top-notch Students in Basic Scientific Areas* (abbreviated as *Everest Program*) that started in 2009, is focused on top-notch talents, who are expected to be academic leaders in their study areas in the future. The aim of the program is to found several training bases for young talents referring to the superior disciplines in some high-level research universities, and to attract excellent students to devote themselves into research in basic scientific area. The program is proposed to focus on five areas (mathematics, physics, chemistry, bio-science and computer science) first, and some twenty universities are selected to carry them out. Specialized in the postgraduate level, the *Prize for the New Academic Doctor Students* was newly set up to encourage doctor students to make more original innovation in their study.
- For the sake of an integrated innovation system, universities are required to take more responsibilities in the technical and industrial development. Considering this, 28 national key laboratories, 10 national centres of engineering and technology study and 45 MOE-attached key

laboratories have been newly founded in the higher education institutions.⁶ Meanwhile, the universities are also encouraged to take more cooperation with companies and prompt transformation of scientific and technological achievements; to take more cooperation with research institutes within the superior disciplines and form high-quality scientific research platform; and to take more cooperation with international first-class universities and research institutes. To support the integrated innovation system, Chinese government proposes to set up some new policies in the future, such as *Proposals on Higher Education Institutions Giving Full Play in National Innovation System*, and *Joint Action of Science and Education Plan*.

Faculty

A qualified faculty team is a steady support for high-quality education and research. In order to meet the needs for high-quality teachers, the Chinese government issued the *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Development of Educational Talents (2010-2020)*⁷ in 2011. As the plan points out, faculty development in the next ten years will be mainly targeted at three missions:

- Cultivate and assemble academic leaders with international influence. Under the *Recruitment Program of Global Experts*, started in 2008, 2000 high-qualified experts overseas will be introduced into China. Accompanied with *Chang Jiang Scholars Program* and *Innovative Team Development Program*, it is proposed to advance the quality of academic teams and develop a set of interdisciplinary bodies that are full of creativeness. Moreover, the government pays great attention to producing high-qualified teachers in philosophy and social science. And they are expected to form a Chinese school in the future.
- Train outstanding young scholars. This is one of the focal points in developing faculty teams in universities. The supportive programs include the *National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars*, *Prosperity Project of Philosophy and Social Science in Higher Education Institutions*, *Program for Developing Young Backbone Teachers in Higher Education Institutions* and so on.
- Improve the personnel structure and management. The universities are encouraged to carry through an employment system under contract, prompt sort management for faculty, implement the research assistant system, and improve the learning-origin structure of the teaching team.

Access

The college access system is undergoing significant changes in the following areas.

- The *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development* indicates to further improve the popularization level of higher education in China, and try to make the gross enrolment rate from 24.2% in 2009 to 40% in 2020. This implies that the opportunities to enter Higher Education Institutions will be expanded continuously.
- In the view of different requirements and characteristics of undergraduate education and tertiary vocational-technical education, a classified entrance examination system has been

⁶ <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5794/201107/122487.html>

⁷ *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Development of Educational Talents (2010-2020)*.

http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/A04_zcwj/201106/xxgk_120794.html

piloted in some provinces since 2011. This reform is targeted at diversified paths to higher education. And it brings a series topics and reforms, such as different content and standards of the exams, new measures to evaluate students' comprehensive quality, multiple ways of recruitment and new timetable to test different subjects, etc.

- Referring to access reform on the graduate level, the most principal part is the increasing enrolment of professional degree graduates, which is attached to the change of postgraduate structure. Accordingly, the content and ways of entrance exams will be adjusted gradually.
- To narrow the regional gap, the Chinese government is trying to reasonably enlarge the recruitment amount in western areas and further improve the overall enrolment distribution. Moreover, counterparts support between universities in eastern and western areas is supported by the government at the same time. All the efforts are aimed at improving higher education equity.
- In order to improve the selection mechanism for various talents, the government encourages multiple paths and measures in entrance exams and admission. Based on this, three groups of top universities, respectively led by Peking University, Tsing-Hua University and Tongji University, implemented reforms on independent recruitment since 2009. Although this reform has created a new path on admission, it brings new problems and debates on test equity.

Governance

The *National Medium- and Long-Term Plan for Education Reform and Development* indicates that the reforms should be implemented at different levels step by step. The central government, local governments and universities should take respective responsibilities. In other words, decentralization is being carried out, and the universities receive more autonomy in self-management. In November 2010, the National Education Advisory Committee was officially established. This is a consultative agency to take investigation, argumentation and evaluation for significant national policies on education reforms. This is the first advisory specialized agency in China, which stands for a more open governance system.

In practice, decentralization and autonomy are mainly reflected in the discipline structural reform, change on degree authorization system and the establishment of a modern university system.

- In the discipline structural reform, the universities gain more autonomy in setting up new disciplines. According to institutional needs for talents and the professors' strong interests, the second-class disciplines could be instituted by universities themselves.
- The State Academic Degree Committee devolves its power in examining authorized doctor and master degree spots to 58 graduate schools and provincial academic degree committees. So the autonomy of provincial governments and degree-granting universities will be further expanded. But, as the amount of doctoral degree-granting universities is large enough, the universities are asked to change the way of full-authorization to time-limited-authorization. This change is considered as a historic reform in the degree system,⁸ which will contribute to the characteristics development and adaption to society within the universities.

⁸ <http://www.moe.edu.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5794/201108/122930.html>

- The establishment of a modern university system is one of the significant reforms in the long-term plan. It concentrates on internal management of universities. Since 2010, 28 universities have taken six related experiments into practice. The pilot subjects includes: classified instruction and management paths, the internal management structure (includes academic committee, faculty congress and board of directors), personnel system reform, chief accountant system, evaluation system for academic performance and punishment system for academic corruption.⁹ The purpose of the reform is to improve the effectiveness and openness of institutional management, and to develop the characteristic in different universities.

Internationalization

- Prompt transnational education, and improve the cooperative way on running schools by Chinese and foreign universities together. And encourage the domestic universities to take more academic cooperation with laboratories and research institutes abroad.
- Carry out *Study in China Program*,¹⁰ enlarge the scholarship pool, and make effort to attract more foreign students to study in China. As a goal, the government is striving to make China be the largest Asian host country for international students before 2020.
- Encourage more students and teachers to study abroad. To support this, subsidization and publicly funded scholarships were raised in 2009.
- Support the development of the Confucius Institute. And further prompt the cultural communication between China and other countries.

⁹ <http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s4868/201012/112258.html>

¹⁰ *Study in China Program*.

http://www.moe.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/moe_850/201009/xxgk_108815.html

2 England

New arrangement for teaching funding and student finance

In June 2011, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) of the British government published the White Paper “Students at the heart of the system”¹¹. The White Paper followed the independent Governmental report of the Browne committee “Securing a sustainable future for higher education” from October 2010¹².

The Browne report provided a review of higher education funding and student finance. The report recommended a radical departure from the existing way in which higher education institutions would be funded for their teaching. Rather than the Government providing a block grant for teaching to the institutions, students contributions should pay for most of the study costs and governmental support should follow the student who has chosen and been admitted to study. Choice is thus expected to be in the hands of the students. Higher education institutions can charge different and higher fees than in the past, provided they can show improvements in the student experience and demonstrate progress in providing fair access. The Browne report emphasised that such a change in higher education funding and student finance should follow certain basic principles: More investments should be made available for higher education, institutions should provide high quality teaching so that students who pay more get more for their money, growing student demand should be met and no one should be put off from studying, government would cover upfront costs for students via a loan system, students should only pay back costs of their education when they are in employment.

The 2011 White Paper from BIS has worked out the Browne report into specific policies and instruments adding the important notion that changes have to be implemented in times when public funding has to be reduced. The White paper covers four areas; their main points can be summarised as follows¹³:

1) Financing students

The proportion of funding for teaching provided by a direct grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will decline and the proportion from graduate contributions, supported by subsidised loans from Government, will increase. HEFCE will remain responsible for allocating the remaining teaching grant to support priorities such as covering the additional costs of subjects, such as Medicine, Science and Engineering, which cannot be covered through income from graduate contributions alone. From autumn 2012, all higher education institutions will be able to charge a basic fee of £6,000 annually for

¹¹ <http://c561635.r35.cf2.rackcdn.com/11-944-WP-students-at-heart.pdf>

¹² <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/corporate/docs/s/10-1208-securing-sustainable-higher-education-browne-report.pdf>

undergraduate courses. The maximum fee charge will be £9,000 a year. Loans will be available for all first-time undergraduate full-time students and most part-time students to cover both course and living costs. Students from low-income family background will be provided with more generous loan support. These loans will only be repaid at a rate of nine per cent of earnings over £21,000. Repayment will be based on a variable rate of interest related to income.¹⁴

2) Student experience

Government expects higher education institutions to provide an expanded standard set of information about their courses, the qualification of their staff, student experiences, employability of graduates, outcomes in the National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSS) etc. and to make it easier for prospective students to find and compare this information. HEFCE and other providers of key data on higher education institutions will be asked to sophisticate and expand their data information systems for parents, students and employers. A new risk-based quality regime will be implemented. All institutions will continue to be monitored through a single framework but the need for, and frequency of, institutional reviews will depend on an objective set of criteria and triggers, including student satisfaction, and the recent track record of each institution.

3) Increasing social mobility

All institutions which charge more than £6,000 must have Access Agreements with the Director of Fair Access setting out what they will do to attract students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The capacity of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA)¹⁵ will be substantially increased providing more support to universities and colleges in the area of access and equity. A new National Scholarship Programme will begin in 2012 to help improve access to higher education amongst least well-off underrepresented groups. All higher education institutions that participate in the Programme will contribute additional funds. Further career guidance, information and service for students and graduates will be established.

4) Regulatory framework

The White Paper proposes the introduction of risk-based regulation to English higher education, with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as a lead regulator for the sector, in association with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Office For Fair Access (OFFA), and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The proposals for a new regulatory regime are backed up with a Technical Consultation document of BIS published in August 2011¹⁶. A key feature will be that external quality assurance at the level of full

¹³ For further information on the state of implementation undertaken by HEFCE, see <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/funding/201213/>

¹⁴ For further information, see <http://www.slc.co.uk/about%20us/index.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.offa.org.uk/about/>

¹⁶ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/higher-education/docs/n/11-1114-new-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-consultation>

institutional reviews will become less of a regular event for the great majority of higher education entities, and may even disappear for them entirely. Further, the process and criteria for granting degree-awarding powers, university title and university college title will be reviewed, providing private and new providers access to the student market.

These changes envisaged have raised substantial debates about potential consequences for British higher education:

- It is not yet clear to what extent Governments in Scotland and Wales will follow the English reforms. Welsh parliament is, for example, considering to charge lower fees and provide higher governmental funding for Welsh students, charging higher fees not only for international students but also for students from other parts of Britain.
- Further calculations of the costs of the new loan system points out that overall governmental spending on higher education is unlikely to decrease, at least in the first years.
- Critique has been raised that the new funding system will not allow for more investment in higher education; the distribution of study places and the re-distribution of funding across the system will not increase funding available and thus not allow for expansion; certain demand will remain unmet.
- Case studies undertaken by CHEPS show concern within higher education institutions about the fact that income will not rise (even for institutions charging highest fees) while student expectations as full fee-payers will rise. Management of expectations of students and parents becomes thus a crucial issue.
- The new funding system might impact on student mobility. More than in the past, students might choose institutions within their region (avoiding further costs for living expenses away from home) or might consider studying abroad in lower cost countries (including British off-shore provision abroad).

A new framework for research evaluation and funding

The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) - first implemented in 1986 having had its last round in 2008 - will be replaced by the Research Evaluation Framework (REF)¹⁷. The first assessment within the new framework will take place in 2014 and will be conducted jointly by the four UK higher education funding councils.

Due to cumulative criticism of the RAE, the government announced in 2006 that the 2008 RAE would be the last one and would be replaced by the REF. The initial aim was to devise something simpler and cheaper that would eventually be more of a matrix, that is data driven, system and less heavy in terms of peer review. The REF is, however, in many ways similar to the RAE. Institutions will be invited to make submissions to discipline-based units of assessment, the evaluation process will be mainly based on expert review, substantial basic funding for research will be allocated according to results. Most likely 4*-rated departments will receive about three to four times more funding than 3* rated departments. The number of expert sub-panels will decline and cover fewer and broader subject divisions. The use of metric-

¹⁷ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/02_11/02_11.pdf

based indicators and especially citation information to inform the reviews was envisaged. Explorations and feasibility studies contracted by HEFCE raised concern about the use of metric-based information and recent reports from HEFCE clearly indicate a retreat from the original position.

A major change through the new REF concerns the fact that research will not only be assessed by looking at the quality of research outputs but also by looking at the socio-economic impact of research and by looking at the research environment. The quality of research, that is of submitted research outputs in terms of their originality, significance and rigour, with reference to international research quality standards, will remain the prime criterion accounting for 65 per cent in the overall outcome of the assessment. The sub-panels will also assess the reach and significance of impacts on the economy, society and culture that will account for 20 per cent in the overall outcome. Finally, the research environment of the unit of assessment will be assessed in terms of its vitality and sustainability and its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline and will account for 15 per cent of the outcome.

Especially the proposal to include 'impact' into the REF has led to some principle criticism as well as some controversy as regards feasibility. In 2009, HEFCE has commissioned an impact pilot exercise¹⁸ as well as a study on the use of impact assessment in other countries¹⁹ that viewed the work of the Australian RQF Working Group on Impact Assessment as providing the most promising basis for application within the REF. The outcome of this process within the REF has been that units of assessment are requested completing a template describing their approach during the five and a half year assessment period to enable research impact, and case studies describing specific examples of impacts achieved during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research in a longer time frame of the last 10 years²⁰.

¹⁸ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/other/re02_10/re02_10.pdf

¹⁹ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2009/rd23_09/rd23_09.pdf

²⁰ http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/01_11/01_11.pdf

3 Finland

Higher education infrastructure

Mergers

The university sector has experienced mergers in the past 12 months. In the Helsinki's region, three of the 20 universities under the auspices of the Ministry of Education merged to Aalto University, two regional universities combined to form the University of Eastern Finland, and two institutions in Turku also merged.

Restructuring and rationalisation

In a document released June 2010, a cross-departmental Ministerial Working Group on Educational Policy has issued a statement about the future structure of Finland's universities and polytechnics. By 2020 there will be fewer universities and polytechnics, changes in the disciplinary mix and reduction of student intakes. The aim of the new reforms is to improve the education system and to increase competitiveness, well-being and culture.

The working group report envisages no more than 15 universities by 2020, with most having at least 3,000 full-time equivalent students. Three small creative arts universities are likely to merge in coming years.

Similar rationalisation was called for among polytechnics. The target for 2020 is to have no more than 18 polytechnics (currently 25), with most of them to have a full-time equivalent student population of at least 2,500. There is also a call for polytechnics to be located in fewer places.

Polytechnic reform²¹

The polytechnic reform recorded in the Government Programme started in September 2011. The aim is to draft a government proposal for a new Polytechnics Act, which is to take force from the beginning of 2014. According to the Government Programme, the responsibility for polytechnic funding as a whole will be transferred to the government, and polytechnics will be made independent legal persons. The licence to provide polytechnic education will be revised, with emphasis on quality and impact. Polytechnic financing will be overhauled to better support current objectives, such as speedy transfer to the labour market. The polytechnic units will be combined into sufficiently large and innovative high-standard competence environments. There will be at least one polytechnic in every province. The reform is being prepared by a committee and a steering group appointed by the Minister of Education and Science (Jukka Gustafsson). The steering group has representatives from polytechnics, labour

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http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/ammattikorkeakoulu_uudistus/index.html?lang=en

market organisations, local authorities and student organisations. The members of the preparation committee are officials of the Ministry of Education and Culture. There are 25 polytechnics in the Ministry's sector, with 118,000 students in Bachelor's programmes and 6,500 in Master's programmes. The government funding for polytechnics will be allocated in a ratio of 70:30 on the basis of the number of students and degrees awarded.

Reductions in student intake

The 2010 working group also announced reductions in student intakes. Currently the annual intake to universities and polytechnics numbers about 56,000; the number of graduations each year is about 34,000 and the aspiration is to have 75% of students completing in minimum time. Should this occur, an annual intake of 46,000 would suffice, according to the report. Finnish students are among the slowest in Europe to complete their degrees (see below). The group looked at the nation's discipline mix, and highlighted a need for rationalisation of teaching in some disciplines. The number of students in engineering and some areas of the humanities ('language science', history, education and culture) is to be cut, while some areas of the social sciences are to be promoted.

Time to degree

According to data published as part of the Euro-student project, the average age of new university students is 21.6 years. The median age of Finnish graduates is 28, also at the 'old' end of the scale.

Why is it that Finnish university students start their studies later, take longer to progress through them, and are among the oldest in Europe by the time they have been academically prepared for the workforce?

- Inefficient allocation and admission systems. Universities tend to run their own admissions tests and these usually differ between the institutions. The number of applicants sitting admissions tests is three times the size of the matriculation cohort and in 2008, only 29% of new university students matriculated in the same year. Delays of several years can occur as some students apply several times before gaining entry to their preferred programme.
- Introduction of Bologna BAMA structure. Since Bologna, most students have enrolled in a three-year bachelor degree, followed by a two-year masters programme. For many, this means they take a minimum of five years to get into the workforce instead of four. However, Finnish employers do not acknowledge the first (bachelor) degree as a full degree that signals sufficient competencies for entry to the labour market.
- Conscription. Young men have to serve, somewhere between the ages 18 and 28. This seems like an obvious cause of delayed study times but it is rarely mentioned in Finland. Each year, around 27,000 young men start their national service obligation of six, nine or 12 months. Many will be eventual higher education students.
- Finnish universities have a single intake each year, so the delay in studies for someone opting for 12 months' national service might be as much as two years, depending on their intake date.

Governance

Consequences of the new university act 2009

In 2009 a new university act was approved. Its purpose is for universities to be better able to:²²

- react to changes in the operational environment
- diversify their funding base
- compete for international research funding
- cooperate with foreign universities and research institutes
- allocate resources to top-level research and their strategic focus areas
- ensure the quality and effectiveness of their research and teaching
- strengthen their role within the system of innovation

The reform takes place on three major platforms:²³

- Finnish universities will become independent legal entities and in one sense will cease to be government-funded public institutions. Universities will have the option of becoming either *institutions subject to public law* or *foundations subject to private law*. The Ministry of Education will continue to be the main source of income, but funding will be provided in the form of a monthly-paid subsidy rather than an allocation through the annual national budget. As legal entities, the universities will have full financial liability, which will emphasise the importance of strategic management.
- The ownership and management of university buildings is to change. The government is to relinquish its 100% ownership and provide universities with majority ownership rights.
- Governance arrangements will be different, but not quite as originally planned. At least 40 per cent of the members on the board of a public university must be persons external to the university. The members are elected by the university collegiate body, which may also decide to have an external majority on the board, if it so wishes. The chair and the vice-chair of the board are elected from amongst the external members. The board of a foundation university has seven members, three of whom are nominated by the founding members of the university foundation. The number of candidates nominated by members must be at least double the number of seats. The board is appointed by the multi-member administrative body of the university. The foundation universities may also elect a board entirely composed of external members. The chair and vice-chair must be persons external to the university.

²²

http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/koulutuspolitiikka/Hankkeet/Yliopistolaitoksen_uudistaminen/index.html?lang=en

²³ Source:

http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/koulutuspolitiikka/Hankkeet/Yliopistolaitoksen_uudistaminen/index.html?lang=en

Timo Aarrevaara, Ian R. Dobson and Camilla Elander, Brave New World: Higher Education Reform in Finland, in *Higher Education Management and Policy* Volume 21/2

Funding

(Debate on) introduction of tuition fees

Finland's universities were completely tuition fee-free until 2010 when the new Universities Act permitted universities to charge students from outside Europe, under limited circumstances. The new fee regime has been introduced as a five-year experimental programme to promote international contacts. The tuition fees would be applicable only to special masters' programmes, different from those available to domestic students. Universities will also have to establish a scholarship scheme. The universities will decide whether to offer fee-paying courses and will decide on fee levels. Imposition of domestic fees, however, is not inevitable. Much more likely would be the introduction of some form of 'student learning entitlement'. Under such a scheme, students would no longer remain in the system as 'perpetual students' without some personal financial penalty. The growth in the number of fee-paying students is likely to be slow at first although there is nothing to say that it won't pick up within a few years. Of course, if universities charge less than full cost-recovery fees, foreign students will continue to be subsidised by the Finnish taxpayer. Perhaps this is a small price to pay for the valuable international linkages made possible by having foreign students studying in Finland.

Charging tuition fees to domestic students is not on the current agenda even if the OECD suggests introducing tuition fees would reduce the time university students take to complete their degrees.

New funding models in 2012

Universities and polytechnics are to use new funding models by 2012, and these are to emphasise the quality of teaching and research, and higher education's impact on society.²⁴ The 2010 ministerial working group provides scant detail on how these emphases will be measured.

Private contributions to higher education

A new universities act has transformed institutions from branches of government into independent legal entities. Universities now face fewer restrictions in raising revenue via private donations and bequests. They started to plan their private fund-raising activities last year but initial efforts were slow to pay off, largely because of the sluggish economy which affected the flow of corporate donations. Their current campaign is more about convincing individuals to start donating. Although universities had the right to accept bequests and donations from foundations or private organisations before the new Act, these had to be recorded in separate accounts. There was limited tax deductibility for these corporate donations but no tax break for donations from private citizens. This situation has been amended: donations of EUR850-250 000 (US\$1,000-300,000) are now tax-deductible for individuals as well as foundations and companies. In the context of the Finnish welfare state, this is a radical change. Universities have an extra incentive to maximise their donation pool this year: the

²⁴ <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2010062518314670>

government has offered 250% of the sums donated as a mechanism to kick-start universities' private fund-raising. Several, particularly the larger ones, now have fundraising managers so there has been considerable investment in infrastructure to solicit donations. The newly reformed university sector also has two foundation-based or semi-private universities. To become financially viable, they were required to have more privately sourced equity and therefore had much higher targets for private donations.

Missing information:

Polytechnic reform

English version of the 2010 working group document

4 Flanders

Institutional landscape

From the academic year 2004-2005 onwards, higher education in the Flemish Community provides five kinds of study programmes. University Colleges (UCs) offer *professional bachelor* programmes, geared towards professional practice, and *advanced bachelor* programmes for students who have completed a professional bachelor programme and want to specialise. Both UCs (within the framework of an association) and universities offer *academic bachelor* programmes, intended to make students pass on to the master course, and *academic master* programmes. *Advanced master* programmes, offered by universities and UCs, are intended for students who have obtained a master degree and want to specialise. By means of bridging programmes, holders of a professionally-oriented bachelor degree can gain access to master programmes. Most UCs and universities are comprehensive institutions offering training courses in different disciplines, including fine arts, music and performing arts.

The restructuring of the Flemish higher education landscape – particularly the programme supply – has been under discussion for many years and continues to be one of the most pressing policy dossiers. In the last decade, these discussions have been fuelled by the introduction of the BaMa structure, the accreditation system and the foundation of associations. An association is a co-operation between one university and one or more UCs. As a result there are five associations in Flanders with the universities of Leuven, Ghent, Antwerp, Hasselt and Brussels as centres. For example, together with twelve UCs, the K.U.Leuven forms the “K.U.Leuven Association”. The associations are charged, among other things, with improving the research capacity of university colleges, consulting about a rational supply of study programmes, structuring programmes and transition possibilities, the development of a shared approach for quality assurance, organising student counselling, and educational innovation and improvement.

In these processes the academisation (*‘academising’*) of the traditional two-cycle training programmes offered by the UCs plays an important role. UCs were given opportunities to ‘upgrade’ some of their more professionally oriented two cycle training courses into academically oriented ones and to strengthen their research function and the teaching-research nexus. As a consequence, the division between professional and academic programmes is no longer linked to different institutions. Since some programmes of UCs have become full academic programmes, it is no longer a privilege of universities to offer academic programmes, and to do (academic) research. However, this structure that blurs the distinction between universities and UCs has become an issue of debate. In the summer of 2011 the Flemish government decides to have all academic programmes offered by universities and to have all professional oriented programmes by UCs (with the exception of the programmes in fine arts, music and performing arts). According to the minister this would be the final piece in the evolution of *‘academising’* study programmes. It would restore the binary divide (starting in

2013-14): UCs are responsible for professional bachelors and universities for academic bachelors and masters.²⁵

The introduction of a new level related to higher education (HBO₅). It concerns a level between secondary and tertiary education.²⁶ The new level includes the existing training courses in nursing offered by secondary schools and the adult training courses offered by the Centres for Adult Education (evening and weekend education). The main target group are those in the labour market without a higher education degree but like to upgrade their qualifications. In the new phase of the HBO₅ the target group will be extended to students leaving secondary education. The minister strongly advocates that secondary schools and Centres for Adult Education develop new programmes in collaboration with universities colleges and vice versa. The collaboration should include the design of the programmes, the use of human resources and infrastructure, collaboration with respect to quality assurance. Secondary schools and Centres for Adult Education can develop new programmes in collaboration with UCs. It provides higher vocational education, rewarded with a degree. It is meant for secondary school students who want to obtain a higher education degree but without taking a multi-year programme (such as the professional bachelor at a UCs), and for those who want to obtain a degree in higher education in a later stage of their life (*tweede kans onderwijs*). It is to some extent comparable with the Dutch Associate Degree. For the moment it is not exactly clear when this new HBO₅ programmes will start because vocational qualifications attached to these programmes have still to be developed. It is the minister's intention to develop the qualifications framework for these programmes as soon as possible so the programmes could start in 2012.

Teaching

In 2004, the government issued the decree on flexibility in higher education. The decree on flexibility introduced a more flexible way of organising study programmes than was common practice at that time. Study programmes were rather strictly organised on the basis of study years, with study progression measured by passing or failing the exams of each study year. This system was replaced by a credit accumulation system, although model trajectories of 60 credits for each academic year (that is, roughly one study year) still are defined by the higher education institutions. Students are allowed to combine the last part of the bachelor programme with a first part of the master programme. When introducing the system of flexible higher education many feared for a prolongation of the studies. The first figures show that there is no increase of the time to graduation. At the same time, provisions were made to allow for the recognition of

²⁵ This does not necessarily imply that the associations will be abolished (though *'academiseren'* was one of their major activities). In the future the associations could focus its activities on further collaboration and streamlining of professional and academic study programmes and to facilitate smooth path ways. The debate on the continuation of this type of cooperation between higher education institutions goes on because not all the associations are working as well as wished for.

²⁶ http://www.flandre.be/servlet/Satellite?c=Solution_C&cid=1277542086666&context=1141721623065---1191211212373-1194841705098--1220429328824&p=1186804409590&pagename=Infolijn%2FView

competences and qualifications gained outside the formal education system. This should facilitate flexible learning pathways and lifelong learning. A recently conducted evaluation demonstrated the costs of implementation: monitoring, reporting, administrative structures are creating red tape.

The introduction of flexible pathways means that in concluding a contract with an institution a student has three options:

- Diploma contract: a student registers and enrolls to achieve a diploma. This is by and large the traditional system.
- Credit contract: a student registers only for a number of courses without, for the moment, the aim to get a diploma. Credits for passing courses remain valid, implying that a student can get the degree after a longer period.
- Exam contract: a student registers only to do exams without taking classes.

It is possible for students to conclude different contracts, with one institution as well as with different institutions.

There is a clear trend to extend the duration of masters programmes from one- (60 ECTS) to two-year (120 ECTS) programmes. In 2011, the Flemish institutions have submitted 77 proposals for such extensions to the minister. The main reasons for extending the masters are: a) it better fits international developments, b) it opens possibilities for international aspects in the programme without touching upon other important aspects of a masters (mobility window), c) better opportunities for in-depth theses, d) because of more opportunities to (really) specialise there will be less need for post-tertiary education (so-called master-after-master programmes (advanced masters)), and e) practice-related aspects (e.g. internships) can become a crucial part of the masters programme (which is in line with Europe's Modernisation Agenda that stresses closer links between institutions and businesses).

Participation

The government's strategic plan 2009-2014 ('Beleidsnota') says the government wants to increase the level of participation, particularly of backgrounds with traditionally low participation rates. For this regional supply of professional bachelors and HBO's programmes are important. The minister will use the "Widening Participation Fund" and will adapt the financial student support system. In this context, the minister supports the Bologna initiatives to develop measurable goals and indicators with respect to the social dimension (participation ratios, progress ratios, employability, and graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds). Moreover, the government wants to promote student mobility. By 2015/16 15% of the bachelors and masters graduates should have at least a three month experience of studying abroad. Additionally, two-year masters programmes should have foreign-based internships as part of their programmes.

Research

In its latest strategic policy document on scientific research and innovation²⁷ (*'Beleidsnota 2009-2014'*), the Flemish ministry of economy, science and innovation joins European trends in science and innovation policies. There is a strong emphasis on stimulating creativity and entrepreneurship, valorisation, enhancing collaboration between different knowledge providers ('knowledge triangle'), focus on a limited number of economic clusters, thematic spearheads and grand projects, creating critical mass, strengthening excellence of basic research, encouraging international research collaboration, creating better opportunities for research talent, and a more streamlined and output driven research policy.

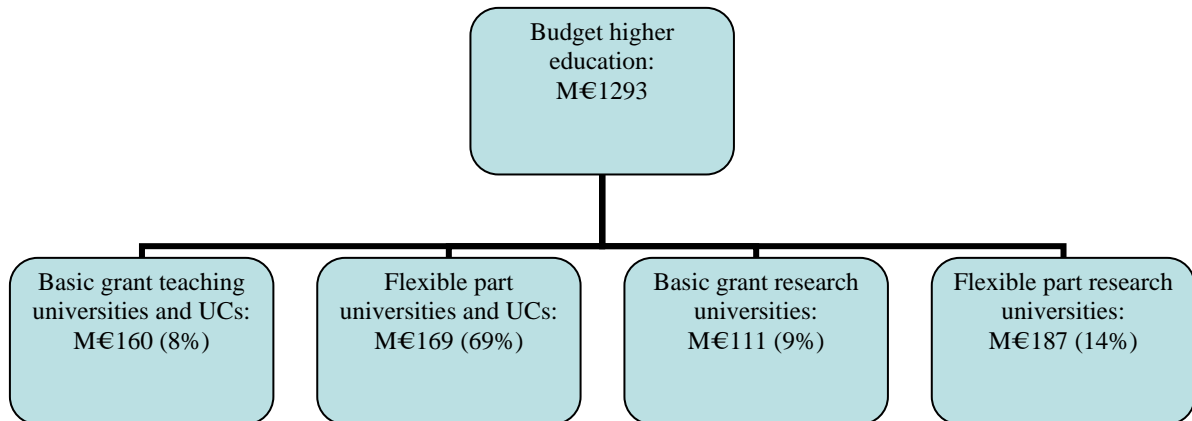
One of the measures of the Federal Government to strengthen the research infrastructure and to support the European Research Area is a "Return programme for excellent researchers" (*'Terugkeermandaat'*). Belgian researchers working abroad can submit a proposal to return to Belgium for a maximum of a two-year period. They are supposed to work on programmes funded by the Federal Government. The government has decided to increase the budget for Research and Innovation with some 60 million euros for the coming 4 years. The allocation of this extra budget will be balanced between basic research (researcher-driven) and applied research and innovation (technological innovation but also social innovation and innovation in the health sector).

Funding

In 2008 the Flemish government launched a new funding Act (*'Financieringsdecreet'*). The new funding system was introduced to establish a single funding model for both the universities and the universities of applied sciences. The underlying goals of the new system are to enhance participation, to increase study progress, to safeguard equal opportunities, to rationalise programme offering, to support flexible path ways, to support the '*academisering*', and to stimulate the quality of teaching and research. To meet these goals, the public budget was increased with 9% (besides the structural changes in funding the institutions).

This new funding scheme has a stronger orientation towards output funding. Because this is likely to have impact on the distribution of resources (winners and losers), the new funding system will be phased in. It is supposed to be fully operational from 2014 onwards. Up till 2013 each institution receives a 'guaranteed minimum' that is indexed on 2007.

²⁷ <http://www.ewi-vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/documents/Beleidsnota%20Wetenschap%20&%20Innovatie%202009-2014.pdf>



These are the basic figures: index 2011. For 2012 there was an adaption of 2% for the budget of the universities and the budget of the professional study programmes due to the increase of the numbers of students. But there is a decrease of the budget for the academic study programmes at the university colleges due to a decrease of the number of students.

Leaving the (difficult) technical details aside, at current the distribution of the public funds is based on student enrolments,²⁸ on student achievement and progression²⁹, and on research output (number of PhDs awarded, number of publications and citation scores). Moreover, institutions are financially rewarded for academic success of students from under-represented socio-economic and ethnic groups; for this the government introduced an “Widening Participation Fund” of M€6. Another additional budget concerns the quality and efficiency of study programme supply (so-called “Rationalising Fund” of M€5). This was a one-shot incentive; the budget was cut in 2011.

In 2007, a study voucher system (*leerkrediet*: *credits for higher education learning*) has been introduced. Starting higher education, each student receives 140 credit points. When a student registers for a programme a number of credits is taken off this individual account (depending on the type of contract between the student and the institution). As soon as a student passes a course the number of credits will be transferred back. If students fail to pass a course the number of credits will not be refunded. Through this mechanism of risking to loose credits both the institutions (partially funded on the basis of earned credits) and the students are encouraged to perform. This way students are also encouraged to choose their study subject carefully (the number of drops outs in Flemish higher education is too high and regarded as a serious problem that needs further attention – see later). If a student has a deficit (negative balance of credits) then the institution has the right to refuse the student or to charge higher tuitions. Because institutions are partially funded on student success (earned credits), the minister hopes that institutions will increase their efforts to minimise dropouts and to supervise and guide students more effectively.

²⁸ ‘Enrolments’ are based on the number of credits that students want to obtain (see *leerkrediet*) and is based on the kind of contract between the institution and the student. There are three types of contract: diploma, credit and exam contract. This variety is related to the introduction of ‘flexible pathways’ in Flemish higher education.

²⁹ Study success is related to the number of credits earned by students (see *leerkrediet*).

Quality

As the result of the implementation of Bologna, the Flemish introduced a new quality and accreditation system, together with the Dutch, in the beginning of the 2000s. In 2013-14, the existing procedures will be adapted. As in the Netherlands, the renewed accreditation system comprises two aspects: institutional review (new) and 'light touch' accreditation of programmes. Before the end of 2021 each institution will have been reviewed twice: a first round will take place in the academic years 2015-16 and 2016-17 and the second round will take place in the academic year 2019-20 and 2020-21. If the outcome of two reviews is positive and the institution gets full fledge accredited, then the institution will be considered as 'self-accrediting' and the 'light touch' meta-evaluation will follow instead of the work-intensive external quality assessments of each programme. At that moment the involvement of external experts in the internal quality assurance will be required as well as a benchmarking with at least two international comparable study programmes. There will be a new protocol aiming to reduce administrative burdens.

Educational programmes will be described in terms of learning outcomes that are linked to the European qualification framework.

Upcoming issues in policy discussion

- The most important issue concerns the transfer of academic study programmes from the UCs to the universities. The implementation of this reform will have a significant impact on the governance of the HEIs, the staff regulations and the funding model.
- A second major issue concerns the implementation of the new quality assurance and accreditation system.
- There will also a reform of the student facilities. Those are the three major laws on higher education in 2012.
- The minister is working together with the institutions on a deregulation and a reduction of the administrative burden in general.
- It is likely that 'student orientation' will be an important issue in the coming years. The number of students that pass in the first year is too low; there are too many dropouts. Moreover, too many students are 'drifting downwards' in the system – they start too ambitious and have to fall back to other types of (higher) education. In this broader context the Flemish open access policy in higher education is subject of on-going debates. So far these debates have been without any clear results, though policies related to 'student orientation' could be a first step.
- The university rectors have agreed to submit a report on 'broad-based bachelors programmes' (*brede bachelors*). This discussion on restructuring bachelors is linked to an intended reform to restructure the secondary education system (assuring a proper link between secondary and tertiary education).

- Another issue of debate concerns the tuition fees that some perceive as (too) low (about €600 per annum). So far however the current minister of education is not in favour of higher tuition fees.
- A last issue concerns the reform of the teacher training programmes.

5 France

Early November 2011 the French government has announced budget cuts of 100 billion euro. How this major operation will affect the plans regarding investments in higher education and research is not clear yet.

HE infrastructure

The new Licence³⁰

In July 2011 a reform of the Licence programme was announced to enhance the attractiveness of the licence (the equivalent to the first degree, bachelor degree)

The new licence is scheduled to be progressively introduced from September 2012 and is the final piece of a five-year plan to cut back failure rates in the first year of and improve the success rate of students in general university first degree programmes.

The reform introduces three major changes.

1. First, the minimum course length will be raised to 1,500 teaching hours over its three years to guarantee the academic quality of the licence.
2. All students must have the opportunity to include at least one period of workplace training as part of their university course, to give them direct experience of professional life, help them decide what direction their studies should take, and facilitate a smoother transition to working life.
3. Given the growing diversity of the new entrants to universities, universities have to make the programmes more flexible and diverse. Transfer between programmes should be made easier, honours tracks as well as tracks for students with learning deficiencies should be developed more, the organisation of the first year programmes should allow students with difficulties to switch to other programmes, and to back this up, a system of personal mentoring should be developed and implemented system-wide.

Employability ranking

Employability and the relation between higher education and the labour market are issues high on the French higher education agenda for a long time. There is a history of reforms aiming to improve the links between the educational and the professional field. In that context, a ranking of French universities according to their graduates' job prospects published by the Ministry for higher education and research ³¹ has drawn attention.

Under the LRU³², universities have to make information on the employability of their graduates publicly available. The ranking is based on the survey of the master graduates from 2007 and

³⁰ <http://www.gouvernement.fr/gouvernement/la-nouvelle-licence-universitaire>

³¹ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid53618/insertion-professionnelle-des-dipomes-de-master-selon-la-discipline-nature-de-l-employeur-statut-d-emploi-secteur-d-activite.html>

³² Law for the Freedom and Responsibility of Universities (2009).

relates to their situation two and a half years after graduation. There have been previous studies on graduate employment, but this is the first attempt to rank universities on this issue. According to the minister, families and students need such information "[t]o choose the right subject at university and later succeed in the job market ". The exercise would give universities an instrument to guide them in considering improvements for courses with least professional potential, and for state could take the results into account for funding. The latter refers to plans to develop better indicators for the performance of the higher education sector in 2012 (as a consequence of the new governance under the LRU). "Between now and 2012 we will compile true indicators of national performance which will be integrated into the calculations for allocating resources, as laid down in the 2007 law," the minister promises.

Not unexpectedly, this ranking of universities has caused controversy. The main critique is that the differences in the position on the ranking are not significant and that the ranking of universities as a whole does not take into account the kind of education each university offers, the individual characteristics of the student population and the characteristics of the regional job market.³³

Access to Grand Écoles

In December 2010, the Conférence des Grandes Ecoles (CGE) published a white paper on widening access to Grandes Écoles.³⁴ In this document the CGE responds to the pressure from the government to bring the university and the grande école systems closer and to widen the GEs' social mix and include more students from less privileged backgrounds. As a follow up on the agreement that the CGE signed with the ministry to fix an 'objective' for each school to recruit 30% of students receiving state grants, compared with the usual 10-15%, it formulated proposals to:

- Enhance the success rate of students from less privileged social or regional backgrounds,
- Experiment with new admission procedures
- Develop new practices in the French higher education system to break the link between ambitions and results and social background.

Excellence initiatives

At the end of 2009 a plan was launched to boost the French economy in times of financial and economic crisis. A large part of this 35 billion euro '*investissements d'avenir*' process³⁵ was dedicated to higher education (10 billion) and research (7.9 billion).

Four 'actions' for higher education were developed: the IDEX, the LABEX, the EQUIPEX and the IDEFI actions.

IDEX (short for initiatives d'excellence) is a programme for which in total 7.7 billion euros are earmarked to 'have emerge' 5 to 10 higher education and research organisations or

³³ Jean Dubois, in his [Histoires d'Universités](#) blog on *EducPros.fr*.

³⁴ *Livre blanc de l'ouverture sociale des grandes écoles françaises*.

http://www.cge.asso.fr/presse/CGE_LivreBlanc_OuvertureSociale_2010.pdf

³⁵ <http://investissement-avenir.gouvernement.fr/content/action-et-projets>

conglomerates (poles) that can compete with the best universities in the world. In the Fall of 2010 a first call for IDEX conglomerates was launched and in July 2011 3 bids were selected:

- IDEX Bordeaux, coordinated by the PRES "Université de Bordeaux" in which 4 universities, the Institut polytechnique de Bordeaux and Sciences Po Bordeaux are grouped.,
- Unistra by the Université de Strasbourg, a 2009 merged institution of 3 universities: Louis Pasteur, Marc Bloch and Robert Schumann,
- Paris Sciences et Lettres (PSL) coordinated by a foundation in which 13 partners participate, among which le Collège de France, l'École normale supérieure, l'Université Paris-Dauphine, l'ESPCI ParisTech, Chimie ParisTech, l'Observatoire de Paris, l'Institut Curie, and l'Institut Louis Bachelier.

A second call for projects was launched in September 2011.

LABEX is a programme that calls for proposals that enhance the international attractiveness of French laboratories by facilitating the performance of world class research projects and participate in creating structures for that. The first call for LABEX proposals was launched in 2010 and from a total of 241 proposals 100 were selected in March 2011. Labex is limited to laboratories (in the French sense of the word).

EQUIPEX is a 1 billion euro programme to facilitate French laboratories to acquire equipment that will allow the laboratories to do research at world excellence level, with a focus on enhancing knowledge and innovation. After the first call for proposals 52 projects were awarded a grant.

The final initiative is the IDEFI programme (Initiatives d'excellence en formations innovantes). In this programme, proposals to explore and promote new and innovative ways of teaching and learning are invited. The initiatives should reward the commitment of teachers to innovative and ambitious projects, geared towards the study success of students and be exemplary to the whole higher education system. With a total budget of 150 million euro, this latest excellence initiative is the smallest one. First IDEFI grants will be awarded in March 2012.

International student mobility³⁶

There is a change in the government policy regarding international student mobility. There are new immigration measures that tighten restrictions on foreign students from outside the European Union. The government wants to keep the doors open to international students, but the focus is more on student exchanges between universities, rather than individuals coming to France to study.

Recent orders from the ministries of the interior and of employment tighten the interpretation of legislation, making it much more difficult for a non-EU foreigner to change from a student to an employee status after graduation, and limit their stay in the country after graduation to six months.

Non-EU foreigners wishing to study in France must also prove increased financial resources before they can obtain a residence permit.

Hardest hit will be Moroccans, who comprise the biggest national group of foreign students. Chinese and Algerians form the second and third largest groups.

Research priorities

The research and innovation strategy for the period 2009-2012 (SNRI) is built around five main principles :

- Basic research has to be promoted, especially regarding large research infrastructures ;
- Research responsive to society and economy is key to economic growth and employment.
- Risk management and the enhancement of security are important in our society. These issues therefore need to be prioritised in cultural, social and technological innovation.
- Social sciences and humanities have to play a major role in linking research across disciplinary boundaries
- Multidisciplinarity is indispensable for the enhancement of innovative and responsive research

In the SNRI there are three axes along which research priorities are geared : health, well-being, food and biotechnologies ; environment and eco-technologies ; and information, communication and nanotechnology.³⁷

In the plans on investment in the future, there are also initiatives geared towards boosting the quality of research activities and to have French institutions positioned higher on international rankings. A major initiative is the creation of Instituts de Recherche Technologique (IRT).

The IRT are new research institutes that have to contribute to the development of innovative products and improve the transition of graduates to the labour market by focusing on partnerships with industry and improving the attractiveness of France among enterprises and the best international researchers. With the 2 billion budget for this programme strategic public-private partnerships have to emerge regarding research, teaching and knowledge transfer.

The first six IRTs got a green light in September 2011. These six initiatives will receive nearly 400 million euros. Another 1.1 billion euros is made available as a 'dotation non consommable' (institutions may use the interest generated by those funds).³⁸

Governance

The implementation of the LRU

Early 2011, the total number of public universities that gained more freedom to manage their own affairs under the 2007 LRU was 73 (nearly 90% of all public universities. The final batch of universities to which the LRU will apply is scheduled to join in mid-2012.

³⁶ <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20111001151506826>

³⁷ source : <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56143/strategie-nationale-de-recherche-et-d-innovation-exercice-de-prospective-scientifique.html>

³⁸ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid57989/1-5-milliards-d-euros-pour-les-six-premiers-instituts-de-recherche-technologique.html>

The LRU transfers some control from the state to the universities for matters such as management of budgets and human resources, including staff salaries and bonuses, and deciding research strategies. Universities may form foundations with businesses to generate extra funding and are encouraged to create clusters with other higher education and research institutions.

Another stage of the reform is devolution of property ownership from the state to the universities - the first four or five universities having already started the transfer process. When this process is finalised, universities will be able to renovate their buildings to suit their needs, and have power to sell properties and keep the proceeds.

Funding

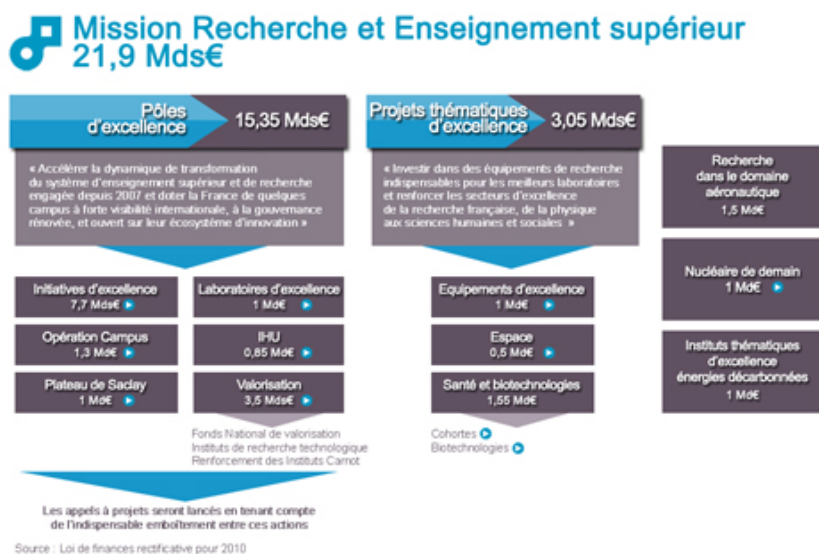
Budget for higher education

Despite an austerity budget aimed at cutting at least €40 billion higher education and research remain a French government priority having been spared the deep cuts and job losses made in other areas of the 2011 budget.

The 2011 budget for higher education rose by €428 million, or 1.3%, to a total of €14.9 billion. The increase includes €134 million for upgrading staff pay, and €71 million for introduction of a 10th month of student grants. For research, whose share of gross domestic product rose from 2.07% in 2007 to 2.21% in 2009, the allocation for 2011 will increase by 2.7% to €10.3 billion.

The Investment in the future programme is the major vehicle for the additional funds allocated to the stimulation of French economy. A large part of that programme (almost two third) is dedicated to higher education and research. The excellence initiatives and the IRTs discussed above are major elements of the activities in this programme (see diagram below).

Operation campus is an action to improve the real estate of 10 universities to create showcase universities.



Quality

Stocktaking of quality of higher education

The French higher education landscape is changing as universities assume greater autonomy, according to the first regional analysis of all France's universities, published this month by the Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur, *Aeres*. Institutions are forging new alliances with research organisations and businesses, with those based in and around the biggest cities thriving best.

Launching the 600-page report, Jean-François Dhainaut, the agency's president, said the study had taken four years to produce, with 10,000 evaluations carried out by 4,500 French and international experts.³⁹ They started in 2007, the year Aeres was itself created. The report gives profiles of each region, including strengths and weaknesses and the extent of collaboration with higher education institutions and partnerships with business and industry. Each regional section then presents evaluations of all its universities, together with information including student and staff numbers, undergraduate and postgraduate courses and research specialisations, student success rates, governance, international relations and finances. Research activities are analysed jointly with the relevant masters or doctoral courses. Dhainaut emphasised that the study did not constitute a ranking of French universities, pointing out that the methodology had evolved and that the time lag over the four annual evaluations would penalise those institutions studied in 2007 compared with those studied more recently. Rather, the report represented a "snapshot of the quality of higher education and research in France".

With the formation of research and higher education clusters, known as PRES (pôles de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur), the Ile-de-France and other dominant regions such as Rhône-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Strasbourg, Toulouse and Bordeaux had achieved 'critical mass' which, for example, enabled them to obtain large-scale infrastructure and equipment necessary to develop scientific and technological research (according to Dhainaut).

Disparities had grown between these metropolises and other regions where the number of academics and researchers in a PRES numbered fewer than 500. Collaboration was vital if these smaller PRES were also to attain critical mass, he said.

Evaluation of doctorate schools

The quality assurance agency AERES published in 2011 a report on 69 doctoral schools. The report shows that the research activities in the doctoral schools are a strong point. Doctoral schools have improved on the organisation of their internal management, HRM and follow-up systems, but not all schools have succeeded in scoring well on all indicators in that respect.

³⁹ (source:<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20110121142738875>)

Time to degree, dropout rates and student staff ratios are indicators on which most schools are weak.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ see also <http://www.aeres-evaluation.fr/Actualites/Actualites-de-l-agence/Synthese-des-evaluations-2009-2010-des-ecoles-doctorales>

6 Germany

Introduction

In July 2006 the German Bundestag and the German Bundesrat have ratified a constitutional amendment that newly regulates the legislative competencies of the Bund and the Länder. This reform of federalism also affected higher education policy. Now the Länder governments have the sole responsibility for higher education. The former framework law for higher education of the Bund⁴¹ is not applicable anymore, access to higher education and higher education degree can only be regulated by the Bund. The constitutional reform gives the Länder full autonomy to design their higher education policies. In particular the funding of higher education should be borne by the Länder solely. Former cooperative tasks like the construction of buildings in higher education will be funded by the Länder. To balance out the additional financial costs the Länder are facing because of the abolishment of these cooperative tasks, several agreements between the Bund and the Länder have been made. E.g. the Bund still partly funds the construction of buildings in higher education.

The constitutional change also led to the establishment of the Joint Science Conference (gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz) that organizes the cooperation of Bund und Länder in higher education. The Joint Science Conference is the successor of the former Bund-Länder-Kommission and started to work early 2008. Members of the Joint Conference are the federal government and the governments of the Länder. Its main task is to coordinate “questions of common interest in the field of national, European and international science and research policy” (GWK 2011) among the members of the Joint Science Conference. Currently The Joint Science Conference coordinates three different pacts that organize the cooperation of the Bund and the Länder in higher education. These pacts are the:

- Higher Education Pact 2020 (Hochschulpakt 2020) that mainly aims at supporting higher education institutions to tackle the increasing number of students that are expected to enter university till 2020.⁴² In its first phase from 2007 to 2010 the Higher Education Pact should fund 91,370 additional new entrants to higher education. In total the Bund spent 565,7 Mio. Euros but the actual number of new entrants has exceeded the expected number of around 91,000 new entrants by nearly 100%. In 2009 the Higher Education Pact has been prolonged for a second programme phase. From 2011 to 2015 the Bund in cooperation with the Länder will fund another 275,000 additional new entrants to higher education (13,000 Euros per Student for a four year period are funded by the Bund - in total about 26,000 Euros for each additional new

⁴¹ Though the Framework Law is not applied anymore it is still not abolished. The Bundestag still has to decide on a law that will abolish the Framework Law.

student will be invested). Also, the funding for students that entered higher education already between 2007 and 2010 will be continued. In total the Bund will invest about 4.9 billion Euros in this second phase.

- Joint Initiative for Research and Innovation (Pakt für Forschung und Innovation). In 2009 Bund and Länder agreed on this pact. The main goal of this initiative is to give more financial security to the research institutions that are conjointly funded by the Federal Government and the Länder. From 2011 to 2015 the funding for the Helmholtz Association, the Max Planck Society, the Fraunhofer Society, the Leibniz Science Association and the German Research Foundation should be increased by five percent every year. Also some special needs of these organizations should be funded. The joint initiative not only aims at providing more financial security but also at the following research policy goals (BMBF 2009):

- Trigger dynamic developments in the science system,
- Create dynamic and performance-enhancing networks in the science system,
- Develop and implement new international cooperation strategies,
- Establish sustainable partnerships between science and industry, and
- Recruit the best scientists and persuade them to stay in Germany long term

The above mentioned research organizations who act as partners in the joint initiative have issued statements on their own measures and steps to support the realization of these goals.

- Joint Initiative for the Quality and Teaching and Learning (Qualitätspakt Lehre). This joint initiative is organized as a competitive funding programme where universities and other higher education institutions can apply for funds to improve their quality of teaching and learning. According to the recommendations of the German Council for Science and the Humanities (Wissenschaftsrat) on the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning, it aims at:

- Improving human resources in teaching, supervising and (student) counselling,
- Supporting higher education institutions to better qualify their staff for tasks in teaching, supervising and (student) counselling,
- Assuring and further developing the quality of teaching and learning at higher education institutions.

Within this framework the programme funds eligible proposals of higher education institutions that aim to improve staffing, the further qualification of staff, measures to further improve the conditions of teaching and learning and the development of new and innovative forms of teaching and learning.

Next to these new joint initiatives the Länder use their autonomy to profile their own higher education policy, in particular their right to set up own regulations for the remuneration of professors in order to compete for the best and brightest scientists. Also, several Länder have

⁴² In its first phase the higher education pact also aimed at strengthening the research capacities of universities. For research grants an additional allowance of 20% was awarded to fund the full costs of a research project.

implemented new bodies for the governance of universities, like the university council that mainly acts as an advisory board.

Teaching and Learning

In the last three to four years the topic of teaching and learning has gained more importance in German higher education policy. Besides the impact of the joint initiatives mentioned above also efforts of other actors have contributed to this development. The recommendation of the Wissenschaftsrat (2008) on the improvement of the quality in teaching and learning build an important impetus for the growing importance. The following recommendations have been issued (Wissenschaftsrat 2008: 7-14):

- Teaching at higher education institutions should allow self-organized learning and should convey disciplinary as well as soft skills to the students. Teaching should take the form of self-organized and active learning.
- The improvement of the quality of teaching and learning will need further financial means that should be spent in a quality sensitive manner, in particular additional staff to improve the faculty student ratio and specialized staff to work on the quality of teaching and learning should be funded.
- A further change of the personnel structure should be implemented. In particular professors focusing on teaching should be enabled to tackle the growing need for teaching in the coming years.
- Universities are requested to further improve their quality management systems, including incentives to make teaching and learning more important. Also, systematic personnel development and professionalization of teachers should be considered by the universities.
- Achievements in teaching and learning should be made accountable. The Wissenschaftsrat recommends universities to introduce instruments that allow them to monitor different aspects of teaching and learning, for example the time to degree, study success, and attrition. The use of these kind of indicators would allow them to better steer their educational activities.
- To assure the feasibility of a study program should be at the heart of all measures taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Especially the transition between the different study levels and a possibility for study to reorient during the first years of their study without too much loss should be reflected upon.

Based on these recommendation a number of initiatives and projects have been started. One of the main goals of these projects was to implement measures that improve the quality of teaching and learning - either as an outreach to gain more excellence in teaching and learning as well as improving its quality. Further, some initiatives aim to innovative teaching and learning by supporting the implementation of new forms of teaching and learning. Also, the exchange about new forms of teaching and learning and about best practices in this area is supported. Initiatives took form in various ways. The Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (Rector's Conference) for example now annually awards a price for excellence in teaching, the so-called "Ars Legendi Prize".

In addition to that the Rector's Conference also started in 2010 the project "Nexus". The goal of this project is to pick up new policies in teaching and learning from higher education institutions in Germany, systemize and further develop them. Also the implementation and the support of an exchange network on these new practices in teaching and learning will be done by the project. Also the Kultusministerkonferenz in cooperation with the Stifterverband der deutschen Wissenschaft started in 2009 a competition in which proposals on ideas to improve to enhance excellence in teaching and learning have been prized.⁴³

Besides these measures to improve the importance, quality and excellence in teaching and learning also the discussion about the intended and non-intended effects of the Bologna Process was leading to further policies in these areas. The evaluation of the first outcomes of the Bologna Process⁴⁴ showed that negative as well as positive conclusions could be drawn from it. The main point of critique was that the curricula of the bachelor programs have not been designed in a deliberate way. In some programmes the contents of the former four year programmes has been reorganized to a three years programmes. This led to a situation where students had too much workload. Also the employability of bachelor-degree holders has been criticized. In particular (prospective) students did not perceive the bachelor-degree as a degree that would already qualify for the labour market. Further, rules that were regulating the transition from Bachelor- to Masterprogrammes were claimed to be too intransparent. Also, rules to access Masterprogrammes for graduates from older degrees (like the Diplom) or from the university of applied science have been criticized. Based on this critique most universities and other higher education institutions have started to further improve their Bachelor and Master programmes.

Also positive effects of the Bologna Process have been noticed. In conjunction with their greater autonomy universities have used the Bologna Process to implement new structures in teaching and learning. Some universities have used the opportunity to innovate the organizational structure of teaching: These universities have introduced colleges or professional schools (for example the Leuphana University Lüneburg). Other universities have taken the chance to introduce didactical innovations or started to train their teachers.

Further, the growing diversity of the student population as well as the various needs of the labour markets have led the Wissenschaftsrat to the recommendation for a further differentiation of higher education institutions (Wissenschaftsrat 2010). This differentiation applies to the emergence of new forms of higher education institution as well as to the internal differentiation of higher education institutions. While the Wissenschaftsrat does not recommend to construct teaching only institutions, it advises universities to consider the development of teaching only centres within their existing structures. Also, the differentiation

⁴³ More information on the competition, the prize winners and their projects can be found at:

www.exzellente-lehre.de

⁴⁴ In 2010 about 82% of all study programmes were organized as Bachelor or Master programmes. This percentage differs between the disciplines, in particular only 58% of the study programmes from arts and music were offered as Bachelor or Master programmes. In total about 53% of all students were studying in Bachelor or Master programmes in 2010, about 77% of the first-years students were enrolled in a Bachelor or Master programme (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz 2010).

of study programmes should be decided carefully: The programmes offered should meet the requests of a diverse student population but should not be too overspecialized to guarantee that transitions between study programs can still be smooth.

Also for the doctoral level of study measures to improve the quality have been taken. The quality of doctoral study and research was under scrutiny as several cases of scientific malpractice like plagiarism and fraud have been discovered in the recent years. Again, the Wissenschaftsrat issued a position paper in which some requests for the reorganization of doctoral studies were stated. Among these statements a pledge for more control in the assessment procedure of doctoral theses was included (Wissenschaftsrat 2011).

Research

The Excellence Initiative is still running. In 2010 a third round was opened. In Summer 2012 the selected projects/universities will be announced. In the third round also universities who have been selected in the first two rounds can apply for a prolongation of their research projects. In 2009 the Federal Government and the Länder agreed on the prolongation of the Excellence Initiative. To fund the new and the continuing research projects the total budget for the initiative was increased by 30%. Till 2017 about 2.7 billion Euros will be spent on the Excellence Initiative.

The Federal Government and the Länder also agreed to cooperate in research. The federal "High-Tech-Strategy 2020" builds a framework for this cooperation. Its main goal is to "concentrate the public research & development (R&D) resources as well as to improve coordination between the various players with the overall goal of improving the competitiveness of Germany's knowledge-based economy." (Erawatch 2010: 2) The High-Tech-Strategy prioritize research in the areas like sustainable energy and climate; health and nutrition; mobility; safety; and communication technology (BMBF 2010). Besides these topics the High-Tech-Strategy also aims at linking national and European research policies and improving the general conditions for research. In particular the conditions for research-oriented SME should be improved (for example: more easy formation of companies, special funding like support of risk capital for SME).

The High-Tech-Strategy uses several instruments, for example the Spitzencluster-Wettbewerb (Leading Edge Cluster Competition) and the "Innovationsallianzen" (alliances of innovators) to mobilize and strengthen research capacities. In the Cluster Competition regional clusters of public and private research institutes and universities can apply for research funds. About three rounds of competition are planned. In each of these rounds five clusters will be selected and can receive funding of up to 200 Mio. Euros for a five year period. The Cluster Competition aims at improving the public-private collaboration, supporting clusters in selected fields of technology and also at strengthening research capacities in the new, i.e. the Eastern Länder (Erawatch 2010: 12-13). The Innovationsallianzen aim at mobilizing the private research funding. The programme will only fund strategic partnership or cooperation when there is a commitment of the executive board that they will invest in research. Then the Federal Government will fund about a sixth of the cost (one euro of the government for five euros from economy - see BMBF 2010a).

Funding

The federalism reform made the Länder fully responsible for higher education, including funding. In the recent years the Federal Government and the governments of the Länder have agreed on different joint initiatives to share the funding of higher education (see above).

In 2008, the Federal Government and the Länder agreed on the "Bildungsgipfel" that from 2015 onwards about 10 per cent of the gross national product should be invested in education and research. Included in this percentage are about three per cent for research and development. Despite this agreement it is still not agreed on the individual financial contributions of the Federal Government and the Länder.⁴⁵ Since 2007 public expenditures for higher education have increased. The estimate for the spending in 2010 is 22.8 billion Euros, from these 19.9 billion (88%) will be paid by the Länder and 2.8 billion (12%) by the Federal Government (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010: 48). In 2008 about 6.2 per cent of the gross national product were spent on education, 2.7 per cent on research and development and another 0.2 per cent were investment in the infrastructure for education and higher education. In total these were about 215.3 billion Euros (Datenportal BMBF).

Following the decision of the constitutional court in 2005 that stated that the Länder are allowed to introduce tuition fees, seven Länder, mostly Länder with a conservative government, introduced tuition fees in 2006 and 2007. Due to elections and changes in the government the number of Länder has shrunk to four. Currently only Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Hamburg charge tuition fees.⁴⁶ In Hamburg the fees will be abolished by the winter term 2012/2013. In 2008 the tuition fees made up a substantial share of the funding of public higher education institutions. In total, about 874.5 million Euros were gained from the fees. Länder which have been abolishing the tuition fees plan to compensate the universities by increasing public grants.

Within most of the Länder the universities have gained institutional and financial autonomy. This also led to a change of funding universities. The Länder have withdrawn from a detailed financial steering of higher education institutions to a system in which higher education institutions receive block grants. To determine the block grants currently a growing number of the Länder uses performance-based and formula-based procedures to allocate public funds to the universities. Also, target agreements are used. Among the Länder one can find different mixtures of these procedures.

⁴⁵ Higher education is still viewed as being underfinanced. The reform of the federal system has given the Länder the full responsibility; but it was not accompanied by a reform of the taxation system. Taxation is still mainly in the authority of the Federal Government. Hence, Länder mostly do not have enough income to fully fund their educational tasks. The Federal Government and the Länder continuously are debating the actual share each of them has to invest in higher education and research (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, 2010).

⁴⁶ These numbers refer to tuition fees that have to be paid for the first study. Tuition fees can also be charged for a second study and from students whose study length exceeds the regular time to degree. Here also very different regulations have been set up by the Länder.

Governance

The reform of federalism led to the establishment of the Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz; an institution that organizes the cooperation of the Federal Government and the Länder in the area of higher education and research (see above).

A second consequence of the reform of federalism was that the Länder started to design the autonomy of the universities in different ways. Most of the Länder changed within their framework laws the internal governance structure of universities: most of them introduced a supervisory body, mostly called the Hochschulrat (Supervisory Board)⁴⁷. These boards can be defined as bodies that act as brokers between the Länder governments and the universities; their main function is to relieve the Länder as well as the universities from certain control tasks. These boards do not only control universities, they also have co-determination and approbation rights in areas like the strategic development of the university, target agreements and economic affairs. They also function as an advisory board for the president and the steering committee (Präsidium) of the university. The boards can be composed in different ways: Universities can choose whether it should only consist out of external persons or if it should be a mix of internal and external persons.

Internationalization

In 2008 the Federal Government has passed the Internationalization strategy in Higher Education and Research (see Alesi/Kehm 2010, p. 55). This strategy has four main goals (BMBF 2008, p. 5-6):

- Strengthening cooperation with the most talented researchers worldwide. German research should seek cooperation with researchers abroad but also researchers from abroad should be attracted to come and work in Germany.
- Realizing international innovation potentials: German companies should seeking cooperation with leading R&D companies worldwide.
- Strengthening the cooperation with developing countries in the areas of education, research and development.
- Becoming a responsible partner on the international level that is able to master global challenges: Germany should use its innovative research capacities to solve global problems like climate change or migration.

To realize these goals different measures have been defined. The mobility of researchers shall be improved, international mobility shall become a part of the training of young scientist. Also measures to attract foreign students and researchers to come to Germany have been established. The improvement of employment conditions in higher education and research shall support the return of excellent German researchers who have been internationally mobile. Germany's participation in international research cooperation and in international funding schemes shall be improved, also the High Tech-Strategy (see above) should consider internationalization aspects like cooperation with international clusters of excellence.

⁴⁷ For a detailed description of the Hochschulrat in Northrhine-Westfalia see (Ministerium NRW).

In the recent years several concrete initiatives to further internationalize higher education and research have been taken. Among the funding schemes of the BMBF one can now find programmes that fund the cooperation with a selected country. Every year a new country is selected, in 2010/2011 for example the cooperation with Brazil in the German-Brazilian Year (Deutsch-Brasilianisches Jahr) was funded. Further actions were to facilitate the recognition of foreign degrees and the marketing of German Higher Education and research on an international level (for example Hi! Potentials). Also, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) has established a grant schemes for German researchers working abroad and willing to return to Germany. The Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation invests in using its global alumni-network to market Germany as an excellent destination for research.

Quality assurance

In Germany study programmes have to be accredited. Several accreditation agencies fulfil this function. To standardize the rules for accreditation and to facilitate the institutional mobility of students the Kultusministerkonferenz (Standing Conference of Ministers in Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany) has agreed on common guidelines for the accreditation of Bachelor and Master programmes in 2010.

The framework laws on higher education of the Länder made universities responsible to establish and organize their own quality assurance systems. These quality assurance systems can also be subject to an accreditation as universities can apply for it. The quality assurance system must prove that it will guarantee that the qualification goals and standards of the study program will be realized. The system accreditation procedures applies different criteria, among them the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

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7 Italy

Introduction

The Italian Higher Education System

- Two types of HEIs: universities and non-universities, which include higher level arts and music education (known as “AFAM”).
- Three cycles (Bachelor, Master and PhD). Bachelors last three years, Masters two, and PhD are variable. Courses in medicine and surgery, veterinary science, and dentistry are still organised in one single cycle lasting 5-6 years.
- Access for who has upper secondary school leaving certificate.
- Numerus Clausus in certain disciplines such as medicine
- HEIs define selection procedures
- Universities issue degrees in all three cycles; AFAM issue degrees in the first and second cycle

In Italy the major higher education development is represented by law 2010/240, known as the “Riforma Gelmini” (after the name of the then Minister for University Education and Scientific Research, or MIUR, hereafter: “the 2011 Reform”), which came into effect on 29 January 2011⁴⁸. The law is the result of a set of reform plans dating back to the 1980s (see also quote below). The 2011 Reform is the most important – and controversial – reform of Italian higher education in a decade. Earlier reforms concerned primarily adapting the Italian system to the “Bologna requirements”. A second important development was the establishment in 2006 of the National Agency for the Evaluation for the University and Research System (Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca, or ANVUR).

That Italian higher education needed reforming has for a long time been acknowledged, but achieving reform in Italy is a monumental task because of structural problems such as underfunding, resistance to change and endemic conflicts of interest related *inter alia* to oligarchies within academia, nepotism and so-called “baronato” – a system by which, to use *The Economist’s* words, tenured professors “often treat their faculties as personal fiefs”. In a 2008 editorial, *The Economist* pointed out that⁴⁹: “The need for change is now pressing. Five universities are, in effect, bankrupt. The system as a whole is manifestly failing the economy. Only 17% of Italians between 25 and 34 have a tertiary qualification, compared with an OECD average of 33%. The main reason is a shocking dropout rate of 55%, the highest in the rich world.”

The Bologna declaration appeared to be an opportunity to change the system for the better. As pointed out in Faber and Westerheijden (p.20): The Italian constitution protects academic

⁴⁸ <http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:2010;240>

⁴⁹ “Higher education in Italy. A case for change”. *The Economist*, 23 November 2008.
<http://www.economist.com/node/12607260>

autonomy and, in the 1980s, Clark had depicted Italy as the epitome of a higher education system dominated by the academic oligarchy, all but impervious to change (Clark, 1983, also: Boffo et al., 2004). Since the 1960s, there had been several reforms (Ballarino & Perotti, 2010), which, since the late 1980s, aimed to make the system more adaptable to society's changing needs (Westerheijden et al., 2010). In 1997, minister Berlinguer assumed office with plans for major reforms for the sector (Vaira, 2003). A report drafted by an ad hoc working group of academics was published in April 1998 after sector-wide, but continuing, discussions. The Italian reform plans concerned a whole package to revitalise the system, including governance (greater institutional autonomy and tighter connections to the region rather than to the ministry), competition through differentiation of degrees, competition for academic staff, quality assurance of education, and reform of the degree structure⁵⁰.

The "Riforma Gelmini" and the Changes in Different Areas

Teaching and learning

The Reform sets clear requirements for professors and researchers in terms of their commitments to Teaching and Learning (including student mentoring). Full time academic staff is employed for 1,500 hours per year and part-time staff 750. Of these hours, full time/part-time professors must conduct respectively 350/250 hours of teaching (including tutoring and student assessment). For researchers the requirements are respectively 350 hours and 200.

Research

In general, there is a sense that quality of Italian research is substandard. According to the same *The Economist's* editorial mentioned above: "Some valuable research and inspirational teaching are done in Italian universities. But the more common pattern is of a uniform mediocrity."

A key element in the reform was the establishment (art. 21) of the "National Committee of Research Guarantors" (Comitato nazionale dei garanti per la ricerca, or CNGR). The CNGR is a consultative body within the Ministry which has the task of promoting research quality and ensuring effective peer-review evaluations for selecting projects eligible for public endowments. Such a mechanism is said to improve what was accused of being a largely inefficient (and often corrupt) research funding.

The CNGR:

- Is made up of seven researchers, who can be Italian or foreign but must be of recognized reputation and representing a variety of disciplinary areas
- Of the seven members, two are women and two men; they are chosen by the Ministry from a list of 10-15 candidates selected by a selection committee
- The selection committee is composed of five members designated by the Ministry, the ANVUR, the Italian expert committee on research policies, and two international bodies, i.e. the European Research Council and the European Science Foundation

⁵⁰ Faber, M. & D.F. Westerheijden (2010). *European Degree Structure and National Reform: Constitutive Dynamics of the Bologna Process*. In J. Enders, H.F. de Boer and D.F. Westerheijden (Eds.). *Reform of Higher Education in Europe*. Rotterdam/Boston/Taipei: Sense Publisher

- The costs to maintain the CNGR are covered through the budget that will also support the research projects, and cannot be over 3% of these funds
- Membership of the CNGR is for three years, it can be renewed only after a 5-year period of absence and members cannot be over 70 years of age

Funding

In Italy, the right to education, including higher education, is enshrined in the Constitution (art. 34). According to the Constitution, the State is obliged to empower “the capable and worthy” to reach the highest levels of education regardless of their financial situation. This task has traditionally been delegated to regional “agencies for the right to education”, which disburse grants, meal vouchers, students housing etc. The key piece of legislation was law 390 of 1991, subsequently modified in 2001. In 1997 a national “supplementary fund” was set. The fund was allocated to the regions, which remained responsible for its disbursement to students.

The 2011 Reform introduced a so-called “merit fund” to promote student excellence and meritocracy. Eligibility depends on standard national tests for first year students and standard national criteria for students second year and above. The fund provides:

- Student grants (also for study abroad)
- Student loans that will have to be repaid only in part, according to academic results and graduate income (students who graduate with the highest grade *and* on time are exempt from repayment)

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The funds are meant to add on to existing regional support. However, it has been pointed out (particularly by student associations) that the Reform centralizes the system and reduces regional funds, while in fact promoting student indebtedness⁵¹.

Student assessments of teachers will be one of the criteria for deciding the levels of public funding of universities.

Governance and Reforms in Recruitment Policy

The 2008/133 law⁵² enabled public universities to become foundations under private law (by absolute majority vote within the academic senate). As foundations, they remain non-commercial entities.

The 2011 Reform defines more clearly the roles of the Academic Senate vis-à-vis the Council. The Senate gives scientific proposals only, but the Council becomes accountable for all costing matters (also for separate branches). Moreover, the Council includes 40% of external, non-elected, members.

The 2011 Reform (art. 3) also promotes mergers between two or more universities, or between certain sectors within universities and between universities and research institutes. The stated goals are to improve teaching and learning, research, as well as to rationalize the distribution of

⁵¹ <http://www.retedellaconoscenza.it/formazione/universita/106-appello-per-lalternativa.html>

university locations in the country (in effect, this means to reduce the number of small institutions). At the same time, each university will be allowed a maximum of 12 faculties.

The 2011 Reform also includes some significant changes in recruitment policies, such as the so-called tenure-track system. Unlike before, researchers can only remain in temporary employment for six years (max two contracts of three years each). Upon termination of the six-year period the researcher will receive permanency or terminate his/her relationship with the university. Salary increases for professors will be related to the assessment of their research.

Quality

The 2006 establishment of the ANVUR⁵³ marked a key change in the evaluation of University activity in Italy. The ANVUR is an autonomous “juridical person”. It took over from the National Committee for the Evaluation of the University System (Comitato per la Valutazione del Sistema Universitario, or CNVSU) and Committee for the Evaluation of Research (Comitato di Indirizzo per la Valutazione della Ricerca, or CIVR), which are part of the Ministry.

The 2011 Reform gives more authority to the ANVUR in setting out “objective criteria to verify research results” (art. 6). Moreover, the Reform (art. 5b) also provides for the receivership of universities that go bankrupt or are financially mismanaged.

The 2011 Reform (art. 13) also amends earlier legislation (2008/180, art. 2) by giving more weight to personnel costs vis-à-vis the university’s total expenditures and the number of research projects (nationally and internationally) in the funding formula. The law 2008/180 prescribed (in general terms) that 7% or more of State funding was allocated to universities according to (a) educational offer, (b) research quality and (c) efficiency and effectiveness.

Internationalization

The 2011 Reform purports to boost internationalization by supporting student and academic staff international mobility, joint degrees, inter-university cooperation, and increasing courses in foreign languages. Moreover, universities may use both public and private funds to recruit foreign researchers of “clear renown”. Remunerations are set by the University Council according to the “European average”. The Rector has final say in recruitments, after considering the Academic Senate’s advice, and the new recruit’s résumé must be placed on the University’s website.

General policy debates (policy intentions and policy action/outcomes)

In general, as mentioned at the beginning of this document, a key problem of Italian academia has always been endemic corruption, “baronato”, as well as gerontocracy. The 2011 Reform purports to address these problems by supporting young academics and limiting corruption by forcing each athenaeum to have to have an “ethical code” to avoid conflicts of interest, change the research stipends system, which before was based on years of service, etc.

⁵² <http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/081331.htm>

⁵³ <http://www.anvur.it/>

While reform in the Italian higher education system is badly needed, the main criticism to the 2011 Reform is its centralized nature, epitomized perhaps by the new student grant system, which in effect reduces regional autonomy and, according to student organizations, risks reducing access because of higher costs.

8 Japan

Introduction

Japan's vast system of Higher Education includes 1224 government-approved degree-awarding universities and colleges in 2011. 780 of these are designated as 'daigaku', a term referring to those institutions that have received a government license to award four-year degrees equivalent to a baccalaureate. These four-year universities along with junior colleges, technical colleges, and special training institutes enrol close to three million (in 2011: 2,779,921) undergraduate students. The latter include 72,665 undergraduate students (the total number of foreign students is about 140,700 in 2010), the vast majority of whom are from China.

Universities can be divided in three major categories: (i) national universities originally established by the Japanese government, (ii) public universities established by local public entities or public university corporations, (iii) private universities established by educational corporations, most of them on a non-profit basis, and a few operating by for-profit companies in 'special districts for deregulation'.

The private sector is the largest, accounting for about 80% of all universities and about 80% of all university students. Each private university promotes its own unique education and research activities based on the spiritual legacy of its foundation. They play important roles in the development of Japanese higher education.

The university system is highly stratified in terms of the substantial distance not only between the top of the institutions, but also the differences below the top quartile. The differences are substantial with regard to the quality of research and teaching, quality of incoming students due to the tough selection processes, and the employment success of graduates.

One of the most striking features in Japan is the significantly aging population. It is estimated that by 2050 the total population will have decreased by 25%. The aging has led to challenges for HE institutions as the overall system is facing a decline of the student population. Some are struggling for survival. Particularly the Junior Colleges shrunk substantially. They seek institutional upward mobility; some were able to transform themselves into universities.

In order to face a further decline, Japan has stated high ambitions to attract more international students. The dramatic catastrophe earlier this year has tempered this ambition, but it is generally felt that measures have to be taken to attract foreign students and researchers. Apart from this there is a strong movement to create a top level of research universities that is globally competitive.

Teaching & Learning

In Japan HE institutions are relatively free to shape their curricula and conditions to establish new HE institutions have been further relaxed since 2005. Until recently the majority of students graduated with a bachelor degree and were employed by enterprises for in-company training. Less than 5% continued with postgraduate education. This is changing as employers show more

interest to recruit master students, mainly in Science and Engineering subjects. Together with the ambition to keep up with international developments this has resulted in an expansion of courses at the graduate level. In this context the policy towards “prioritization of the Graduate School” involves a shift of emphasis from the level of undergraduate to graduate education and the formation of graduate schools. There is also a growth of professional training programmes at the master level and establishment of vocational graduate schools.

Much attention focuses on improving the teaching practice and curriculum design, the utilization of ICT in education, development of credit systems, and student assessments. Much effort has been put in changing the teacher-centred education in Japanese universities towards a more student-centred learning. Especially new professional programmes are expected to implement active learning by encouraging dialogue among students and the development of practical competencies and expertise.

The government has proposed to set up specific curriculum guidelines for HE. It emphasises that institutions should prepare students to act successfully in an international environment and should extend their provisions for lifelong learning, mainly in the context of the evolving aging society. The quality of teaching gets also more attention. Government supports a system for excellent educational practices to raise the prestige of the teaching activities. The highly reputed universities in the area of curricula, teaching, and learning are not by definition the top research universities.

Another issue concerns the development of double and joint degree programs between a university in Japan and in a foreign country. These are expected to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of programmes. A working group in the University Council for Education has set up guidelines to be used by universities for building organized and continuous cooperation in implementing these programs. It has been stressed that these programs should not be in conflict with laws/ regulations such as the Standards for Establishing University, as any deviation might degrade confidence in Japanese universities and the validity of their degrees. Apart from aspects of curriculum organization, certification and assessments, it is recommended to clarify the competency that should be achieved for completion through communication with the partner universities. Transparent, objective and strict grading policies should be conducted including grade point average and peer review of grading to make the curricula more substantial and visible.

Research

The growing interest in improving graduate education will press universities to modernize and expand their research efforts. In the past Japanese industry benefited from fundamental knowledge carried out in other countries, a strategy that was very successful in the past. However, as Japan has to compete in fields in which the state-of-the-art is evolving rapidly, and the fact that organisations that do basic research and development have a competitive edge, this strategy is changing. More attention is now being given to advancing the state of knowledge through an increase in basic research.

The last few years the national government is directing more money into competitive grants for research. A prominent goal has been to spend annually an amount of public funds at least equal to 1% of GDP on scientific research and development. This has benefited universities with

research laboratories and research centres, especially those within the national university system with colleges of science, engineering and medicine.

Part of this development is the establishment of world-class universities under the name 21st Century Centres of Excellence (COE21), later named the Global Centres (GCOE). In order to concentrate the financial allocation of research, the number of selected universities has been reduced to about half, and the funds per unit raised significantly. In addition to this, another programme entitled World Premier International Research Center Initiatives (WPI) started in 2007 to support cutting-edge research institutes for a period of 10-15 years. The aim is to attract globally distinguished researchers. The use of English has been stressed for both research and administration.

The institutionalisation of the world-class university policy has progressed at the national level and at the university level. At the national policy level, the government encourages universities to voluntarily choose different functions, and the government developed various project funds for promoting top-level research awarded to a limited number of comprehensive research universities. Universities in their turn are challenged to set up a “grand design” of the future of research universities, to strengthen their collaboration with other universities.

Funding

Traditionally, the HE system has a very differentiated financial structure. It has a dual system of cash-based budget and accrual funding. The national universities receive two types of grants from the government, one for operating costs (as block grants), and one to finance capital expenditure.

The funding of universities is mainly divided into three categories: funding for basic expenses, competitive funds for individual research activities and financial assistance to students. The latter consists of interest-free and interest-bearing loans. The proportion differs according to the level of education with higher loans/scholarship at the postgraduate level and whether students are living at parental home or on their own. Students at private institutions are eligible for the same financial regulations.

Efforts to increase the funding part based on competition among all universities (national, public and private) have been intensified. It is expected that this would allow universities to specialize their functions and promote their individual strengths. As a result of the annual 1% cut implemented in 2004 (see section on governance) operational grants have decreased in favour of incentive-based funds on a competitive basis from the Special Education and Research Fund.

The changing funding mechanisms have a differentiating effect on the university system. Some universities and schools, mainly in the Tokyo area, are able to counteract the financial pressures by successfully competing for research funds. Other, less successful universities try to survive by focusing more on teaching and diversify their funding sources. Reduced annual block grants most likely lead to a rise in fees closer to the level of private ones in order to survive. However, increases in fees may not be adequate for smaller institutions and programs, fearing that they would lose students in a declining student market. What remains is that many locations will face the loss of departments, courses of study through mergers and disestablishments.

The national and local governments (prefectural or metropolitan) directly fund and indirectly subsidise higher education in multiple ways.

The promotion of private universities has been an important policy issue for the government. Although legally the government could subsidise up to 50% of the current expenditure of private universities, this level has never been reached. At present, private universities receive subsidies of about 12% of their expenditure. The following financial measures have been implemented to reduce financial burdens on students and improve the conditions for universities for the quality of delivery (teaching and research):

- Subsidies for operating costs (personnel expenses for the teaching and administrative staff,) and facilities maintenance costs.
- Loans provided by the Promotion and Mutual Aid Corporation for Private Schools of Japan
- Preferential tax treatment
- Support for the managerial improvement of education corporations.

Through this financial injection, private universities are enabled to strengthen their management base and to provide information concerning their research and teaching activities and their financial conditions. The public subsidy for the operating costs of private universities has increased over the years, from 2,655.5 in 1993 to 3,217.8 in 2009 (x 100 mil Yen).

Governance

The most important change of the last years has been the ‘privatization’ of about 200 national and public universities. Under the Koizumi regime these universities have been reorganized in 2004 as individual national university corporations (NUCs), aiming to improve each university’s independence and autonomy. This would enhance education and research and put them on equal terms in their competition with the private universities as well as with universities abroad.

This ‘corporatization’ has important outcomes. NUCs were turned into independent institutions with their staff no longer being civil servants from which they derived a guaranteed life-long employment, but engaged in a contractual relationship with the university as the legal employer. At the same time the position of the university President has been strengthened considerably, although still appointed by MEXT. This reform would grant the NUCs greater autonomy vis-à-vis the MEXT such as:

- Increased freedom to manage resource allocation, human resources and internal administrative structures by a corporate management team under the leadership of an appointed president,
- More flexibility over setting budgets with no ‘line-itemed’ prescription from MEXT,
- Incentives to increase external revenues in both teaching and research.

The corporate status allows universities to develop a distinctive profile and strategy to attract resources and students nationally and to increase their international competitiveness.

Changes in funding schemes may increase the degrees of freedom of institutions in their operative powers. This becomes manifest in the replacement of the annual allocation of public funds in block grants by a formulaic reduction in annual block grants of 1% per year. These formally national institutions have enrolment quotas set by the national government which determines the size of block grants disbursed annually in support of taught programmes. In order to compensate for the reductions, NUCs are now allowed to raise their tuition fees by a maximum of 10%. Those NUC's that are unable to gain competitive grants or fail to build large endowments are allowed to charge rates that are similar to those charged by private universities (the latter average annual tuition fees are about 35% higher than those at national or public institutions). This development may especially disadvantage lower-ranked and smaller universities, especially those in more remote regions, as they are forced to raise tuition fees to levels like those in private universities in order to survive.

Despite this increased autonomy, MEXT maintains its control over certain aspects of operations of NUCs on the grounds that they are run with public funds and play important public roles. This regards for example the determination of enrolment caps, the level of fees and decisions regarding departmental reorganisations.

Part of the reforms is the requirement for each NUC to deliver a six-year strategic plan which in turn responds to MEXT's own mid-term goals. The universities have been informed that future funding may be based on performance over six years covered by their plans but the precise relationship between performance, evaluation and funding remains unsolved. One major level of control is that each university must submit an annual report charting its progress in achieving the goals of its medium-term (six year) plan.

As the OECD review (2009) states, the HE institutions find it difficult to plan meaningfully over the longer term: not only do universities lack the appropriate experience and skills mix to engage in strategic planning, also MEXT has traditionally been geared to collecting and monitoring detailed information on the performance of the sector rather than to policy analysis and evaluation procedures.

The University Council of Japan (2011) has launched proposals to strengthen the governance of universities in the entire establishment formats of national, public and private universities. Special considerations concern the organizational and management bases of universities. Components are the creation of a structure for information provision, the improvement in professional quality levels of university administrative staff, partnerships between universities as well as between regional industry and the public sector.

Increasingly, NUC's have to diversify their financial resources, deriving funding from a mix of limited government grants, higher fees, donations, joint ventures and revenue-earning business activities. Meanwhile, as the NUC's do not longer have a guaranteed share of government funding, top private universities are enabled to increase their efforts to compete for the national funds that are being offered to create an elite 30 world class universities.

Quality

The change of the status of universities into independent corporate bodies has been accompanied by a new evaluation scheme to be carried out by both a governmental committee and a national agency called the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University

Evaluation (NIAD-UE). NIAD-UE assesses the teaching and research performance of all national universities every six years and submit results to the National University Corporation Evaluation Committee, a subcommittee within MEXT that evaluates mainly the managerial aspects of universities. Local public universities operated by Local University Corporations go through a similar assessment process and report the assessment results to municipal governments.

Generally the assessment scheme of teaching and learning assesses the input, process, output (achievements) and outcomes (indirect effects). Since each university has different objectives or missions, curriculum and learning support should be consistent with these objectives and outcomes should be monitored as the basis for constructive feedback for quality improvement.

Adding to the above mentioned scheme for national and local public universities, all national, local, and private universities and colleges are required to submit a comprehensive evaluation within every seven years in the light of each institution's respective purpose and goals. This is called 'Certified Evaluation' or accreditation, and includes their research and teaching activities, organizational management, available facilities and equipment. Quality assurance and accreditation associations (private organisations like the JIHEE for evaluation and JUAA for accreditation) have to be certified by the Ministry (MEXT). All universities are regularly checked in accordance with the self-provided standards. Universities are obliged to implement the outcomes of these processes thereby addressing the following issues:

- Publish their self-evaluation reports on education and research
- Clarify the content of teaching, plans and the standards for performance
- Provide training for teaching staff (faculty development) and research opportunities required to improve teaching.

Quality assessment and assurance not only takes place at the level of individual institutions, but also at the school or faculty level. Firstly, NIAD-UE implements assessment of both education and research as part of the National University Corporation Evaluation Scheme. Quality assessment consists of (i) 'threshold type' of assessment, aiming to assure minimum standards and (ii) 'performance' assessment, used for rating or ranking purposes. Secondly, professional graduate schools such as law schools or business schools have to go through school level certified evaluation every five years. Certified evaluation (CES) consists of institutional accreditation and school level accreditation. Currently, programmatic certified evaluation is required only for professional post-graduate schools that have recently been established and are separate from academically-oriented postgraduate schools.

In addition to this, the *Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education* (JABEE) has been established as a voluntary accreditation body to conduct quality assurance and accredit science and engineering faculties. JABEE participates in the Washington Accord of engineering education. Therefore, the engineering education programmes accredited by JABEE are recognized internationally in the world of engineers. The objectives of JABEE are (1) to improve engineering education, (2) to guarantee the international reference of engineering education, and (3) to realize the mutual accreditation of engineering-related licenses with foreign organisations. JABEE examines self-evaluation reports of four-year science and technology

programmes as well as the two-year programmes provided by the higher technical colleges and junior colleges. The examining team, consisting of representatives from the business world, checks the educational purposes, educational results as well as their analysis, the admission policy, teaching methods, educational environments including facilities and methods to improve education. Recently, JABEE also accredits master courses in science and technology.

In the context of promoting academically-oriented postgraduate programmes, the focus of quality assurance is to clarify educational purposes, to enrich course work that can meet international standards, to carry out performance evaluations, and to ensure appropriate research instructions.

Two issues have been raised on the current system of quality assurance which to date have not been solved satisfactorily. One is that governmental intervention by transforming voluntary-based accreditation activities to legally-mandatory certified evaluation has not yielded the expected effects. According to some accreditation agencies and RIIHE⁵⁴, governmental involvement has not only been too intense in the process of encouraging self-review, peer-review and self-improvement, but also in hampering the autonomous improvement of HE institutions. It has been of little practical help for HE institutions in improving teaching and research. There is a widespread suspicion that evaluation outcomes will have an effect on budgetary allocations.

The other issue is that although it is technically possible to compare the performance of each institution at the faculty level, ratings are based on different levels of prospective universities' goal achievement. This means that it is impossible to compare ratings between universities. The Government acknowledges that each university will be given an opportunity to set up their own strategies (e.g. invest more in stronger areas or reinforce weaker ones) in the second-round of medium-term goals and purposes starting from 2011 on.

There is a general belief among experts that quality gaps have increased between the top research universities, the average teaching universities and those classified at the lower end of the hierarchy. The evaluation system allows for a broad variety of quality levels with sufficient consideration for the attributes and features of each individual university (University Council of Japan, 2011).

Internationalisation

The internationalization of higher education is very high on the policy agenda aiming to adjust the domestic academic community to English-based, international academic dialogue. The competitiveness of HE institutions in international student markets is crucial, both for attracting postgraduate students to sustain research capacities, and for compensating the shrinking market of domestic students, mainly at the undergraduate level. Policies to further this internationalization are:

- An ambitious plan to attract a large number of international students by 2020 to Japan, the "*300,000 International Students Plan*". For this purpose high-quality education should be

⁵⁴ Research Institute for Independent Higher Education, attached to the Association of Private Universities of Japan.

available for international students. Aspects are to actively provide information about studying in Japan, to improve the entrances (including entrance examination and admission), to facilitate conditions, to promote the social acceptance of students after graduation, and to create scholarships and financial assistance for international students.

- The project “Global 30” originally designating 30 universities across Japan as core centers for internationalisation. Partly because of budgetary constraints, only 13 universities have been selected up to now. They receive intense support to create an environment where international students can feel at ease to study in Japan. The development of courses and course material in English should also attract foreign teachers.
- Improvement of the quality of education to meet international standards and the need for international viability of qualifications. The establishment of the Accreditation Board of Engineering Education (JABEE, see above) is an example as this became an official member of the international alliance of accreditation bodies of engineering education.
- The development of human resources capacities in Asia and support of the AUN-SEED network, aiming to establish doctorate programmes in the field of engineering at flagship universities in ASEAN countries through exchanges with Japanese universities. A further tuning of quality assurance processes is increasingly pursued in the East Asian region.
- To further the ‘Global Centre of Excellence’ program for particularly the research oriented universities to augment their status worldwide and to advance research capacities to internationally competitive levels, particularly in the Asian region.

Generally internationalization relies almost completely on government initiatives and financial incentives. Also private universities are expecting more government subsidies allocated according to the number of international students, rather than on tuition fees from these students. Various types of public support systems are currently available for international students.

General policy debates /challenges

Higher education in Japan is in an on-going change process both as a result of governmental policies and other factors such as the competitive pressures arising from shrinking youth cohorts, the demand of research-based innovations and international competitiveness. These factors challenge the prevailing steep hierarchically stratified system.

Government policies aim to strengthen the top universities by creating incentives for which only universities with strong research records are qualified. By decreasing the overall higher education budget and increasing competitive research budgets the differences between universities are becoming more segmented. Investing in a limited number of national flagship research universities would sacrifice financial support for a larger number of mass higher education learners. This would damage teaching and research at lower ranked and smaller universities, especially in remote regions. Several (mainly private) institutions already fail to

meet their enrolment goals and have been forced to relax admissions standards in order to maintain enrolment levels sufficient to ensure their economic vitality.

On the other hand, the deregulatory policies to promote marketization of the HE system would enable institutions to strengthen their management capacities to develop their own profile. For example, offering programmes with a professional or practical emphasis, cooperation with regional agencies or employers, focusing on the cultural or personal development of students, specializing in particular domains, engage in partnerships with overseas universities.

The reforms in the last decade have also resulted in a blurring of old categories for classifying institutions. For example, publicly listed stock companies have formed a consortium to run a real for-profit university. Many former private (non-profit) junior colleges have been upgraded to four-year universities in an attempt to maintain their enrolment rates, especially for young women who nowadays prefer university rather than the traditional two-year college (which nowadays are mainly considered as irrelevant 'finishing schools').

Although each university has made efforts to clarify its own mission based on its educational principles, there is a need to re-examine not only measures taken by each individual university, but also what the entire HE system should be. This need has been felt given the development of participation rates, the diversified students' needs, and the cross-border education activities. An inquiry is under way to advice for the mid-to long-term perspective on the future of HE in order to arrive at a functional differentiation of universities. This differentiation does not mean that universities are categorized into different types, but rather that the individual nature and attributes of universities should be as diverse as they currently are. This mainly involves the creation of more transparency ('visualization') of the state of the higher education landscape including the changing status of vocational and professional higher education (senshu gakko/senmongakko) as distinctive types of higher education. In this context it is felt that criteria for the establishment of new institutions need further clarification.

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9 the Netherlands

General

The Dutch higher education system is in a dynamic situation. Because of the expectation that the number of students will increase substantially until 2020, the previous Minister of Education, Science and Culture (MinOCW) appointed a committee (Committee Veerman) to develop a long term strategic vision for a sustainable development of the Dutch higher education sector (Veerman *et al.*, 2010). The main recommendations of the committee were focused at creating a higher quality higher education system that will better meet the demands of a diversifying student population and labour market:

- To allow selection in justified cases
- To stimulate and develop profiling of higher education institutions and study programmes
- To limit the proportion of student- and graduate-based funding
- To invest in research
- To firmer settle Associate Degree, Professional Master's programmes and broad-based Bachelor's programmes
- To invest in staff qualifications

This agenda has been taken up in 2010-2011 by all relevant stakeholders and led to a structural platform of discussion between the MinOCW, the universities association (VSNU), the UAS association (HBO-raad) and the student unions. A first step was the establishment of a Working Group on Profiling and Funding in which the stakeholders mentioned above argued that profiling leads to higher levels of specialization and strategic choice for strong activities. This type of diversification is believed to boost basic quality in general.

Inspired by the Veerman report, in August 2011 the Minister published his new Strategic Agenda: "Quality in Diversity" (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2011). In a nutshell, the key message and action lines of this strategic agenda are:

- Support the development of a stronger study culture focused on high quality education and higher study success rates
- A stronger profiled and diversified higher education landscape
- A stronger profiled and impact-oriented research environment

Governance

Though no major changes in legislation have occurred, the new strategic agenda introduces a new governance mechanism by means of performance agreements between individual higher education institutions and the ministry. The new performance agreements, to be concluded in the summer of 2012, will (have to) address concrete objectives with regard to the following topics:

- Dropout, particularly in the first year
- Study duration and success rates
- Quality evaluations from accreditation
- Teaching intensity (contact hours and staff/student ratio's)
- Teacher qualifications
- Reduction of overhead to strengthen the primary processes

These performance agreements will also be related to funding. About 7% of the education-related funding will be based on “quality and profile” and will be further increased with already intended reinvestment funds. In total around €310 million will be allocated on the basis of performance agreements in 2015. After an evaluation in 2015 it is envisaged to increase this share to 20% of teaching related funding. In addition it has been decided to allocate €90 million of the current research funds to support the research profiling process.

In December 2011, the minister and the institutions’ representative organisations (VSNU and HBO-council) entered into ‘gentleman’s agreements, which by and large underlined several issues from the minister’s strategic agenda.

The profiling process is further intended to involve “sectoral plans” in which relevant stakeholders like universities, UAS, research institutes, business and other societal organisations together decide on the distribution of tasks per discipline for higher education and research (Werkgroep Profileren en Bekostiging, 2011).

In 2011 debates have started to privatize the Dutch Open University, because it serves different target groups than originally envisaged. Instead of offering a “second chance” for getting a higher education qualification it particularly serves persons who already hold a degree and want to upgrade their skills in the same or in other areas.

Quality assurance and accreditation

The quality of teaching programmes as well as the trustworthiness of the quality assurance and accreditation systems in the whole higher education sector are under discussion. This discussion has been fuelled by public scandals about whether or not degrees have been awarded improperly. It is suggested that the Education Inspectorate should start checking the quality of programmes at both universities and universities of applied sciences. This has led to substantial resistance, particularly in the university sector.

Since 2010, the Dutch quality assurance and accreditation system moves into a next stage by the implementation of institutional accreditation in the area of teaching. According to the new system, institutions have to prove that they are “in control” of their teaching quality (NVAO, 2011). Institutions are supposed to demonstrate a clear vision on their teaching and teaching quality. They have to prove to have their quality-related policy instruments in place to guarantee this vision, that they measure if their policies work, that they have sufficient improvement-mechanisms and that they properly distributed the organizational responsibilities to this end (NVAO, 2011). In 2010, a pilot started with a limited number of institutions to get

institutional accreditation. In autumn 2011 the first institutions received their official institutional accreditation as regards teaching quality. When institutions are in the process of institutional accreditation, the accreditation process for individual teaching programmes will follow a limited procedure with less and lightened criteria ('light touch approach').

Because Dutch accreditation only provides a yes or no answer to the question if a programme meets the minimum quality requirements, it is possible since 2009/10 for Dutch higher education programmes to apply for distinctive (quality) features in the areas of internationalization, small-scale intensive teaching and entrepreneurship. This concerns additional special processes in which programmes can earn a high level distinction to show that they are very good or excellent in one of the dimensions mentioned. The pilot with the distinction in internationalization showed it is very difficult to earn a score of "excellent" (NVAO, 2011b).

Research

The Committee Veerman restated the strong role of higher education research in the development of the Netherlands towards a top-level knowledge intensive society. As such, it was suggested that (substantially) more money should be invested in research, both from public and private resources. However, the economic crisis is likely to be a 'spoilsport'. The Dutch government has planned to save €18 billion in the 2011-15 period and late 2011 it has been announced that extra savings of around €6-10 billion are necessary due to expected disappointing economic growth rates (saving relate to the country as a whole).

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The second strategy in Dutch research policy is the development of a stronger focus of research along the nine Dutch economic top sectors: AgroFood, Horticulture, High Tech, Energy, Logistics, Creative Industries, Life sciences, Chemistry and Water (MinOCW, 2011). To stimulate universities to better profile their research agendas, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will make bilateral agreements on the priority areas for each individual university, based on their strengths, the nine Dutch economic top sectors as well as the *Grand Challenges* from the EU 8th Framework research programme. It has been decided to re-allocate €90 million of the current research funds to support this research profiling process, to a large proportion through the envisaged "sectoral plans" discussed above under the heading of "governance" (MinOCW, 2011).

Also the funding policies and strategic agendas of the Dutch research councils – NWO and KNAW – will be aligned with this general focus on priority areas (MinOCW, 2011).

Another action line is an intensified orientation towards the comparability of research quality and a higher emphasis on valorisation of research results (MinOCW, 2011). Valorisation will become one of the core tasks of knowledge institutions next to teaching and research and will be supplemented with additional policy initiatives, like more demand driven steering. Also the Universities of Applied Sciences will get a stronger research mission. Finally, the research function of the UAS is envisaged to be strengthened with a specific budget of around €85

million per annum. This is an intensified prolongation of previously started initiatives (MinOCW, 2011).

Funding

There have been no major changes in terms of the funding mechanism for higher education recently. Neither has the total budget available to public higher education institutions changed substantially. The basic budget for higher education institutions even decreases from around €6,8 billion in 2010 to €6,6 billion including basic research funds for universities. This budget is envisaged to stabilize in the coming 5 years (National Budget for Education, 2011). With one-third of the students, the universities receive around 60% of the total budget available for higher education institutions.

There may be annually slight differences in the funding level per institution, particularly dependent on the number of new entrants and graduates in the previous year as these are the main drivers of the funding formula. Differences may also relate to the relative number of new entrants and graduates across disciplines as there are three different funding tariffs between on the one hand humanities and social sciences, on the other hand science and engineering and last medically oriented programmes. This also goes for the universities of applied sciences.

In the coming years, however, there may come some bigger differences between institutions as the government aims to allocate a part of the budget more flexible for strategic objectives. The Strategic Agenda for Higher Education (2011) defines important policy priorities for higher education and research. These will have an impact on funding. Around €380 million per annum is reserved for the teaching-related priorities in the new Strategic Agenda such as increasing study success and quality, teacher professionalization, profiling and valorisation. In the area of research around €250 million will be made available for profiling through research infrastructure, sectoral plans and valorisation. Around €85 million will be reserved for research in UAS.

A large part of the funds that will be related to profiling concerns a more flexible allocation of existing funds. Part of the extra funds, however, will come from additional tuition revenues. Traditionally Dutch students pay a flat rate tuition fee, regardless of the programme or institution they attend. In 2011 the tuition level is €1713 for regular full-time students. From academic year 2012/13 the tuition fees for students who study 1 years longer than the nominal duration of a programme will have to pay €3000 extra per extra year studied (both for bachelor and master level programmes). On July 6 2011 a law was passed to enable this new rule. Students can borrow the extra tuition tariff through the official student financing system. Students already paying the (full cost) institutional fees (like non-EU students) are exempted from this arrangement. The latter group already has to pay somewhere between €5.000 and €10.000 per year depending on the institution.

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10 Norway

Institutional landscape

Currently the Norwegian higher education sector comprises eight universities, eight specialized university institutions (of which three are private), two academies of arts, twenty-three state university colleges and thirty-two private university colleges. In practice, Norway seems to have a flexible and 'transparent binary system' with universities and specialized university institutions on one side of the spectrum and university colleges on the other. The flexibility can be exemplified by the fact that although universities and colleges should have different academic profiles and degree programs, such profiles does not hinder colleges to offer PhD-programs, or universities to offer more professional programs. Since university colleges can qualify for the university status (what some of them have done)⁵⁵ if they fulfil certain national academic standards and criteria (assessed by NOKUT, the national quality assurance agency), the system is called flexible and transparent.⁵⁶

Flowers in the landscape

Diversity is one of the main policy topics in Norwegian higher education. The ministry has developed a new tool to describe the diversity of the higher education system, the so-called "Flower project" (this project is based on the U-Map project).⁵⁷ The purpose is to raise awareness and trigger reflection on institutional characteristics. Each HEI profile is expressed as a flower, based on information from the national data base for statistics on higher education (DBH)⁵⁸. To construct a 'flower', the following dimensions are used: size (number of students, number of academic staff, size of budget, number of courses), education (vocational oriented profile, master students, continuing and further education students, distance learning students, student credit points, students' age profile, number of qualified applicants), research (academic staff profile, number of PhDs, academic publication, research funds from EU and national research council), internationalization (outgoing and incoming exchange students, English courses), relations with society (contributions to activities outside EU and national research council, contract work, business ideas).

These flowers are mostly intended for the strategic profiling of institutions, and are used as input in the annual strategy conversations between the Ministry of Education and the individual institutions. In addition, the Ministry has set aside some resources (NOK 50 mill.) for

⁵⁵ In the last couple of years five university colleges have successfully applied for the status of university (Stavanger, Agder, Ås, Nordland, Oslo). Though they are granted this new status they are supposed to develop their own profile that does not resemble exiting university profiles.

⁵⁶ Ole-Jacob Skodvin (2011) How to measure profiles in the Norwegian HE landscape. The Norwegian 'institutional profile landscape', paper presented in Bucharest 16-17 October 2011.

⁵⁷ Ole-Jacob Skodvin (2011).

⁵⁸ <http://dbh.nsd.uib.no/>

institutional initiatives that can stimulate to increased diversity or inter-institutional collaboration in higher education. Some of the funding in the recent years have been allocated to institutions that plan mergers or other forms of institutional collaboration.

Mergers and intensified collaboration

A number of institutions have taken the analyses of a national committee on higher education (the Stjernö committee – see later) and some of its recommendations as a starting point for a regional cooperation and/or merger process (Skodvin and Stensby 2010; Maassen 2010):

- In 2009, the University of Tromsø and the University College of Tromsø have merged into a new institution (university). This merger has changed the ‘power balance’ among the institutions in the region. In consequence, two other university colleges – Harstad and Finnmark – have decided to work more closely together and reallocate some tasks, and consider a possible merger with the new University of Tromsø.
- The University of Bergen has developed a close cooperation (network) structure with three regional colleges (høyskoler), not in the area of PhD education;
- The university college in Oslo and the university college in Akershus have merged into a new institution in 2011, and this new institution intends to apply for university status in 2015.
- In 2007, the university colleges of Buskerud, Vestfold and Østfold and the University of Life Sciences established a network alliance called Oslo Fjord Alliance. They want to strengthen their regional and national academic position. This alliance started with a reallocation of tasks in terms of study programmes and research activities. In 2009, these institutions (not including the University of Life Sciences) said they want to become one institution in the near future.
- The University of Stavanger has also invited regional colleges in their surrounding for closer collaboration, and discussions are on-going.
- The University of Agder and Telemark college are discussing closer collaboration, including a possible merger.
- Three university colleges in the western part of Norway (Molde, Ålesund and Volda) decided recently to start a cooperation process with the goal to merge in the future (the Vestland Alliance).
- For a number of years there has been cooperation between university colleges in the Lillehammer/Hamar/Gjøvik region with the aim to establish a university in the region. The ambition is to apply for accreditation (to upgrade its status) in 2012.

Interestingly, while these processes are initiatives of the institutions and the ministry indicated in 2007 not to interfere in these processes, the ministry has decided in recent years to make extra funds available (Nok 50 million annually) for stimulating and supporting the further development of these processes. This is regarded as an important signal from the ministry: without direct interference it indicates that the on-going merger and cooperation processes are considered to be important in the process to come to a better allocation of tasks in Norwegian higher education and to realise more effective forms of institutional cooperation and profiling. However, politically there are mixed responses to the institutional changes in the higher education landscape. While many politicians are quite positive towards mergers between

institutions, there also is growing scepticism concerning the development of a further increase in the number of universities in Norway.

Teaching: Institutional drifts

The NOKUT-criteria for upgrading university colleges concern among other things the right to awarding doctoral degrees. In 1995, there were ten Norwegian institutions that had this right. In 2010, there are 22 institutions with doctoral degree awarding powers; the increase has mainly taken place in the university college sector. At the moment, more university colleges are in the process of obtaining this right.

This development is not without problems. Many of the new doctoral programmes are based on small and vulnerable academic environments and they have few students. A NOKUT-evaluation on this concludes (Skodvin and Stensby 2010):⁵⁹

- The major challenge in establishing new doctoral programmes is to demonstrate an adequate academic level and sufficient breadth, depth and internal coherence;
- The majority of research groups at university colleges are fragile and not very active in terms of scientific publications;
- The new doctoral programmes are narrow in scope;
- The number of students in these doctoral programmes is low.

Skodvin and Stensby (2010:18) note that the establishment of new doctoral programmes is mainly driven by institutional strategy (improve prestige) and is not 'sufficiently academically based'. In their overall assessment of Norwegian higher education, they report that while the ministry states that it will maintain the binary divide, there is a sincere risk on unintended institutional drift that can result in 'pale copies of the originals'. However, there are also "internal" and more regional factors triggering the development of new doctoral programs. Often, the financing of such doctoral programs stems from regional authorities, and are closely linked to regional development plans. Furthermore, since all university colleges are mandated to undertake research as part of the duties, the development of master and PhD programs also stems from a more ambitious and competent academic staff.

There has been a significant growth in the number of master programmes offered by university colleges. In 2003, 45 master programmes⁶⁰ were offered by universities; in 2010 this number is 145. Over the same period the number of students per master programme remained by and large the same. In 2003, approximately two-thirds of the university colleges offered one or more master degree level programmes; in 2009, all university colleges are offering such programmes. In the period from 2003 to 2010 the share of master degree level students at university colleges has doubled, whereas this share at the universities slightly decreased. Notwithstanding this there are basically very few master degree level students at university colleges – in 2009, one

⁵⁹ Skodvin, O-J & B. Stensby (2010) *Does size matter? The Norwegian HE landscape in change*, paper presented at EAIR conference September 2010.

⁶⁰ The number of 45 master programmes does not include the programmes of the university college in Stavanger, which received the university status in 2005.

out of thirteen university college students is doing a masters. Somewhat paradoxically, the share increase in the number of master and PhD programs within the college sector is indirectly a driver for university status, since this status imply the right to be a self-accrediting institution. Hence, becoming a university also means that you increase your autonomy, and can skip applying NOKUT for accreditation.

The small size of many university colleges, the formal demand that a university should have at least five masters programmes and four PhD programmes is seen as insufficient, too formal and too constraining, whilst the number of institutions awarding PhD raise questions of critical mass and quality of research training environments. A number of shortcomings were perceived (e.g. Maassen 2010)⁶¹: a rather negative set of evaluations by NOKUT of professional bachelor programmes; signals from the university sector that the Quality reform has a negative effect on the research capacity and activities of the universities; complaints from Norwegian industry about the quality of HE graduates; worries about the lack of innovation oriented activities in the HEIs; and a decrease in the number of international students studying in Norway.

Research

Overall characteristics⁶²

The overall characteristic of trends in Norwegian research policy during the last decade may be described in terms of an increasing emphasis on the enhancement of the excellence and productivity of research, on research-based innovation and on the internationalisation of research. Key instruments to enhance quality and productivity are:

- Centres of Excellence: there are currently 21 Norwegian Centres of Excellence. This is an innovation in Norwegian research policy that has been strongly emphasised and welcomed;
- Scheme for supporting young, excellent researchers;
- Performance-based institutional core funding for research (HEIs). In Norwegian research funding there is a relative emphasis on institutional over competitive/strategic funding. Instead of devolving funds from the institutional to the competitive/strategic channels, much effort has been made to make an increasing part of institutional funding performance based;
- A national system for measuring research productivity (“tellekantsystemet”). This is a national database for registering all scientific output published domestically and internationally. Institutional funding is partly linked to the research output measured in this database. Recent statistics show that research output has steadily increased in Norway, although it is difficult to find a causal relationship between the research productivity system and research output.

⁶¹ Maassen, P. (2010) *Higher education policy developments in Norway*, Personal document.

⁶² ERAWATCH Research Inventory Report: NORWAY, 2010

- systematic/periodic evaluations of research institutes, research programmes and disciplinary fields of research; and the development of effective follow-up measures by the Research Council of Norway;
- enhancement of the strategic management of university research.
- Regional research funds which are intended to bolster Norway's research capacity and quality by promoting research, innovation and development efforts at the regional level. The annual yield on the funds, roughly €26.5m), will be available for allocation beginning in 2010.

Internationalisation of research has been strengthened through:

- continued participation in international organisations/projects (CERN, ESRF, EMBL, etc.);
- efforts to increase Norwegian participation in EU Framework Programmes for Research;
- bilateral agreements for research collaborations with, in particular, the USA, Canada, Japan, China, Russia;
- making Norway an attractive host country for foreign researchers (for example, Arctic, epidemiological and environmental research); increased research collaboration with developing countries.

Research-based innovation is supported by:

- Centres for research-driven innovation, a scheme for establishing collaborative partnerships between companies and public research institutions;
- expanded support for RCN programmes for user-driven industrial research;
- Centres for regional industry/research collaboration (Centres of Expertise). Nine projects have been granted the status of Centre of Expertise;
- support programmes and infrastructure to facilitate the commercialisation of academic research;
- the introduction in 2002 of the tax-deduction scheme (Skattefunn)

Innovation policy

In 2011, the Research Council of Norway has drawn up its first specific strategy on innovation.⁶³ The strategy emphasises the need for more innovation in the public sector and the importance of a broad national knowledge base. The document calls for an increased effort in areas where Norway excels and for new momentum in areas that need improvement. It calls to concentrate on three main action points:

Focus: implementing research activities to promote innovation and increase value creation in priority areas. The Research Council will work to:

- Expand the interaction and integration of activities between the public funding agencies in the priority areas.
- Enhance collaboration to promote innovation in the health and welfare sector together with the regional health authorities, the municipal sector and trade and industry.

⁶³ Innovation strategy for the Research Council of Norway. The research Council's innovation activities 2011-2014.

- Incorporate research to a greater extent into professional education and practice in the areas of health and welfare.
- Promote innovation and the development of robust technology designed to meet the needs of society, in part by establishing a framework for risk management and ethical considerations.

Breath: paving the way for more research across Norway's private and public sectors through cooperation with the research community. The Research Council will work to:

- Improve the framework conditions of the SkatteFUNN tax deduction scheme and increase hourly rates for projects qualified under the scheme.
- Expand cooperation activities and promote the formation of new networks, particularly in the public sector.
- Promote the participation of the social science and humanities communities in innovation efforts.

Impact: aligning research and cooperation activities to ensure that the results are used. The Research Council will work to:

- Ensure cohesion, cooperation and task-sharing between the public funding agencies to promote the verification and commercialisation of research results.
- Develop incentives designed to increase innovation and commercialisation at and on the part of the research institutions.
- Obtain increased allocations to enable the public funding agencies to support more pilot, verification and demonstration projects at companies, public bodies and research institutions.

Internationalisation as a comprehensive national research strategy ⁶⁴

Based on the outcomes of an evaluation study on Norwegian participation in European research projects, all relevant stakeholders should try to increase Norwegian participation in European-based research projects. Norway should have a stronger focus and dedication to the importance of internationalisation of R&D, and in particular the Framework Programme. In the foreseeable future this will continue to be Norway's most important internationalisation channel of national R&D activities. At the institutional level there is also a need to become more systematic and goal-oriented in terms of research strategy and orientation towards international R&D collaboration. Attention should be given to ease the administrative and economic burdens for instance by national co-funding (Because EU funding schemes for research projects cover as a maximum 75 per cent of the total cost), ensure increased participation of the large enterprises, improving conditions and participation of SMEs – improve dissemination of results, transferring the skills of successful participation and experts.

⁶⁴ Helge Godø, Liv Langfeldt, Aris Kaloudis, et al. (2010) In Need of a Better Framework for Success An evaluation of the Norwegian participation in the EU 6th Framework Programme (2003–2006) and the first part of the EU 7th Framework Programme (2007–2008)

Science for the future: Strategy for Strengthening Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) 2010–2014 ⁶⁵

In 2010, The Ministry of Education and Research published the report “Science for the Future” in which it announces the need to stimulate interests in science. In collaboration with the entire education system, the working life and trade and industry the ministry will continue the efforts to improve the education in the science subjects and to increase the recruitment to studies and careers in MST. The effort must include all levels of education from kindergarten on and to the research and work areas. Early efforts will provide motivation and knowledge that will create positive ripple effects throughout the chain of education. The overall objectives of the present initiative is to reinforce pupils’ and students’ competencies in science subjects, increase the interest in MST and strengthen the recruitment and implementation at all levels, not the least among girls.

Future reforms in Norwegian higher education?

In 2008, a national committee on higher education, the Stjernö committee, identified four alternative approaches for Norwegian’s future higher education system:

1. A multi-campus model, in which the country would be divided into eight regions with all institutions in one region forming one university (creating ‘universities’ with a minimum size of 8,000 to 10,000 students, with the exception of the University of Oslo); diversity would take place within the regional institutions. This model is based on geography.
2. A binary model with in total five universities and six university colleges.
3. A network structure with a university at the centre of each network. This can be regarded as the renewal of the Network Norway model.
4. Mergers among institutions of different profiles. A stimulation of differentiation in higher education.

After the publication of the Stjernö committee report several things have happened. Besides the mergers and increased numbers of cooperation between institutions, the minister initiated several actions:

- PhD education: stimulation of the establishment of national research schools. One round for establishing national graduate schools has in the meantime been organised, with funding from the Norwegian research council. At the same time, the number of higher education institutions that is offering a PhD degree has increased to 22 and it seems difficult for the Ministry to put a stop this process.
- University definition: While the definition of what is a Norwegian university has not been changed dramatically, the Ministry has asked NOKUT to focus in the applications for new PhD programmes more on quality than on quantity. NOKUT recently proposed new criteria for university colleges, focusing indeed more on

http://ec.europa.eu/research/evaluations/pdf/archive/fp7-evidence-base/national_impact_studies/evaluation_of_the_norwegian_participation_in_fp6_and_in_the_first_part_of_fp7.pdf

⁶⁵ http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kd/dok/rapporter_planer/planer/2010/realfag-for-framtida.html?id=593791

quality and capacity, and recently NOKUT has decided to sharpen the demands for PhD-programs by requesting that each program need to demonstrate their quality through an increase in the number of doctoral candidates being graduated. In essence, this imply that it will become more difficult to acquire the PhD-status in the future.

- Funding system: Some minor changes in the public higher education funding system have been introduced, and a major change is prepared.
- Small higher education institutions: The Ministry has indicated that small institutions do not have to close, and that instead they will receive extra funding from the Ministry to strengthen their recruitment and staff foundations. However, the Ministry also argues strongly for mergers, meaning that an alternative interpretation is that the Ministry would like to see institutional changes in the landscape of higher education, but that it does not want to be held political responsible for change operations. By leaving it to the institutions themselves, it will also be the board of the institutions that will have to face the political turbulence associated with such mergers.
- Bachelor professional education: Various measures have been taken to strengthen bachelor level professional education. This includes the announcement of the establishment of *centres of excellence for education*. NOKUT recently announced the tender for the first round of funding for these centres, and decided that the University of Oslo and the University of Tromsø jointly will host the first center.
- Internationalisation: The Ministry has published a green paper on the renewal of the internationalisation of higher education policies.

The dynamics described above indicate that the Norwegian higher education landscape is changing. On the one hand we see several government initiatives, evoked among other things by the recommendations of the Stjernö committee, as well as initiatives of the institutions. The Minister has indicated regularly that she is satisfied with the current change dynamics, both through her ministry, and the institutional initiatives, and does not see a need for more far reaching higher education reforms at short notice. On the other hand there are voices calling for more government actions because there are still several problems such as the continuing 1) fragmentation of PhD (and Master level) education, 2) difficulties of smaller regional institutions to attract students and staff, 3) ambitions of the stronger university colleges to apply for university status, 4) inefficiencies of the public funding system, 5) move of students to the urban areas, 6) worries about the international competitiveness of Norwegian top fundamental research, and 7) worries of low Norwegian success in FP7 (and especially the ERC).

11 Spain

Introduction

Spain, a federal system, is divided in 17 autonomous communities and 2 autonomous cities. In terms of education, “the autonomous communities implement legislation defined at the national level, can develop their own complementary legislation and regulate the non-basis elements of the education system” (OECD 2009). A decentralized model regarding authority over education is currently in place for Spanish Higher Education. It distributes authority over education between the State, the Autonomous Communities and the Universities. Jurisdiction over higher education is designated almost totally to the universities (with exceptions in certain military, artistic and music degree programmes). The State however regulates the conditions for obtaining, issuing and recognising academic and professional degrees.

Tertiary education includes university studies as well as higher vocational education and training. Universities are the main institutions that provide university studies, while higher vocational education is usually linked to secondary schools and to special vocational institutions. Vocational education and training can be delivered in both public and private schools.

There are 78 universities – 50 public and 28 private. Of the 50 public universities, 48 fall under the authority of Autonomous Communities while 2 fall under the Ministry of Education and Science. Of the 25 private universities, 7 belong to the Catholic Church. There are four different types of university establishments in Spain: university schools (*escuelas universitarias*), where ‘short-term’ three-year courses are offered; university colleges (*colegios universitarios*) where the first three years of study leading to a licenciado is completed; faculties (*facultades*) where long-term courses are offered in all academic disciplines (except technical courses) and higher technical schools of engineering and architecture (*escuela superior de ingeniería y arquitectura*) where long-term technical courses are completed.

Studies at Spanish universities are divided into three cycles and have undergone some changes since 2010. In line with the European Higher Education Area, programmes are situated in one of the following three cycles:

- Bachelor's programmes - basic degree programmes and/or general education-oriented;
- Master's programmes - specialized or multidisciplinary advanced training, academic or professional oriented;
- Doctorate programmes - advanced training in research techniques.

Competition for places at Spanish universities is high as there are too few places for all the students wishing to attend. Spanish students must have an Intermediate level and then pass an Entry exam. This will give them a chance to continue their education in a university or other Higher education facility.

Important legal developments of the Spanish Higher Education system

The following important steps can be mentioned (as listed in the OECD thematic overview):⁶⁶

- The Spanish Constitution (1978) defining the three principles: autonomy, academic freedom and the right to education.
- The University Reform Act 1983 (LRU), starts a period of universities autonomy and the transfer of responsibilities from the central to the regional government.
- The Organic Law 6/2001 on Universities (LOU), being amended by the Organic Law 4/2007 (LOMLOU) forms the legal foundation for tertiary education. It defines the organisation of a university; its management, it establishes a national Quality assurance agency (ANECA), etc. – The LOMLOU is considered to be a response to the Bologna process. (Non-university tertiary education is regulated by the Organic Law on Education (LOE 2/2006))

In relation to the standards of the European higher education area (EHEA), royal decrees have been promulgated:

- on the recognition of qualifications related to professional activities (253/2003);
- conditions for the recognition and validation of foreign qualifications (285/2004);
- European credit system and qualifications (1125/2003)
- European Diploma Supplement (1044/2003)
- Structure of University Education /regulation undergraduate courses (55/2005)
- Mobility of Professionals (1171/2003)
- Regulation of post-graduate courses (56/2005)
- “Establishing the Committee for the National Qualifications Framework definition of Higher Education”(900/2007)
- “On the organisation for official university education” (1393/2007)

In addition the ‘Real Decreto 432/2008’ assigns responsibility for university education to the Ministry of Science and Innovation.

Estrategia Universidad 2015 (EU2015) - University Strategy

An important policy document for the Spanish higher education system is the Estrategia Universidad 2015 (University Strategy) that passed Parliament in the summer of 2010.⁶⁷ The EU2015, initially suggested by the Ministry of Science and Innovation, is being implemented under responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The strategy aims to complete the regulatory development of the Law on Universities (LOMLOU). It is an initiative to modernise the Spanish university system as proposed by the European Commission (in the context of the European Higher Education Area and the Modernisation Agenda). Among other things it aims to promote excellence, the internationalisation of universities and the social dimension. The EU2015 is a comprehensive document, in which four areas are identified (see figure below).

⁶⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/18/46/41014632.pdf>

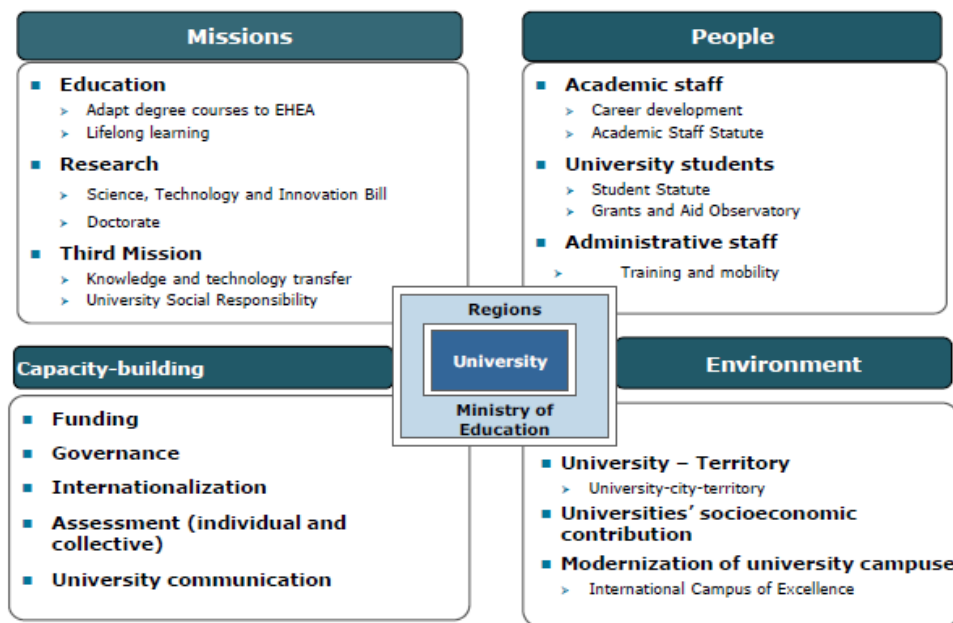
⁶⁷ <http://www.educacion.gob.es/dctm/eu2015/2011-estrategia-2015ingles.pdf?documentId=0901e72b8091009a>

Within each of the four areas strategic goals have been identified, addressing the main challenges of the European Agenda for Modernisation. The four areas are:

- missions (teaching & training, research, third mission)
- people (teaching & research, undergraduates, administrators & services),
- capacity building (university funding, governance, internationalisation, evaluation, university communications)
- and environment (university-city-territory, socio-economic contribution, sustainable campus).

To measure the success of the strategy, a monitoring and evaluation system has been put in place (with an international advisory group (GAIN) and a monitoring committee (COSEU) – see website EU2015). For this purpose the EU2015 plan contains an elaborate chapter on indicators ('steering through scoreboards').

The initiative (with special emphasis on the Campus de Excelencia initiative) is considered to have an important effect on university profiling, internationalisation efforts with the general aim to increase international prestige and visibility.



The modernisation of the Spanish universities is the central goal of the EU2015, particularly in terms of research, innovation and social interaction. Its objectives are based on: the pursuit of excellence and improved quality in terms of university research and education; heightening the economic impact and social relevance of university research; and improving the management of human resources and strategic planning as regards university research. To meet this objectives, the universities, their associations, the development regions and leading social and economic actors have worked together to develop a plan of action – depicted in the figure below.

Improvements	EU 2015 Objectives for modernising universities
Quality and Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Increase the number of researcher trainers, and provide universities with the infrastructure, resources and means necessary to carry out high-quality research. • - Promote specialisation in university research through incentives and competitive mechanisms designed to further develop the individual strengths of each university. • - Strengthen the Spanish universities that are currently doing the most significant research in Europe in any given field, promoting their participation in world-class programmes and networks.
Economic Impact and Social Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Promote structured collaborations and closer relationships between universities and businesses, particularly in terms of the development and establishment of strategies for the transfer of knowledge and technology, thus increasing the contribution that universities make in terms of innovation. • - Promote collaborations between universities and local and regional authorities where such arrangements can help with the definition and establishment of regional knowledge-based development strategies. • - Promote more thorough social interaction, and a stronger university commitment to its involvement with civic organisations searching for solutions to social problems, particularly those that require scientific knowledge.
Human Resources and Strategic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • - Improve strategic research management via incentives and the spread of best practices in terms of governance, research, and strategic and multi-disciplinary agenda definition for research and evaluation. • - Make progress toward sustainable financing for competitive research through the standardisation of total cost models, including both direct and indirect costs, which will help universities to recover the full cost of the research they undertake. • - Develop human resource strategies specifically for researchers, creating career paths and work conditions that will attract, motivate and retain the finest researchers from Europe and the rest of the world.

Table 29: Objectives and improvements proposed in EU 2015

Funding

In 2005, 0.9% of the GDP was spent on higher education in Spain (OECD). As a result of the decentralised system, the autonomous communities are responsible for public funding. Funding schemes therefore vary strongly between the communities, and also have different characteristics. Universities receive in general funding from the following sources: from the autonomous communities, from tuition fees and external income sources.

The economic viability of universities shall be ensured, enhancing academic excellence and increasing the impact of the Spanish university system. The EU2015 refers to key areas for improving the economic and financial situation of universities, developed by the Joint Committee on Financing of the Spanish University System:

- “Grants and aid for university studies and public tuition fees. University Observatory on Grants, Study Aid and Academic Performance [Observatorio Universitario de Becas, Ayudas al Estudio y Rendimiento Académico]

- Institutional financial fairness across Devolved Regions
- Human Resources. New academic staff charter. Adaptation of human resources to the European Higher Education Area. The Science, Technology and Innovation bill [Ley de la Ciencia, la Tecnología y la Innovación]. Teaching and research careers. Talent attraction.
- Adaptation of university infrastructure to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). International Campus of Excellence (Spanish "CEI").
- Research, technological development and activities in support of innovation. Incentives to science, technology and innovation.
- Efficiency and effectiveness of the management of Spanish universities. Accountability and transparency." (source: Ministry of Education)

To strengthen the social dimension of education, the cabinet approved a royal decree in May 2011 that means a budget increase for the academic year of 2011-12. An increase by 5% is manifested as compared to before. The budget for scholarships has been doubled since 2004. In addition, to stimulate students to perform better, new grant components are introduced. This entails that if a student performs very well (measured in ECTS), s/he will receive a bonus of 150 Euros (source: website Ministry of Education/ Press Releases)).

However, the most significant changes are found in the budget cuts that are seriously affecting the HE sector in Spain, which will in the long run have important consequences for the system and the individual universities. (according to an Expert opinion).

Governance

The Ministry of Science and Education is responsible for university education. Two other bodies were established in 2007, replacing the University Coordination Council: the General Conference on University Policy (CGUP) and the Council of Universities (CU). The Ministry and the CGUP provide the regulatory framework at the national level. As mentioned earlier, the Spanish higher education system is decentralised and the autonomous regions can adopt additional regulations.

The Organic Law 6/2001 and the amending Organic Law 4/2007 provide measures for strengthening the autonomy of universities, in order to react to challenges of the Spanish society and to act in a more flexible way. The necessity of strengthening leadership structures is identified, providing greater flexibility.

The EU2015 strategy addresses the governance system as follows: first, the balance between autonomy and accountability shall be reviewed and the principle of social responsibility shall be stronger included in the organisational culture. Second, the economic viability of universities shall be ensured. This shall take place by developing a funding model for higher education enhancing academic excellence and increase the impact of the Spanish university system. (source: Website Estrategia Universidad 2015).

Internationalisation

The EU2015 outlines internationalisation of the Spanish higher education system as one of the key priorities. In this area four major objectives are identified:

1. To increase the international offer of universities (i.e. interuniversity and international masters; attract international academics; encourage offering courses in foreign languages etc.)
2. To consolidate a highly internationalised university system (i.e. to promote training and skills to work in an open international environment; to attract staff with international experience to support the internationalization of students; to encourage a quality education based on priority topics, using English and / or other foreign languages; to increase the number of international teachers, researchers and students).
3. To increase the international attractiveness of universities (i.e. to improve the visibility and international recognition of the best campuses as attractive places to live, study and research; support services for the reception, stay and departure of students and foreign visitors; to participate in international networks, projects and programs of education and research; to improve the international position of education and research conducted in the Spanish campus).
4. To promote the size and global social responsibility of universities (i.e. to consolidate a university community and a multicultural society contributing to world understanding, peace and prosperity; equity in access to higher education; to meet societal needs and develop knowledge enabling societies to provide solutions for socio-economic problems).

In addition Spain is actively involved in adjusting to the norms of the Bologna process (see decrees released above), and those of the European Higher Education Areas. The implementation of the Bologna process is, however, also critically perceived, resulting in strong budget cuts (source: University Worldnews).

Although mobility of researchers and students is stressed as one of the important aspects in the Organic Law of Universities 6/2001 and the EU2015, there are obstacles in form of language skills, close ties to families etc.

Spain's cooperation with Latin America is considered a facilitator for internationalisation. Currently already different networks exist, strengthening the scientific/academic cooperation like, IESAD, AUIP, CUIB. "In 2006, the Ibero-American Ministers of Education declared their intention to proceed toward an Ibero-American Knowledge Area (Espacio Iberoamericano de Conocimiento, EIC), which would promote co-operation and improvements in the quality and relevance of tertiary education, research and innovation." (OECD p.23)

The creation of the Fundación.es to promote internationally the Spanish higher education system (although the impact is quite small at the moment, it is too early to evaluate its impact).

Quality

The traditional guarantor of quality in higher education in Spain has been the state, mostly through the authorisation for institutions to operate and the recognition of the programmes

offered as leading to degrees officially valid throughout the nation. The development of “quality assurance” (QA) in its modern meaning started in the 1990s and has become a major feature of the Spanish university system during the last decade (OECD, 2009).

One national agency and several regional agencies

Having a national quality agency is relatively new in Spain, a country with strong regional identities (Warden, 2008). In 2002 the new National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación, **ANECA**) was created in compliance with the LOU as a private law foundation. Under the LOMLU it was transformed into a public agency. At the regional level, eleven autonomous communities have created their own QA agency. Most of them are created as an autonomous body advising the regional authority in charge of higher education, or as a consortium linking regional government and universities or, in one case, as a department of the regional government. All regional agencies together with ANECA belong to REACU, the national network of QA Agencies that emerged as an initiative of the agencies and gained formal status in the 2007 revision of the LOU as a body instrumental to the activities of the General Conference on University Policy (CGPU), where the coordination between national and regional policy in higher education takes place (OECD, 2009).

Quality assurance activities

ANECA has developed several evaluation programmes in order to perform its activities (evaluation, certification and accreditation), with the purpose of integrating the Spanish system into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (OECD, 2009). These evaluation programmes include both Institutional and programme evaluation as well as academic staff evaluation programmes. The amendment of LOU in 2007 marked a further step in the process of adapting to the EHEA, including adaptation to the European framework of qualifications (ENQUA, 2009). This is also focusing on quality assurance systems, which now are no longer voluntary but compulsory. This is a big change, so ANECA's general co-ordinator Eduardo Coba "This way the curriculum becomes a contract between the university and society in specifying what skills the graduate will leave with, how the university will accomplish this, which resources it will use and what kind of a quality system it has put in place to ensure this" (in: Warden, 2008). As a result of the 2007 revision, the verification of new programmes is obligatory for all the official degrees in Spain. From the academic year 2008–2009 higher education institutions will already be offering study programmes harmonised with the Bologna declaration. Before providing study programmes, universities have to receive a positive evaluation report by ANECA. In the last three years, ANECA has devoted considerable efforts to ensuring the conversion of degrees into the new structure. Now the ex-ante accreditation of the new degrees that come about will not only continue, but ANCECA will also undertake new tasks arising from implementing the degrees that have already been accredited (ANECA, 2010).

ANECA has gradually strengthened its position also in Europe by virtue of co-operation with other European quality assurance agencies. Proof of this consolidation is the external recognition granted to ANECA and AQU by ENQA, as well as by EQAR in 2008 (European

Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education), following a process of international assessment. This recognition has been important for ANECA because it has provided the trigger: (1) to improve the methodology, with a focus on the stringent mechanisms for the development and design of the assessment programmes, (2) to harness efforts, so that the ANECA processes, including appeals procedures, are pre-defined and well-documented; and (3) to concentrate on a new way of working with the autonomous agencies, consisting of co-operation and promotion of good working practices in the institutions (ENQUA, 2009).

Research

“The aim of the Science, Technology and Innovation Law which replaces the Law of Scientific and Technological Research of 1986, is to establish a general framework within which to strengthen and coordinate scientific and technical research in order to contribute to sustainable development and social welfare by generating and sharing knowledge and innovation.”(website of the ministry of science and innovation)

Policy Debates/Actions/Outcomes

The new regulation of Doctoral Studies (January 2011) introduces for the first time Doctoral Schools.

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12 Sweden

Institutional landscape

Incentive funds for mergers of higher education institutions

According to the Swedish government, several higher education institutions risk becoming susceptible to global changes. One way of reducing vulnerability and increasing quality in both higher education and research is for more higher education institutions to merge. Changes in organisation should be based on higher education institutions' own assessments and be done on a voluntary basis. To increase incentives for voluntary mergers, the government proposes that incentive funds be allocated. SEK 20 million has been allocated for 2012, and SEK 75 million per year for subsequent years has been calculated.

Teaching and Learning

In the fall of 2010, a total of 374,000 people applied for admission to universities and university colleges, an increase of 4 percent from 2009. Of the 374,000 applicants, 240,000 were admitted. Following a decline over several years there is now an increase in numbers of applications to Master of Science in Engineering programmes. To meet this growing interest, the Government is expanding Master of Science in Engineering programmes by 400 places in 2012, and has plans for an additional 200 places in 2013.

Also the Swedish health care sector is in great need of trained, competent staff. Several agencies are warning of serious shortages of doctors, nurses and dentists in the future - unless more staff are trained. On several previous occasions, the government has increased the number of places on various medical training programmes to meet the needs of the labour market. The demand for staff having completed a degree in health and medical care or dental care is nevertheless expected to increase more quickly than supply, due to a rise in care needs and the age structure among those currently working in the sector. The government is now proposing an expansion of important medical training programmes.

Research

The last years have seen a stronger concentration and strategic research profiling of universities, particularly by introducing a new competitive model of research funding in 2009. Long-term and concentrated investments are undertaken in 20 strategic research areas, with a clear focus on areas such as medicine, technical science and natural science (Hedmo 2011: 13, Hicks 2011: 4; 7).

The six research-funding authorities FAS, Formas, the Space Agency, Energy Agency, VINNOVA and the Swedish Research Council have jointly prepared a paper on the government's future research and innovation bill (2013-2016). They identified seven areas for new targeted research efforts: 1. Knowledge, cognition, communication, 2. Social development

and vulnerability, 3. The digital explosion, 4. Medical technology 5. Biological variability, 6. Welfare, employment, lifestyle and health, 7. The origin of life and conditions.

Furthermore they propose a series of measures to increase the quality of research. A national EU Strategy for Research and Innovation is proposed for greater proactivity to meet the Swedish interests. Universities and other public research organisations should play a larger role in the national innovation system by collaborating with the industry and public sectors on the basis of partnership programs being established by the government.⁶⁸

The government has allocated SEK 150 million to increase the commercialisation of research results. Innovation offices have been set up at a number of higher education institutions.

Anticipating the government's new national research plan in 2012, the Research Advisory Committee launched a report as a contribution to the debate prior to the forthcoming research bill.⁶⁹ Based on their analyses of contemporary Swedish research and (global) challenges ahead they propose the following:

- Sweden must continue to be among those countries investing most resources in R&D. Funding must increase at least pace with that of competitor countries so that Swedish research can continue to maintain its international competitiveness.
- Create clearly defined quality drivers for research (other than citation rates)
- Strengthen the innovativeness of Swedish research (knowledge triangle)
- Strengthen the institute sector; i.e. the link between the academic research and the business sector.
- Develop a strategy for investment in research infrastructure; i.e. linking to initiatives of the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure.
- Further develop the innovation procurement system;
- Increase investment in research 'wild cards'; more investment for high-risk projects (for example as in the United States).
- Strengthen research education – improve the conditions for PhD students, create predictable career paths for younger researchers, and establish an national elite programme for younger talented researchers.
- Excellence requires breath – overhaul the education system from preschool to research ('ketenbenadering')
- Create conditions for more post-doc positions in companies and form more adjunct research fellows in the academic world.
- Implement a special initiative to attract international top-class researchers to Sweden and simplify the expert tax (tax for foreign experts)
- Make donations to research tax-deductible, introduce a tax rebate for research and development (for SMEs), introduce a risk capital deduction.
- Intensify efforts to encourage more students to apply to science and technology programmes

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<http://www.vr.se/franvetenskapsradet/analysutvarderingochuppfoljning/forskningspolitiskaochstatistiskaanalyser/underlagtillforskningsochinnovationsproposition.4.ff38e12132ffa0680b80001259.html>

⁶⁹ <http://www.sweden.gov.se/content/1/c6/15/53/32/09fe1fbf.pdf>

- Invest in lifelong learning and introduce 'individual learning accounts
- Increase the autonomy of Sweden's universities and university colleges.

Funding

Sweden has coped with the financial crisis relatively well. Rather than cutting budgets, the government's Research and Innovation Bill (2009) proposed a substantial increase of research funding (over 20 per cent over a four year period).

The operations of the HEIs are expanding. Expenditure on teaching and research amounted to SEK 54.8 billion in 2010. This is SEK 2.7 billion or five per cent more than the previous year in current prices. This is the third year in succession that expenditure has increased by this magnitude. 65% of HEI's funding for research and teaching is direct state funding (Högskoleverket 2011: 42).

Since 2009 research funding is distributed in form of direct block grants and "competitive" block grants. The competitive part is based on two indicators, namely the level of external funding resp. scientific production and citations (Hedmo 2011: 14). Both the direct block grant and external funding increased radically as part of the new research policy (Gov. Bill 2008/09). The level of external funding increased substantially (15,9 Billion SEK) and most of these sources were allocated by the external research councils and sectoral agencies (ibid).

No tuition fees existed so far, however, from 2011 on they will be introduced for students outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland (Swedish Institute 2010: 1). Two new scholarship programmes were released in order to attract still highly qualified students from outside Sweden.

Governance

In 2008, the Autonomy Inquiry proposed that all publicly funded higher education institutions move to a new organisational form under public law, an independent legal entity termed an 'independent institution of higher education' (SOU 2008:104). Several questions, however, require further investigation and the consultation responses are divided. Proposals and considerations in the Government Bill are therefore based on the assumption that publicly funded higher education institutions will continue to be government administrative agencies.

In 2011, a higher education reform was implemented as an outcome of the Government Bill "Academic for this day and age – greater freedom for universities and other higher education institutions" (Gov. Bill 2009/10: 149). The reform aims at increasing the autonomy of universities and university colleges in order to be able to perform in a highly competitive international sector. Examples of increased autonomy are:

- universities may determine their own internal structures (Swedish Institute 2010: 2).
- universities gain autonomy in terms of academic positions. Recruitment and promotion of academics becomes a matter of decision by universities, except for professors and senior lecturer, whose qualifying requirements and criteria assessment will be decided by the government (Hedmo 2011:18)

- less detailed regulation of studies; while the government remains to set various rules detailed provisions on study plans, public defence of doctoral dissertations and grading committees should, however, be reduced
- Since the 1993 higher education reform higher education institutions have been responsible for planning the capacity and design of their educational programmes. At the same time the Government has set targets for the number of degrees to be awarded in certain programmes. Higher education institutions should be given greater responsibility for planning the capacity of their programmes on the basis of student demand and the needs of the labour market. The Government should therefore no longer set targets for the number of first and second cycle qualifications.

Quality

In “Focus on knowledge – quality in higher education” (Government Bill 2009/10:139), the government proposes changing the direction of the national quality assurance system for higher education institutions to meet the new demands that are based on the goals of greater freedom, internationalisation and high quality. Sweden needs a quality assurance system that strengthens the incentives to achieve high standards regarding learning outcomes of study programmes. Universities and higher education institutions that have study programmes of high quality should be rewarded through increased appropriations.

The new national quality assurance system should consist of quality evaluations of higher education programmes and reviews of degree-awarding powers. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education should be responsible for the implementation of these evaluations and reviews. Resources for study programmes at first and second cycle will be allocated on the basis of programme evaluations, as well as on the number of full-time equivalents and annual performance equivalents.

The present resource allocation system for study programmes at first and second cycle is primarily based on the number of students and their achievements in the form of higher education credits earned. The quality of the study programme is not directly linked to funding. The government considers that those higher education institutions that attain high quality in their study programmes are to be encouraged and receive acknowledgement through increased resource allocation. It is therefore proposed that those higher education institutions offering study programmes at first and second cycle that receive the highest appraisal when a quality evaluation is carried out be rewarded by means of an extra funding. The quality-based resource allocation aims at increasing quality by creating incentives for universities and higher education institutions to try to achieve even higher quality in their study programmes.

Internationalisation

During the last decade the number of incoming international students has also risen from just under 3 of the student population to just over 10 per cent (Högskoleverket 2011).

In the academic year 2009/10 26,500 Swedish students were studying in higher education abroad, which means an increase of nine per cent compared to the preceding year (ibid: 34).

Stimulation of the mobility of international recruitment and mobility of researchers in Sweden – proposed by 6 councils.

General Policy debates

In the bill “A Boost to Research and Innovation”, which was presented in 2008, the Government’s long-term research and innovation policy was laid down. Next year, the Government will present a new bill which aims to follow up and further develop the research policy goals that were set last time. The goals include strengthening Sweden as a research nation and its competitiveness in a globalized world.⁷⁰

Research results from higher education institutions should benefit society, for example by being commercialised. The holding companies of higher education institutions are one important type of tool for commercialisation. The Government proposes that higher education institutions and their holding companies receive special funds to build up 'idea banks' of research results.⁷¹ Promoting research and innovation through tax incentives is being discussed.⁷²

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⁷⁰ http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/o.o.i.s?id=24890&news_item=5703

⁷¹ <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/14054/a/176034>

⁷² <http://www.research-europe.com/index.php/2011/08/peter-honeth-state-secretary-for-research-swedish-ministry-of-education-and-research/>

13 Switzerland

Teaching and Learning

Better qualifications for lecturers

For the period 2009-2012, the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) have chosen three focal points of which two will have a direct impact on teachers' education. To begin with, CRUS called out for the development of explicit formulation of learning outcomes for educational programs in terms of graduation competences. Secondly, it demanded the implementation of the National Qualification Framework (nqf.ch-HS -> see also the section on "quality"). Lecturers must be knowledgeable about higher education didactics and must have the expertise and capacity to actively take part in skills development (Tribelhorn, 2010, p. 146).

Research

Additional research investments due to depreciation of Euro Currency

CRUS welcomes the decision by the Swiss Federal Council to financially support the area of research, technology and innovation with the amount of 212,5 CHF. Part of this money will be going directly to the universities that prognosticated heavy losses in several tens of millions as the result of the devaluation of the euro currency. Research funding from EU programs that had been calculated at a high Euro exchange rate and now is being disbursed at a much lower rate, accounts for financial problems that Swiss universities currently face. Particularly large higher education institutions and the two technical universities are hit hard by this disadvantageous exchange rate, as they are engaged in many international research projects.⁷³

Funding

New Funding System for Swiss Higher Education Institutions

According to the new Swiss higher education Act, the funding of Swiss higher education institution will be embedded in the overall coordination of the Confederation and the cantons. The new University law (approved by Parliament in its last session, Autumn 2011, see HFKG in the next section) envisages that universities and universities of applied sciences will receive funding in the form of basic subsidies, project-related subsidies as well as contributions to buildings/infrastructure. The so-called "reference costs" play an important role in the determination of the required resources. These reference costs are defined as average costs of teaching equivalent to the costs account of the higher education institutions. Decisive criteria are the number of students, number of graduates, average study time and student-to-teacher ratios. The Swiss Confederation covers 20% of the total expenses of universities and 30% of the

⁷³ <http://www.crus.ch/index.php?id=2733>

expenses accruing to universities of applied sciences. For the calculation of the funding share for research activities, acquisition of third-party funding and research performance will be taken into account.

Governance

Adoption of a new university act (HFKG)

In 2006, Swiss voters and the Cantons adopted a series of constitutional articles on education that aimed at stimulating greater levels of shared responsibility between the Confederation and the Cantons in order to improve the quality and permeability of the Swiss education system. An entire article of the Federal Constitution is dedicated to the higher education sector. Art. 63a states that "The Confederation and the Cantons shall be jointly responsible for the coordination and guarantee of quality in Swiss higher education." As follow-up on the mandate, the Federal Council submitted a bill on university funding and coordination of the Swiss higher education landscape (HFKG) to the Federal Parliament for consideration.⁷⁴ The HFKG was approved by Parliament in 2011 and replaces the 1999 Act on higher education. The most important aspects of the new Act can be summarized as follows:

- The establishment of a unitary accreditation system
- Creation of advantageous framework conditions for research- and teaching of outstanding quality
- Support of profile building endeavours and stimulation of competition between higher education institutions, particularly in the area of research
- Support for the creation of priority areas and concentration of offer while safeguarding a broad program spectrum of outstanding quality
- Adequate permeability and mobility between and within universities, universities of applied sciences and pedagogical universities
- Standardization of study structures, degree programs and transfers from bachelor to master programs of a different type of higher education institution as well as the reciprocal recognition of final degrees
- Funding of higher education institutions according to standardized and performance-driven principles
- Countrywide coordination of higher education policies and task sharing in resource- intensive areas
- A clear distinction between universities (cantonal universities and federal institutes of technology) and universities of applied sciences with respect to education (academic vs. professional) and research (basic vs. applied and technology transfer)

Overall, the Act is considered as another important step towards the more institutional autonomy of Swiss higher education institutions. For a long time these institutions were subject to tight cantonal control.⁷⁵ The new Act has been criticized for paying insufficient attention to the right of co-determination of students, lecturers and assistants. Moreover, critics argue that greater effort should be invested in gender equality as well as in the integration of socially

⁷⁴ http://www.sbf.admin.ch/htm/dokumentation/publikationen/news/2009/03_news_2009_en.pdf

⁷⁵ <http://www.crus.ch/news/newsletter/newsletter-system/newsletter-deutsch/nr-21-juli-2011.html>

disadvantaged groups. Another point of criticism refers to a power imbalance between the Cantons and the Confederation – with the Cantons having too much competences. The current distribution of powers stands in sharp contrast with the dynamics of the employment market and the educational systems that call out for more federal competences and would like to stimulate more international cooperation (Prelicz- Huber, pp. 169-170, 2011).

New Bill for the University of Geneva

In 2009, a new law for the University of Geneva was implemented. Geneva was the last Canton to reform its legal framework. Since 1988, all cantonal universities and federal institutes of technology have had their bills changed in order, among other things, to provide them with increasing institutional autonomy.

Quality

Qualifications Framework of the Swiss Higher Education Area nqf.ch-HS launched

In 2009, CRUS together with the KFH⁷⁶ and COHEP⁷⁷ adopted a resolution on the qualification framework for Swiss higher education. This resolution describes learning outcomes required on all three degree levels of the Swiss higher education system (bachelor, master and doctorate) and “represents a paradigm change” as is claimed by CRUS.

The qualification framework describes and defines for all types of Swiss higher education institutions the various levels and qualifications of Swiss tertiary education with the support of descriptors, admission requirements, ECTS- credits and final degrees. Its objective is threefold:

- 1) serve as an orientation tool for the higher education institutions to develop and describe their study courses and programs
- 2) to improve the information about the Swiss higher education system, particularly with regard to teaching
- 3) to facilitate the comparability of qualifications in Europe and to enhance transparency⁷⁸

According to Antonio Loprieno, CRUS president and rector of the University of Basle, the greatest achievement of the qualification framework is the realisation of the description of the three different types of higher education. The Swiss higher education landscape features distinct types of universities: At the Tertiary A level there are two types of higher education institutes with differing educational mandates, namely the traditional universities including the cantonal universities and the federal institutes of technology, where education is linked on basic research. Next, there are the Universities of Applied Sciences where teaching is based on applied research. And there are many options in the field of higher vocational education and

⁷⁶ Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences

⁷⁷ Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Teacher Education

⁷⁸ http://www.crus.ch/information-programme/qualifications-framework-nqfch-hs.html?no_cache=1&L=2

training (Tertiary B level) with the practically oriented certificate and diploma exams and courses at the colleges of higher vocational education and training (OPET, 2006).

Internationalisation

Facilitated Job Market Entrance for Foreigners

In June 2010, the Swiss Parliament approved the initiative to facilitate the entrance of foreigners with a Swiss higher education degree to the Swiss employment market. Foreigners from neither EU- nor EFTA countries may spend up to six months in Switzerland after their graduation to search for a job under the condition of having acquired their university diploma at a Swiss university. The new law also implies that preferential treatment will no longer be granted to foreigners with an EU- or NAFTA nationality.⁷⁹

General policy debates (policy intentions and policy action/outcomes)

Discussion Paper on Re-Calculation of Cost-Intensive Areas

In June 2011, the CRUS plenum approved of a new method for selecting cost-intensive research areas. This method has been developed by the Commission for Planning and Coordination (CPC-CRUS). After the approval of the new Swiss higher education law (HFKG), it will be put at the disposal of the concerned authorities.

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Currently the CRUS is working on the development of a better cost estimate of resource-intensive areas. A first method is based on the assumption that cost-intensive areas require a sophisticated and expensive infrastructures that can jointly be established and used. Based on a survey among universities the selected areas for which universities - either in cooperation with other universities or other types of research institutes- have effectuated joint investments for expensive infrastructure are: a) High Performance Computing, b) Imaging, c) Particle Physics and d) Access to Scientific Information. These four areas will be analysed in detail, whereas aspects such as financial need (including operating costs), infrastructures, expected future developments and (added) value for Swiss research will play a major role in the calculation method.⁸⁰

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⁷⁹ <http://www.crus.ch/news/newsletter/newsletter-system/newsletter-deutsch/nr-14-juli-2010.html>

⁸⁰ <http://www.crus.ch/news/newsletter/newsletter-system/newsletter-deutsch/nr-21-juli-2011.html>

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14 The United States

Introduction

Higher education in the U.S. is the responsibility of the states, rather than of the federal government. In the recent years due to the economic downturn quite some policy initiatives were taken in the areas of funding, financial aid, research and access (Leisyte and Dee 2012). The highlight of the recent period was the Federal initiative to provide short-term funding via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and to ensure the access to higher education despite the lack of resources at the state levels as well as the increases in tuition fees of higher education institutions. In the following I provide an overview of the key policy initiatives at the federal level with some examples of concrete states in terms of teaching and learning, research, funding, internationalization and access.

Teaching and learning

In 2009, the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers coordinated an effort to develop a set of national standards of skills and knowledge to prepare K-12 students for college. These common Core State Standards are divided into two areas: English/Language/Arts and Mathematics. They define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses.

The process of adoption involved an extensive consultation process after which 48 states have adopted them (AASCU 2010, 2011, CCSSI 2011).

Research

US research policy often involves funding of research in strategic areas, with the research agenda changing from time to time. The 2000s were a period of more limited emphasis on a few strategic areas (e.g. energy, nanotechnology) of federal funding. In the energy area, the focus was on limited investments to promote energy independence with a higher share of energy sources originating in domestic sources. This approach was seen in legislation in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

The late 2000s represented an area of emphasis on more generic instruments, with a long term target to double the R&D budgets of three federal agencies as described in the America COMPETES Act: National Science Foundation, Office of Science, Department of Energy, National Institute of Standards and Technology (ERAWATCH 2010)

The National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) was more of a cross-agency umbrella initiative that develops and coordinates R&D activities, participates in the setting of budgets, federal

policies, and technology transfer in the burgeoning area of nanotechnology (Leisyte 2011, ERAWATCH 2010). Currently the priority areas include clean energy and health technology as seen from the Strategy for American Innovation: Driving Towards Sustainable Growth and Quality Jobs. (EC, ERAWATCH 2010)

In 2011, the Obama administration tightened the policies related to financial conflicts of interest in federally funded science research. Researchers are required to disclose their financial relationships with corporations. Universities are required to notify federal sponsors regarding details of financial conflicts and their plans to manage the conflicts. This is the first policy change in 16 years. The goal is to increase the transparency of any corporate influence on federally sponsored science research (Basken 2011)

Beginning in January 2011, the National Science Foundation requires researchers to include a data-management plan with their grant proposal. The goal is to make research data more available to other researchers and the public. NSF does not require researchers to share their data but those who choose not to will be required to provide reasons for not sharing their data (LeClere 2010).

Funding

Public universities have experienced a relative decline in the state's share of institutional revenues, from around 43% in 1985 to approximately 27% in 2009 (NCES, 2010). Some large public research universities receive less than 10% of their revenues from the state (Leisyte and Dee 2012)

In response to the economic crisis, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided short-term, temporary funding to states (up to 3 years) to ensure accessibility and affordability for students, and to allow public institutions to develop a more sustainable long-term financial plan (AASCU 2010, 2011, NCPPHE 2009, USDE 2009). Still the local and state governments are facing serious budgetary problems. Appropriations to state universities have been cut and tuition raised considerably. Students have become more dependent on financial aid (Expert interview)

Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2009 increased the limit of the Pell Grant to \$5,500 in 2010 and up to \$6,900 by 2019. It also consolidated bank-based loan programs to a direct loan program and streamlined the payment process for students. (AASCU 2010, Lederman 2010, Nelson 2011)

American Graduation Initiative – In July 2009, President Obama announced an initiative to enhance the role of community colleges in workforce development and called for community colleges to graduate an additional 5 million students by 2020. The initiative is estimated to cost \$12 billion (AASCU 2010).

Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 expanded the educational benefits provided to military personnel who serve on active duty for more than 3 years since September 11, 2001. The additional benefits would cover up to 100% of the costs for attending a public institution for up to 36 months. Full-time students are eligible for housing allowance (AASCU 2009, 2010)

In June 2011, Washington state Governor Gregoire signed into law a public-private Washington Opportunity Scholarship program that is intended to raise corporate funds to provide scholarships to eligible students from low- and middle- income families who attend the state's public institutions. Microsoft and Boeing have pledged \$25 million each (Fain, 2011)

In 2011, Georgia state Governor Deal increased the GPA requirement and eliminated funding for books and mandatory fees for the state's HOPE Scholarship program. The program is funded primarily by the state's lottery revenue. The decline in revenue necessitated the change (AASCU 2011, Kelderman, 2011).

Governance

The relationship between state governments and public research universities has changed significantly in terms of governance and accountability (Leisyte and Dee 2012). The recent reductions in the relative share of state funding have triggered changes in the governance relationships between states and universities (Morphew and Eckel, 2009). Public institutions have generally been provided greater autonomy, but often in exchange for their compliance with new accountability measures. Research universities have become subject to greater external scrutiny, including government efforts to ensure institutional accountability to students and taxpayers, as well as third-party assessments of university quality as defined by various, ad hoc university rankings (Bastedo & Bowman, 2011)

In June 2011, California state Governor Brown eliminated the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the state's higher education coordinating board, as a measure to reduce state budget. The closing of the agency raised the question of the coordination of the state's three higher education systems and access to the state's college student data (CPEC 2011, Kelderman 2011, Keller 2011).

In March 2011, Wisconsin state Governor Walker initiated plans to separate the flagship Madison campus from the University of Wisconsin system, giving the campus more autonomy in exchange for a reduction in state appropriation. The Wisconsin state legislature did not approve the plan, and instead commissioned a task force to study the University of Wisconsin structure (Stripling 2011).

Internationalisation

More than 86 college presidents petitioned the federal government to restore funding to foreign-language and international programs, specifically Title VI and the Fulbright-Hays

programs. They reasoned that these programs are important to strengthen the U.S. economy and national security (National Humanities Alliance 2011)

In January 2011, President Obama eased travel restrictions to Cuba to allow more purposeful people-to-people contact to promote academic, cultural, and religious exchanges. This policy allows degree candidates at U.S. universities to study abroad in Cuba. It also expands travel opportunities for faculty and staff for educational purposes (BBC News 2011, NAFSA 2011).

Access

In response to declining funding for higher education, 11 states placed a limit on enrolment at their flagship campuses in 2010-2011. For instance, the enrolment in California's public institutions dropped by 165,000 despite an increase in applications (AASCU 2011, Keller 2011).

Beginning fall 2012, the University of California will eliminate SAT subject tests from its admissions requirements and reduce guaranteed spots to 10% of top graduating high school students (from 12.5%). This policy is intended to increase access to a larger pool of students because it will allow students to be evaluated more comprehensively (Keller and Hoover, 2009)

In October 2011, California state Governor Brown signed a bill that will allow undocumented students who graduated from high schools in California to be eligible for state financial aid, beginning July 2012. They will also be eligible for reduced tuition and tuition waiver at the state's public institutions (McGreevy and York, 2011, Associated Press)

The federal government would like to assist greater access by strengthening Community Colleges, but can do little since it is the responsibility of the states which now face serious financial difficulties. States too are emphasizing community colleges as they are cheaper. However tuition has been rising there too which poses serious threat to access.

Texas, Washington, and Indiana established public online institutions in partnership with Western Governors University, a non-profit online institution. The goal for creating these institutions is to expand access to higher education via less expensive, online learning environments. Washington and Texas do not allow students to use state financial aid for the programs (students can use federal aid). Indiana, on the other hand, allows students to use both state and federal aid. (Kelderman 2011, Parry 2011, Young 2011).

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15 European Union

EU 2020 strategy

The **'Europe 2020' strategy**, launched in March 2010, heralds a new era, follows on from the Lisbon Strategy (2000-2010) and sets three priorities: smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (COM, 2010; European Council, 2010). The headline targets of Europe's 2020 strategy are:

- 1) From the current 69% to at least 75% of the population aged 20-64 should be employed.
- 2) 3% of the EU's GDP (public and private combined) should be invested in R&D and innovation and the development of a new indicator to track innovation
- 3) The '20/20/20' climate/energy targets should be met.
- 4) Reduce the share of early school leavers to under 10% from the current 15% and increase the share of the populations aged 30-34 who completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40%.
- 5) 20 million fewer people on the verge of poverty and social exclusion (reduction of 25%)

The targets 2 and 4 are directly related to higher education and research and stress once more the EC's view that higher education and research is at the heart of Europe's future prosperity. To meet the five targets, among other things, seven flagship initiatives have been proposed (COM, 2010). The initiatives linked to higher education include:⁸¹

- the *Innovation Union*, launched on 6 October 2010, which aims to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation so as to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs. It also seeks to re-focus R&D so that it becomes more relevant to today's world, and centres on major challenges such as climate change, energy efficiency, health policy, and demographic change.
- *Youth on the move*, launched on 15 September 2010 and embracing both education and employment, which aims to enhance the quality and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education system and to promote student and young professional mobility, as a means to prepare young people for today's job market.
- An *Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*, launched in November 2010, which aims to bring together both 'work' and 'education' into one integrated lifelong learning process so as to improve employment and the sustainability of social models. It intends to do this by bringing businesses, employers, education and training closer together, so as to better match skills with the needs of the labour market. Regarding higher education, the Commission aims to widen access to education and to develop, with the help of businesses, outcome-based qualifications.

⁸¹ The other four flagship initiatives include 'Digital Agenda for Europe', 'Resource-efficient Europe', 'Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era' and 'European Platform against Poverty'.

The ambitions for higher education are high and hard to achieve. The European Union acknowledges its limited competences with respect to higher education. Therefore, it 'invites' the member states to establish national reform programmes attuned to Europe's 2020 strategy. Close cooperation with the European Commission and promotion of collaboration between higher education institutions, research institutions and enterprises are called for. Policy learning, the Open Method of Coordination, reporting and monitoring (progress reports⁸² and country-specific guidance) should enable this.

Modernising higher education systems

Europe's 2020 strategy sets out the agenda for modernising the higher education agenda: **"Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems"** (COM 2011 – 567). This agenda reflects the EC's perception of the need to improve the quality and efficiency of higher education and training. Attainment levels, quality of teaching programmes better attuned to labour market needs, mobility of staff and students, establishing world class universities in different areas (diversity) and university-enterprise relationships are key foci for change. To realise the high ambitions the EC argues that (more) reforms in key areas are needed. The reforms should aim at:

- an increase of the quantity of higher education graduates at all levels;
- an enhancement of the quality and relevance of human capital development in higher education;
- the creation of effective governance and funding mechanisms in support of excellence;
- a strengthening of the knowledge triangle between education, research and business.

Horizon 2020⁸³

On November 2011, the European Commission has presented a package of measures to boost research, innovation and competitiveness in Europe. With **Horizon 2020**, the EC proposes an €80 billion programme for investment in research and innovation for 2014 to 2020. It brings together all EU research and innovation funding under a single programme. Horizon 2020 will focus on three key objectives.

The first objective is Excellent Science. Horizon 2020 will raise the level of excellence in Europe's science base and ensure a steady stream of world-class research to secure Europe's long-term competitiveness. It will support the best ideas, develop talent within Europe, provide researchers with access to priority research infrastructure, and make Europe an attractive location for the world's best researchers. It will support the most talented and creative

⁸² The progress report on the Europe 2020 strategy, published on 23 November 2011, says with respect to the headline target 2 that the EU tertiary attainment rate has increased (from 32.3% to 33.6%) and that the current trends suggests that the headline target of 40% could in fact be met (EC, 2011). The research and development target is more problematic; it falls short with little progress foreseen in 2011.

⁸³ http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/pdf/proposals/communication_from_the_commission_-_horizon_2020_-_the_framework_programme_for_research_and_innovation.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

individuals and their teams to carry out frontier research of the highest quality by building on the success of the European Research Council; fund collaborative research to open up new and promising fields of research and innovation through support for Future and Emerging Technologies; provide researchers with excellent training and career development opportunities through the Marie Curie Actions; ensure Europe has world-class research infrastructures (including e-infrastructures) accessible to all researchers in Europe and beyond.

The Competitive Industries objective aims at making Europe a more attractive location to invest in research and innovation, by promoting activities where businesses set the agenda. It will provide major investment in key industrial technologies, maximise the growth potential of European companies by providing them with adequate levels of finance and help innovative SMEs to grow into world-leading companies. **Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies** will support the development of technologies underpinning innovation across a range of sectors, including ICT and space. Horizon 2020 will have a strong focus on developing European **industrial capabilities** in *Key Enabling Technologies* (KETs): Micro- and nano-electronics; photonics; Nanotechnologies; Advanced materials; Biotechnology; Advanced manufacturing and processing.

The third objective is to establish a Better Society. This addresses major concerns shared by citizens in Europe and elsewhere. A challenge-based approach will bring together resources and knowledge across different fields, technologies and disciplines, including social sciences and the humanities. This will cover activities from research to market with a new focus on innovation-related activities, such as piloting, demonstration, test-beds, and support for public procurement and market uptake. It will include establishing links with the activities of the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP). Funding will be focused on the following challenges: Health, demographic change and wellbeing; Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy; Secure, clean and efficient energy; Smart, green and integrated transport; Inclusive, innovative and secure societies; Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials.

Erasmus for all

Up to 5 million people, almost twice as many as now, could get the chance to study or train abroad with a grant from Erasmus for All, the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission in 2011. Among them would be nearly 3 million higher education and vocational students. Master's degree students would also benefit from a new loan guarantee scheme set up with the European Investment Bank Group. The seven-year Erasmus for All programme, which would have a total budget of €19 billion, is due to start in 2014.

Lifelong Learning

In 2011, the European Commission published the outcomes of an evaluation of its Lifelong Learning programme. It states that this programme has contributed to (policy)collaboration and (policy) exchange as well as to the development of the European dimension in education and training. Transparency and recognition of qualifications is seen as value added. However, a

direct impact of lifelong learning on the modernisation of higher education systems is unclear. There is room for improvement. The Commission does the following recommendations:

- A stronger focus on priorities and goals of the EU 2020 strategy
- A better incorporation of those that are not part of formal education and training
- More and better integration and harmonisation of implementation between different policy sectors
- Greater investments in mechanism of recognition of competences
- Reduction of bureaucratic burden
- Renewed and clear cooperation between Education, Audio-visual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) and national agencies.

European Cooperation in Education and Training to support implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy⁸⁴

On 20th December 2011, the Commission adopted the draft Joint Report of the Council and the Commission "Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe", on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in education and training ("ET2020"). The report summarises the actions and developments during the first 2009-2011 cycle of implementing "ET2020" and suggests priority areas for European policy cooperation for the next cycle 2012-14. It highlights in particular how cooperation in education and training can support reaching the objectives of the "Europe 2020" strategy.

Key findings:

- The imperative to consolidate public finance puts budgets under pressure – including expenditure for education and training. However, as improving educational achievements can yield immense long-term returns and generate growth and jobs, there is a need for smart investment going along with policy reforms improving the quality of outcomes.
- More efforts are needed to reach the Europe 2020 headline target on early school leaving and tertiary education and to implement the reforms called for by the 2011 Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving and the recent Commission Communication on the modernisation of higher education.
- For the majority of EU citizens, lifelong learning is not a reality. This bodes ill for those hit hardest by the crisis. Unemployed youth and low-skilled adults depend on education and training to stand a fair chance on the labour market.
- Transnational mobility for acquiring new skills enables individuals to strengthen their future employability and personal development. However, the current levels of mobility do not match its importance and benefits.
- As the crisis has accelerated the change of skills needs on the labour market and the need to improve Europe's skills base, ET2020 will support the implementation of the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Agenda for new skills and jobs" by promoting key competences for all citizens, close cooperation between education and the labour market and improved monitoring and anticipation of skills needs.

⁸⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1532_en.htm

The Commission suggests these areas to be confirmed as priorities for European cooperation during the next "ET 2020" work cycle (2012-2014), so as to sustain a successful implementation of "Europe 2020". The joint report will now be discussed in the Council in view of its adoption under the Danish presidency 2012.