



TWO DECADES OF REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS



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REFORM IN HIGHER
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1980 ONWARDS**

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PREFACE

Higher education has long been recognised as an instrument of cultural, social and economic advancement for societies and for their individual members. During the latter half of the 20th century, a rising proportion of the European population from mixed socio-economic backgrounds asserted their right to higher education to acquire new skills or to improve them throughout adult life. This met with the full support of the educational authorities which viewed such a development as a catalyst for cultural and economic prosperity. It is important to remember that, across the European Union, the number of students has more than doubled in the last twenty years. They now number more than twelve million. This surge in demand forced European countries to review their educational offer in relation to availability, relevance, quality, cost and efficiency. In order to provide a better understanding of the developments in this area during the past 20 years, Eurydice, the Information Network on Education in Europe, was asked to prepare the current study covering the EU and EFTA/EEA countries.

In an attempt to identify the major factors that have shaped reforms during the period under consideration, the answer seems to lie as much in the unprecedented influence economic and social life has gained over public higher education as in the increased emphasis on its quality. These were a result of governments relaxing their tight control over higher education by making institutions more autonomous. While public authorities for the most part set only general parameters for operation, they used the quality of the product as a yardstick for funding and thus ensured institutional accountability. The economic world, in its public and private forms, was asked to step in and act both as adviser in questions of administration, quality assurance and curricular design, as well as sponsor.

The study reveals that the reforms undertaken in Europe over the last twenty years, while retaining certain national particularities, increasingly displayed common dimensions and trends. The strengthening of European cooperation in the area of higher education appears to be a widely shared desire. This is undoubtedly the product of Community action in this field over many years, in particular the Erasmus programme. An important milestone was reached last year with the adoption of the Declaration of Bologna by twenty-nine countries on the development of a European Higher Education Area. It is hoped that such an area will promote better European-wide recognition and transferability of study attainments, ever greater mobility of the academic community, strengthened cooperation in quality assurance and a review of higher education structures. The impetus created by this Declaration should lead the participating countries into the 3rd Millennium and guide their higher education policies in the direction of ever closer cooperation.

Viviane Reding
Commissioner Education and Culture
February 2000

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GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATIONS

Country codes

EU	European Union
B	Belgium
B fr	Belgium - French Community
B de	Belgium - German-speaking Community
B nl	Belgium - Flemish Community
DK	Denmark
D	Germany
EL	Greece
E	Spain
F	France
IRL	Ireland
I	Italy
L	Luxembourg
NL	Netherlands
A	Austria
P	Portugal
FIN	Finland
S	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom
E/W	England and Wales
NI	Northern Ireland
SC	Scotland
EFTA/EEA	European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area
IS	Iceland
LI	Liechtenstein
NO	Norway

Other abbreviations

(:)	Not available
(-)	Not applicable
AEI	<i>Anotato Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i> (Greece)
APL	Accreditation of prior learning (United Kingdom)
Bafög	<i>Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz</i> (Germany)
CAO	Central Applications Office (Ireland)
CAT	Credit Accumulation Transfer Schemes (United Kingdom)
CESE	<i>Cursos de estudos superiores especializados</i> (Portugal)
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards (United Kingdom)
CNE	<i>Comité National d'Évaluation</i> (France)
CNED	<i>Centre national d'enseignement à distance</i> (France)
COU	<i>Curso de Orientación Universitaria</i> (Spain)
CROHO	<i>Centraal register opleidingen hoger onderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)
CUNLUX	<i>Centre universitaire de Luxembourg</i> (Luxembourg)
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (United Kingdom)
DAAD	<i>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst</i> (Germany)
DAEU	<i>Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires</i> (France)
DEA	<i>Diplôme d'études approfondies</i> (France)
DESE	<i>Diploma de estudos superiores especializados</i> (Portugal)
DESS	<i>Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées</i> (France, French Community of Belgium)
DEUG	<i>Diplôme d'études universitaires générales</i> (France)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EPSCP	<i>Établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel</i> (France)
ESEU	<i>Examen spécial d'entrée universitaire</i> (France)
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
FHL	<i>Fachhochschule Liechtenstein</i> (Liechtenstein)

GDP	Gross domestic product
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualifications (United Kingdom)
HBO	<i>Hoger beroepsonderwijs</i> (Netherlands)
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council (United Kingdom)
HHX	<i>Højere handelseksamen</i> (Denmark)
HOOP	<i>Hoger onderwijs onderzoek plan</i> (the Netherlands)
HRG	<i>Hochschulrahmengesetz</i> (Germany)
HSP	<i>Hochschulsonderprogramm</i> (Germany)
HTX	<i>Højere teknisk eksamen</i> (Denmark)
IAP	<i>Internationale Akademie für Philosophie</i> (Liechtenstein)
ICT	Information and communications technology
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (United Kingdom)
ISCED	International Standard Classification for Education
ISERP	<i>Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques</i> (Luxembourg)
IST	<i>Institut supérieur de technologie</i> (Luxembourg)
IUFM	<i>Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres</i> (France)
IUT	<i>Instituts universitaires de technologie</i> (France)
IUP	<i>Instituts universitaires professionnalisés</i> (France)
LOGSE	<i>Ley Orgánica de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo</i> (Spain)
LRU	<i>Ley Orgánica de Reforma Universitaria</i> (Spain)
NARIC	Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards (Ireland)
NORDPLUS	Nordic Programme for the Mobility of University Students and Teachers
NUFFIC	<i>Nederlandse organisatie voor internationale samenwerking in het hoger onderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PCAS	Polytechnics Central Admissions Service (United Kingdom)
ÖAD	<i>Österreichischer Akademischer Austauschdienst</i> (Austria)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OU	Open University (United Kingdom)
PRODEP	<i>Programas de desenvolvimento educativo para Portugal</i> (Portugal)
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (United Kingdom - Scotland)
SCOTCAT	Scottish Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (United Kingdom - Scotland)
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association (United Kingdom)
SOFF	<i>Sentralorganet for fjernundervisning på universitets- og høghskolenivå</i> (Norway)
TEI	<i>Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i> (Greece)
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (United Kingdom)
UCCA	Universities Central Council of Admissions (United Kingdom)
UER	<i>Unité d'enseignement et de recherche</i> (France)
UHI	University of the Highlands and Islands (United Kingdom)
UOE	Unesco/OECD/Eurostat
UNED	<i>Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia</i> (Spain)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
VSNU	<i>Vereniging van Universiteiten</i> (the Netherlands)
WHBO	<i>Wet op het hoger beroepsonderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)
WHO	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)
WHW	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)
WWO	<i>Wet op het wetenschappelijk onderwijs</i> (the Netherlands)

PART I

Comparative analysis of higher education reforms between 1980 and 1998

INTRODUCTION

Since the expansion of higher education in European countries began during the 1960s, higher education policy has increasingly been the focus of interest and the subject of international comparison as exemplified by publications such as those of Neave and Van Vught (1991), Gellert (1993), or Goedegebuure et al. (1994). Countries and institutions are more and more likely to examine the experiences of their peers abroad before embarking on reforms or changes to their own systems. Although education policy is primarily the responsibility of individual Member States according to the principle of subsidiarity, Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty recognised for the first time the responsibility of the European Community to promote cooperation in education between European countries. In 1991, a *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community* was published by the European Commission as a contribution to the ongoing debate in Member States on the policies necessary to develop their higher education systems to meet the changing needs of the 21st century. The Memorandum identified five critical areas for the future development of higher education: participation in and access to higher education, partnership with economic life, continuing education, open and distance learning, and the European dimension in higher education. The importance of student mobility, the international role of higher education, the need for strategic management at institutional level as well as the issues of quality and finance were addressed in this Memorandum. The document was widely distributed and discussed throughout the European Community during 1992 and the responses contributed to the development of European Commission proposals for European initiatives in the higher education field.

Earlier Community action programmes in education, beginning with the first action programme adopted in 1976, had made cooperation in higher education a priority. Closer international links between higher education institutions in Europe have been developed as a result of the various Community programmes launched in 1987 to promote student mobility and partnerships between institutions, such as Erasmus, Lingua (now part of the Socrates programme) and through EU-funded research programmes. Furthermore, reforms in some European countries have been linked to or motivated by specific European Union initiatives such as the system for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or the European pilot project for evaluating quality in higher education.

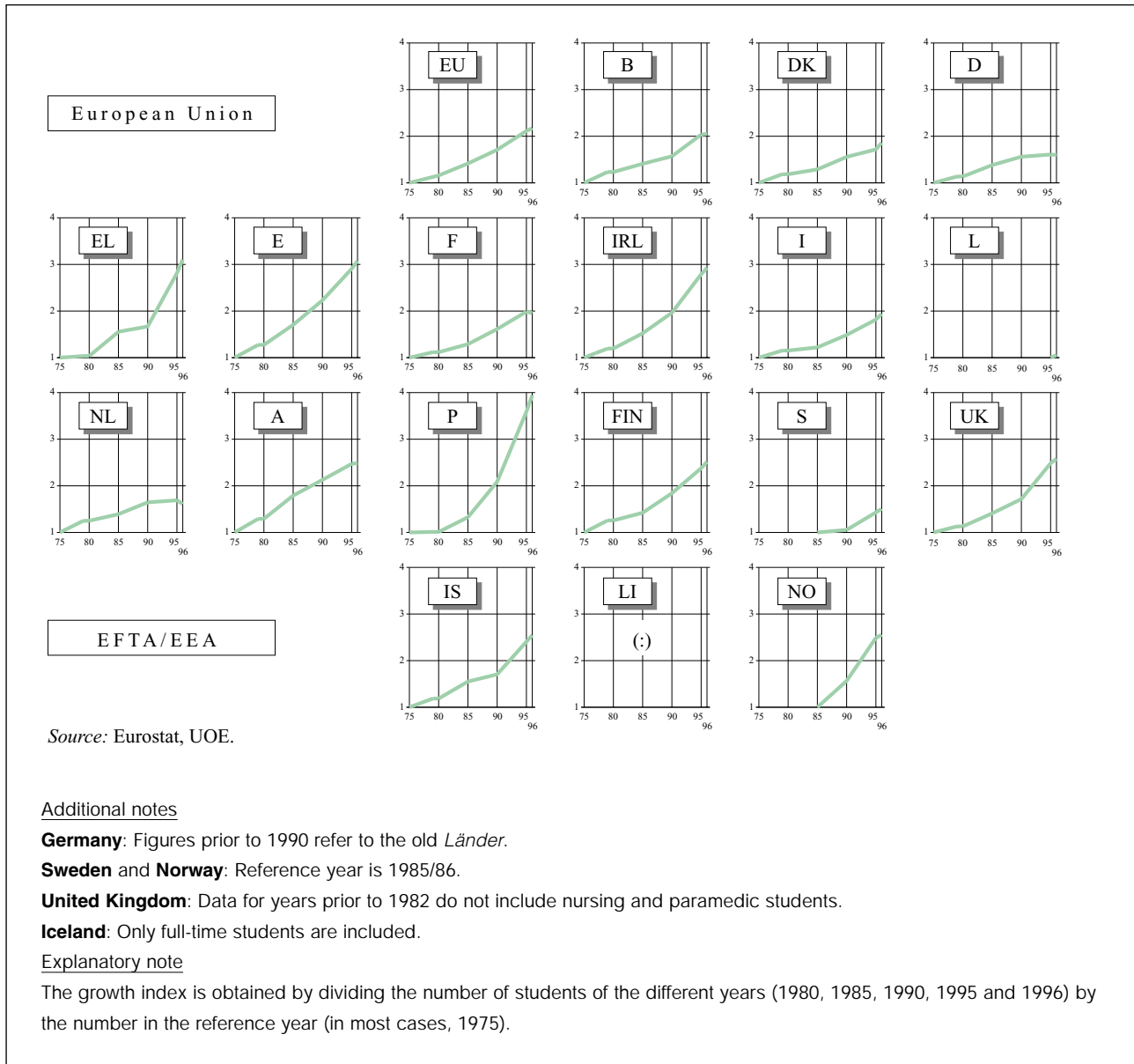
The aim of this study is to examine reforms in the higher education sector in the fifteen European Union Member States and the three EFTA/EEA countries between 1980 and 1998 and to identify the main trends together with the convergences and divergences between the different countries. This study of the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries therefore represents a unique opportunity to investigate the context for, and the direction of, reforms in higher education in Europe during the 1980s and 1990s. It examines and compares the nature and timing of reforms in the different countries during a period of considerable economic, political and social change and increasing internationalisation.

1. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

All European countries have seen a massive increase in the size of the higher education sector since World War II. This has been reflected both in the increase in the number and diversity of higher education institutions and the increase in the number of applicants for places in higher education. In most countries, expansion was greatest during the 1960s, while in others (Spain, Ireland, Austria, Portugal and Iceland) most expansion took place during the 1980s. In Spain, Ireland and Portugal, accession to the European Community and the availability of European funding played an important part

in the growth of higher education. Figure 0.1 (European Commission, Eurydice, Eurostat, 2000, p. 104) shows the trends in the number of students in higher education from 1975/76 to 1996/97.

Figure 0.1: Trends in the number of students in tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6, 7), from 1975/76 to 1996/97



The increased demand for places in higher education during the 1960s and 1970s was partly the result of an increase in the size of the age group leaving upper secondary school. However, it was also the consequence of raised social expectations after the war as a greater proportion of the age group achieved the qualifications needed for entry to university. Since 1980, changes in the European labour market, particularly the move away from heavy industry towards more service-based employment, have reinforced the demand for higher-level training to improve employment prospects in most European countries. Despite the decrease in the number of school-leavers seen in most countries since 1985, the demand for higher education has continued to increase in most countries as young people and adults choose to obtain further qualifications before entering a very competitive job market. Only in the Belgian French Community, Germany, France and the Netherlands has the number of higher education students begun to level out during the mid-1990s. Reforms relating to access to higher education have therefore been a focus of this study.

The labour market changes appear also to have become increasingly important in the planning of higher education programmes at both national and local level, leading to the creation of more vocationally-oriented higher education courses for both young people and adults and stimulating closer links between business and the higher education institutions. In most countries this was reflected in the restructuring of higher education during the 1980s by upgrading specialist training colleges (e.g. teacher and social work training, artistic and musical education) to higher education level and by expanding the non-university sector to provide more technically-based higher education.

Another major influence on the higher education systems of the European countries during the period covered by the study has been the economic recession and the resulting restrictions on public spending which most countries experienced during the 1980s as a result of the 1970s oil crisis. After a brief recovery during the early 1990s, many countries imposed further reductions in public spending as a result of decreases in GDP during the mid-1990s and in order to meet the Maastricht criteria for Monetary Union. Since European higher education systems are substantially publicly financed, most have experienced real decreases in funding which have been exacerbated by the simultaneous increase in the demand for student places. In many countries this has stimulated changes in the systems for allocating public funds, with a move towards the awarding of contracts based on competitive bidding by institutions. In some countries, institutions have also been encouraged to look for funds from alternative sources such as regional governments or industry, or to look abroad for students and research funds. In planning terms, this increased market exposure has been seen as a way of improving the competitiveness and therefore the quality of higher education provision, as well as a way of reducing public costs. In order to perform well in a more market-oriented environment, the management of higher education institutions has had to become more efficient and professional, and capable of planning and delivering a marketable service. The development of institutional management has been reinforced by reforms in many countries giving institutions increased autonomy, particularly over their budgets and the planning of courses.

This study therefore looks at the changes in the management and control of higher education institutions, particularly in relation to financing and quality control. It also examines the ways countries have tried to increase the cost-effectiveness of higher education by reducing student dropout and shortening the time taken by students to acquire a higher education qualification. This is reflected in adjustments to the student financial aid systems and by changes in the structure and length of higher education courses, both of which form a focus of this study.

At the same time, the enlargement of the European Union and the increasing internationalisation of the economies have encouraged countries to compare the quality and competitiveness of their higher education systems. In addition, as mentioned above, European action programmes have influenced the developments of links between higher education institutions across Europe. This study therefore also looks at reforms aimed at increasing the internationalisation of higher education in Europe.

However, although the European countries in this study shared many similar demographic, economic and social trends, the different historical, political and cultural contexts in which these operated meant that the response in terms of reforms to the higher education system differed from country to country. More country-specific factors such as the return to democratic rule in Spain, Portugal and Greece, the break-up of the Soviet Union, the devolution of responsibility to the Communities in Belgium and the decentralisation of power over education in Spain influenced the direction and timing of reforms in higher education. The differences as well as the similarities among European countries are therefore a focus of this study.

2. DEFINITIONS

The national descriptions¹ used as the basis for this study were written, always in close consultation with the national Eurydice units, either by independent experts or by experts within the Ministry responsible for higher education. The view of the reform process which these exemplify is, therefore, primarily that of the national or regional government which oversees the higher education sector. In order to ensure that a similar range of issues was addressed, all country descriptions were based on the same framework. Furthermore, the definitions of the key concepts were agreed before the study began.

Although the great majority of studies of higher education focus on the university sector, this study attempted, where possible, to encompass both the university and the non-university sectors since the latter has undergone considerable expansion and change during the period under review. In order to have a consistent basis for comparison in all European countries, the importance of clearly distinguishing between higher education and further education or other lower-level post-secondary, non-tertiary, education was emphasised.

Higher education was defined for this study as:

All post-secondary education for which at least an upper secondary school-leaving certificate or equivalent is required and which leads to a higher-level qualification. It comprises courses classified at new ISCED 97² levels 5 and 6. Where appropriate, reforms relating both to universities and to other types of non-university higher education institutions have been included.

The aim of this study was to focus primarily on the changes in higher education which resulted from identifiable national or regional policy, depending on the locus of responsibility for higher education, and to link reform to relevant legislation or published policy documents. It was, however, recognised that in some areas of higher education such as curriculum and teaching, which are primarily the responsibility of the institutions, change may be the result of institutional initiatives. In this study, such changes would only be considered to constitute a reform if they gave rise to a policy intended to ensure that such change is also implemented in other higher education institutions or at other levels of the system.

A reform was defined as:

Any substantive, intentional change to the higher education system which has emanated from specific government or regional policy. It may affect a specific area only, such as finance, or may cover a much wider area such as the entire structure of higher education. The responsibility for the implementation of reforms may lie at different levels, including that of the individual institution.

¹ The national descriptions are contained in the CD-ROM attached to this study.

² International Standard Classification for Education.

It should be emphasised that the relationship between policy, legislation and reform varies between European countries and this will be discussed in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change.

The study focuses on reforms between 1980 and 1998. This time span was chosen because it covers a period of considerable change in European higher education and allows for meaningful comparison between different countries. However, there were significant earlier reforms, the effect of which was only felt during the period covered by the study and these changes were taken into account in the analysis.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study has a two-part structure. The first part is a comparative analysis of the reforms in higher education based on the national descriptions provided by the fifteen EU Member States and the three EFTA/EEA countries. The second part consists of the national descriptions themselves, one for each country, with separate reports for Scotland and the rest of the UK and for the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium. As the higher education sector in the Belgian German-speaking Community is limited to a very small number of institutions (for teacher training, nursing and allied studies) and since most students pursue their studies in the Belgian French Community or in Germany, separate information for the German-speaking Community is therefore not included. Both the **comparative analysis** and the **national descriptions** employ the same structure based on the main areas of reform:

Introduction

Chapter 1: Legislation for Change

Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control

Chapter 3: Access and Wastage

Chapter 4: Financial Aid to Students

Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching

Chapter 6: Internationalisation

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The **Introduction** sets the scene for describing the reforms in higher education. In the national descriptions, it includes a brief history of higher education in the country, describes the main social, political, demographic and economic context for the reforms described in the rest of the document, and explains the role and structure of higher education, including details of the different institutions which offered higher education in 1998.

Chapter 1: Legislation for Change examines the policies underlying reform and takes a closer look at the instruments employed to formulate and enforce these policies. Memoranda, position papers, White Papers etc, are listed as policy formulating instruments, while legislation is considered to be a policy enforcing instrument. The pattern and focus of legislation and policy documents are discussed and the comparative analysis takes a closer look at the similarities and differences in the reform process in the participating countries.

Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control looks at reforms affecting the management, financing and quality control of higher education institutions. The focus is on the responsibilities of higher education institutions as well as regional or national government in the provision of public higher education. Reforms and recent trends which have influenced the overall independence or autonomy of higher education since 1980, are discussed. Specific issues relating to the allocation of funds or the evaluation of quality of output are addressed under the appropriate sub-sections.

Chapter 3: Access and Wastage focuses on changes in entry requirements to higher education and on reforms of the access routes for mature-age students or those with non-traditional qualifications. Any reforms designed to reduce wastage or dropout of students from their courses are also described.

Chapter 4: Financial Aid to Students examines the main changes in public financial support for students in higher education. Only a broad outline is given as reforms in this area are examined in detail in the recently published study by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe, 1999*.

Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching examines the changes in the structure of higher education, course planning, teaching methods, the assessment of students and the training of higher education teaching staff. It focuses on the balance between the traditional academic disciplines and the professional and vocationally-oriented courses in the higher education course offer and the changes since 1980. This chapter also looks at reforms relating to higher education qualifications and the move towards more flexible course structures.

Chapter 6: Internationalisation looks at the opening up of higher education to international influences in terms of course provision and through cooperation and exchange of students and staff. Measures taken to promote an international and in particular a European dimension in higher education teaching and research are considered. This includes provision for students in their home countries (e.g. the European dimension in the curriculum, courses in foreign languages, preparatory courses for study abroad, exchange arrangements for students, transferability of student aid) as well as specific provision for foreign students (e.g. courses delivered in foreign languages, language courses for foreigners, recognition of foreign qualifications and study periods abroad, cooperative links with institutions in other countries, funding for foreign students).

The final chapter, **Chapter 7: Conclusions and Future Perspectives** looks ahead to anticipate possible future reforms in the higher education sector and to give an overview of the direction of any changes. The national contributions include the description of important on-going or planned reforms which have not yet reached the statute books. In the comparative analysis this chapter gives an overview of the main areas of reforms and their socio-economic background. While trying to identify common trends in the development of the higher education systems, the chapter also discusses the reasons why certain countries maintained or introduced differing approaches.

CHAPTER 1: LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

The definition of reform adopted for this study requires changes in higher education to be linked to specific government or regional policy, underlining the importance of understanding the official basis for such changes before examining their effects in practice. The present chapter looks at the relevant legislation and published policies in the different countries and tries to relate them to the reform process.

All participating countries were asked to give details of the main legislative and policy instruments linked to reforms in higher education since 1980 as well as some information on their political and social context. Although the study focuses on the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, participating countries were also asked to highlight important and influential legislation and policies adopted before 1980. The legislation and policy documents referred to in this chapter have been summarised in the country tables in the annex to this chapter.

Even a superficial examination of the legislative and policy instruments passed in the participating countries illustrates how much variation there is in the relationship between the making of higher education policy and the implementation of reforms. Not only are there variations in the extent to which the different countries use legal or policy instruments to initiate change in higher education, but countries have also changed their combination of instruments employed during the period under review. As the primary aim of this study is to look at reforms in higher education, it has not been possible to examine in detail the legislative processes of the different countries.

One of the most significant reforms observed has been the increased autonomy given to higher education institutions, especially universities, in most European countries and the move away from the **'interventionary state'** towards a more **'facilitatory state'** in the terminology of Neave and Van Vught (1991). This process has often entailed the releasing of higher education institutions from detailed control through legislation by giving them the right to pass their own statutes in the broadening area over which they have autonomy.

This chapter examines the pattern of legal or policy instruments employed by the different countries and their changing relationship within the reform process. They vary in status and scope, ranging from framework acts, influencing a wide area but often only implemented through subsequent more specific legislation (bye-laws, decrees, regulations etc.) to White or Green Papers, Memoranda or position papers which act to stimulate discussion and may either become a precursor to subsequent legislation or lead directly to change. There are several possible relationships between reform, policy and legislation, often changing over time and between countries. Some countries base reform on a detailed and prescriptive legislative process comprising a series of laws, decrees and regulations which are individually approved by Parliament. Others rely on a limited number of framework laws implemented through subsequent legislation and policy documents. In yet other situations, a policy is tested through the implementation of pilot projects proposed in policy documents and change may already have occurred before the relevant legislation has been passed.

Reforms are not always the immediate result of specific legislative changes, particularly where their implementation requires the enactment of further legislation or action on the part of other bodies such as the higher education institutions. Reforms initiated by legislation may be phased in gradually, implemented only after a long delay or not implemented at all if acts are repealed or their provision is changed by subsequent legislation. The latter is particularly likely where there is a change in

government. This poses a problem when attempting to pinpoint the date when a particular reform was introduced. Since this chapter focuses on the instruments employed to enable or initiate reform, the date given in the tables is, where possible, the year the relevant legislation was passed, or the policy document published. However, it should be noted that in other chapters, where the primary focus is the reform process itself, the date of actual implementation, or the coming into effect of the legislation may be quoted instead.

The country tables which accompany this chapter include a brief description of all those instruments referred to by the participating countries without making any distinction as to their status or their influence on the reform process. The scope and significance of the different legal and policy bases for reform in each country will be discussed in this chapter.

1.1. THE FOCUS OF LEGISLATION AND PUBLISHED POLICY

Table 1.1 summarises the information on the legislation and policy documents relating to reform in higher education between 1980 and 1998. Information on reforms predating this period is included in the country tables attached to this chapter. The dates indicate the year a legislative act was passed or a policy document published and at the same time serve as a link between Table 1.1 and the aforementioned country tables. Whenever a country passed more than one piece of legislation in a particular year, a small letter after the date is used to identify the various legislative acts. Whenever a country passed separate legislation for the university and the non-university sector, this has been indicated in the table by (u) and (n-u). Where there is no indication, the legislation applied to the whole of higher education.

Table 1.1: Main areas of reform and the year any relevant legislation was passed or policy documents published since 1980

Country	Structure of higher education	Management and control	Financing of institutions	Quality control and evaluation	Course planning	Access and wastage	Financial aid to students	Internationalisation	Teaching and assessment	Other
European Union										
B fr	1994 (u) 1995 (n-u)	1994 (u) 1995 (n-u)	1986 1989 1996 (n-u) 1998 (u)	1995 (n-u)	1994 (u) 1995 (n-u)	1986 1994 (u) 1995 (n-u)	1983 1986			
B nl	1984 1990 1992 1994 (n-u)	1989 1991 (u) 1994 (n-u)	1986 1989 1991 (u) 1997	1991 (u) 1994 (n-u)	1984 (n-u) 1991 (u) 1996	1986 1991 (u)	1983 1986			
DK	1988 1990a 1992 1993 (u) 1993a 1997	1993 (u)	1989 (n-u) 1990 (n-u) 1992 1992a 1994	1992a 1993 (u) 1997	1993 (u)	1990a 1992 1993 (u)	1988a	1988a	1984 1993 (u)	
D	1985c 1990	1985c 1998	1996 1998	1996 1998	1985c	1985a 1998		1996 1998	1998	1985b: Staffing
EL	1983a (n-u) 1997	1982 (u) 1992 1995	1982 1997	1997	1997	1983 1997 1997a	1982 1995	1997	1997	
E	1990 (n-u)	1983 (u) 1992	1983 (u) 1992 1994	1983 (u) 1995	1983 (u) 1987(u) 1990 (n-u) 1993 (n-u)	1983 (u)	1983 (u) 1983a			1983: Recognition of private university institutions 1983: Teaching staff 1986: Research
F	1984 1989 (n-u)	1984 1985 (n-u) 1994 1996a	1984 1985 (n-u) 1989a 1990 1994	1984 1996	1992 (u) 1996	1984 1992 (u) 1996a	1984 1996	1992		

Table 1.1: Main areas of reform and the year any relevant legislation was passed or policy documents published since 1980 (continued)

Country	Structure of higher education	Management and control	Financing of institutions	Quality control and evaluation	Course planning	Access and wastage	Financial aid to students	Internationalisation	Teaching and assessment	Other
IRL	1989 (n-u) 1992 1992a (n-u) 1997 (u)	1992 (n-u) 1997 (u)	1997 (u) 1992b	1992b 1997 (u)	1992b	1992b 1995a	1995a			
I	1997b (n-u)	1980 (u) 1989 (u) 1993 (u) 1996a (u) 1997 (u)	1993 (u) 1996a (u) 1997 (u)	1996(u)	1980 (u) 1990a (u) 1997 (u)	1997c (u)	1991 1994 1997a		1998	1980,1998: Teaching and research, staffing 1990: Development planning 1981: Private universities
L	1983 (n-u) 1990 (n-u)	1996 (u)	1996 (u)	1996 (u)			1992			
NL	1982 (u) 1983 1984a 1985b (n-u) 1986a (n-u) 1986a (n-u) 1992	1983 1985 (u) 1985a (u) 1985b (n-u) 1986a (n-u) 1986a (n-u) 1986b (u) 1987 1992 1997 (u)	1982 (u) 1985b (n-u) 1986 (u) 1986a (n-u) 1986b (u) 1992	1985 1985a (u) 1985b 1992 1996	1981 (u) 1985 1985b 1992	1984 (n-u) 1984a 1996	1986c 1992	1988 1991 1997	1985b 1992	1985,1987: Development planning
A	1993a (n-u) 1994	1993 (u) 1997 (u) 1998 (u)	1993 (u) 1998 (u)	1993 (u) 1997 (u) 1998 (u)	1993a (n-u) 1997 (u)	1997 (u)	1992	1997 (u)	1997 (u)	
P	1979a/80a (n-u) 1986 1997a	1986 1988 (u) 1990 (n-u) 1997b (u)	1992 1997	1986 1994a 1998a	1986 1988 (u) 1990 (n-u) 1997a	1986 1997 1998	1993 1997			1989,1994: Organisation of private higher education
FIN	1991a (n-u) 1995 (n-u)	1986 (u) 1991 1997 (u)	1986 (u) 1996a (u)	1986 (u) 1991 1995a 1996 (u)	1993 1995a	1991b 1995a	1992 1994	1991 1993 1995a		1993,1995: Research

Table 1.1: Main areas of reform and the year any relevant legislation was passed or policy documents published since 1980 (continued)

Country	Structure of higher education	Management and control	Financing of institutions	Quality control and evaluation	Course planning	Access and wastage	Financial aid to students	Internationalisation	Teaching and assessment	Other
S	1996a	1987 1992 1992a 1992b 1996a 1997	1992b	1992a 1995	1992b	1992b 1995 1996	1988	1985 1992b		1985a, 1992b & 1997: Staffing 1996a: Tasks of university and university colleges
UK	1991 1992	1988 1989 (NI) 1992 1997	1981 1987 1988 1991 1992 1997 1998	1991 1992 1997	1997	1987	1990 1997 1998		1997	1997: Research, relations between higher education institutions and the business community
EFTA/EEA										
IS	1988 1995 (n-u) 1997 (n-u)	1997a	1997a	1997a	1988 (u)	1988 1997a	1992			
LI	1992 1993 1997	1997								
NO	1987 (n-u) 1989 (n-u) 1990 (n-u) 1991 (n-u) 1991a 1992 1993 (n-u) 1995 1997 (n-u)	1989a (u) 1992 1995 1996a	1992 1996a	1992	1981 1987 (n-u) 1989 (n-u) 1989a (u) 1990 (n-u) 1991 (n-u) 1992 1995	1992 1995	1985 1992 1996	1992 1995	1987 (n-u) 1989 (n-u) 1989a (u) 1992 1995	1986: Recognition of private higher education

Source: Eurydice.

(u) = university (n-u) = non-university

Italicised dates indicate policy documents; non-italicised dates indicate legislation.

Small letters follow dates (e.g. 1987a) when more than one piece of legislation was passed or more than one document published during the course of a specific year. More detailed information on individual legislation/policy documents is available in the Annex to Chapter 1.

The headings for Table 1.1 were chosen from among the main foci of the legislative and policy instruments cited in the national descriptions. They primarily cover the key areas identified in the study framework plus one additional area where important reforms were observed: the overall structure of the higher education system, including the upgrading of post-secondary and non-university institutions and courses. Some legislative or policy instruments influenced other areas which are listed in the column 'other', including changes in the staffing structure in higher education, research, the recognition of privately-run higher education courses or institutions, development planning and the relationship between higher education and society at large. The table shows that the major focus of legislation and policy was on management and control of higher education as well as the financing of institutions. Other important areas were the structure of the higher education system, quality control and evaluation of institutions and programmes, course planning as well as access and wastage. The areas which were least likely to be the subject of legal or policy instruments were teaching and assessment, and internationalisation.

Legislation affecting the **structure of the higher education system** is closely linked with curricular reform and both areas are covered in detail in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching. Reform often concerned the creation of technological higher education institutions such as the *Technologika Ekpaideftika Idrymata (TEIs)* in Greece, the Regional Technology Colleges in Ireland, the *Institut supérieur de technologie de Luxembourg (IST)*, the *Fachhochschulen* in Austria, the polytechnic institutions in Portugal, and the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein (FHL)*. In France, in 1989, the law established the university institutes of teacher training (*instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres - IUFM*) to replace the hitherto non-university structures for teacher training. Other legislation governed the restructuring of the whole of the higher education system to bring the university and non-university sectors into an equivalent legislative framework (though not necessarily to combine the two sectors) and encourage parity of esteem, as in the Flemish Community of Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, United Kingdom, Liechtenstein and Norway.

In some countries like Spain, Iceland and Norway as well as in the Belgian French and Flemish Communities, legislation led to the restructuring and rationalisation of the non-university sector by the merging of institutions. Often such legislation was part of a process of upgrading post-secondary and non-university higher education institutions or courses to university level. Upgrading of courses and institutions offering primary-level teacher training, training for the paramedical professions, training for educational child care staff and art and music courses, was carried out during the period being studied in the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, while the French Community of Belgium upgraded only part of these courses. Italy also upgraded the institutions for sport and physical education from post-secondary to university level. In Norway in particular, the upgrading process entailed the enactment of a long series of royal decrees to cover different types of institutions. Such upgrading often also led to reforms in admission regulations, increases in the autonomy of the institutions, increases in course length and changes in the qualifications awarded.

Denmark, Greece and the Netherlands legislated to create an Open University while other countries established new universities. These were the postgraduate University Centre for Further Education in Krems, Austria, eleven new universities in France (four on the outskirts of Paris, five in the north and west, and one in the Pacific area and the Technical University in Troyes), and the University of Akureyri, Iceland. In 1993, Denmark introduced the so-called 3+2+3-structure dividing university programmes into three cycles: a 3-year bachelor programme, a 2-year *candidatus*-programme and a 3-year doctoral programme. Finally, Germany passed legislation in 1990 covering the restructuring of higher education in the new *Länder* after reunification.

In Liechtenstein, with its small degree of higher education provision, the main focus of reforms during the period of the study was the development and restructuring of the institution *Fachhochschule*.

Reforms in the **management and control** of higher education were the subject of the largest number of legislative acts and policy documents. The main focus was on reforms in institutional management

linked to the increase in autonomy granted to higher education institutions and to the reinforcement of links with the economic environment during the period under consideration. The same instruments often also influenced the regime for **financing** institutions and the procedures for **assessment and quality control** of the educational provision. In a few countries, reforms in this area resulted from legislation covering the devolution of responsibility from the State to certain regions for the overseeing and financing of part or all of the higher education system (Belgium 1989, Spain 1992, and France 1985 (vocational training only)). In some countries, separate legislation had to be enacted to bring about similar changes in the university and non-university sectors.

Course planning, together with the regulation of the criteria for awarding degrees or other qualifications, formed a specific focus for reform acts or instruments in most countries except Ireland, Luxembourg, Iceland and Liechtenstein. However this does not necessarily mean that these countries saw no changes to higher education study programmes during the period considered since, in a number of countries, reforms in course or programme structure or content became the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and would therefore no longer be the subject of national policy.

The legislation or policy-based reforms affecting higher education courses or programmes most commonly involved the re-structuring of university courses. Depending on the country, this could imply the offering of shorter undergraduate courses, the specification of the levels at which different types of degrees could be awarded, increasing the flexibility of programmes and/or establishing closer links between the course offer and the demands of the labour market by, for example, increasing the number of technological courses. A number of countries changed their mechanisms for course planning by either setting up or facilitating the creation of national or (more frequently) institution-based advisory councils to develop and evaluate course provision, as in Spain (1983), Italy (1980) and Portugal (1988, 1990). The process of upgrading non-university vocational institutions and courses often also entailed the restructuring of curricula and, frequently, increasing the length of courses, as in Belgium (1977), the French Community of Belgium (1990), the Flemish Community of Belgium (1994, 1996), Spain (1990, 1993), France (1989), the Netherlands (1992), Portugal (1997a) and Finland (1991a). Finally, new regulations were passed for the recognition of vocational courses provided by private or non-public organisations in Austria (1993a), Portugal (1989, 1994) and Norway (1986).

All the countries except Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, most of whose students study abroad, had legislated to reform **access procedures** for higher education or to reduce **wastage** by influencing the rate at which students drop out of higher education courses. In some countries changes in the systems of financial aid for students, including adjustments to the fees charged, also had an impact on access and wastage.

It is important to emphasise that the nature of changes in the area of access and wastage depended partly on whether or not a country already operated a selective entry system. An examination of reforms introduced in this area suggests that countries with a selective entry system have tended to focus reforms on changes in the selection system while those with more open access have focused more on reducing dropout by improving student advice and guidance. It must also be remembered that legislation-led changes are not the only source of reforms in access to higher education, since in a number of countries, the institutions set their own criteria for admission.

Another important focus of reform was the improvement of access to higher education for mature-age students and those with non-traditional qualifications. Finland (1995a) and the United Kingdom (1987) made commitments to lifelong learning and to widening access to higher education. In Denmark, from 1990 onwards, it was possible for suitably qualified adults to follow part-time Open University courses or other part-time education programmes leading to professional qualifications. In France, since 1984, vocational skills can be accredited for entry to higher education and in Finland (1991b) access to higher education was extended to those with post-secondary vocational qualifications. The French Community of Belgium, in its decrees from 1994 and 1995, granted access to the second cycle of higher education

to those with sufficient professional experience or otherwise acquired knowledge. In 1996, the collaboration and interaction with society at large (the local community, the business community and the public sector) was defined in the Swedish Higher Education Act as a third task of universities and university colleges besides education and research.

Open Universities were created in some countries during the period considered to provide higher education to adults and to those geographically remote from a higher education institution as in Denmark (1990), Greece (1997) and the Netherlands (1984). For the Flemish Community of Belgium the Open University was established in close cooperation with the Netherlands.

A number of countries made legislation-based changes designed to reduce student dropout and to encourage students to complete their courses more quickly. These focused on easing the transition from secondary to higher education by making better advice available to students when choosing their study programmes and by providing support through a tutorial system: France (1992, 1996a); Italy (1997b); Austria (1997); and Sweden (1992b). In the Netherlands (1996), changes in institutional procedures to reduce wastage were included in the quality assessment process.

Another area in which all countries except Germany and Liechtenstein legislated was **financial aid to students**. Most countries seemed concerned with the level of grants and, where applicable, their relationship with loans. Fewest changes were noted with respect to the students' degree of dependence on parents' or spouse's income with all reforms aimed at reducing this dependence.

Despite the apparent importance of **internationalisation** in higher education policy it was not specifically a subject of legislation or published policy in the majority of countries. Only a few countries have made any explicit mention of it during the past 20 years. The range of meaning of the term internationalisation was broad, from the aim of the Greek Education 2000 Act (1997) to adjust higher education to international norms, to the Dutch Internationalisation Incentive Programme of 1988 which aimed to promote an international orientation to the whole of higher education. In Germany, the 1996 *Hochschulsonderprogramm HSP III* (Special Higher Education Programme) refers to the promotion of international cooperation, the Austrian University Studies Act 1997 aims to promote international mobility and successive Government Development Plans for Education and University Research in Finland have made internationalisation one of their target areas. The Swedish Higher Education Acts of 1977 and 1992 stipulate that education should promote international understanding.

Similarly, **teaching and assessment** as well as the qualifications required for higher education teaching staff were the subject of legislation or policy in only a minority of countries. In most countries, the principle of academic freedom extends to teaching methods, which are seen as the responsibility of individual academics. Only a few countries introduced regulations concerning the appointment of teaching staff or made reference to teaching and assessment methods with the main focus on the use of information and communications technology. Denmark adopted the *New Blood Recruitment Programme* introducing new regulations for the appointment of academic staff such as the requirement of a doctoral degree for seekers of tenured posts. Italy made changes to the status of professors in 1980 and decentralised their appointment procedures in 1998. Germany's 1996 Special Higher Education Programme *HSP III* included proposals to improve the infrastructure of higher education through the introduction of multimedia-based teaching and through the promotion of younger academic personnel (support for post-doctoral work, accelerated appointments, targeted support for women), and to increase the financial support for the *Habilitation* (post-doctoral lecturing qualification) in subjects with a high demand for young academics. In Greece, the restructuring of courses at universities (*AEIs*) and technological educational institutions (*TEIs*) under the 1997 Act included the use of new technology and new pedagogical materials. In France, in 1984, the requirements for the recruitment of teaching staff were altered and special training programmes for a new category of junior staff, the *moniteurs*, introduced.

1.2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEGISLATION, POLICY AND CHANGE

Although different types of legislation and policy documents have been treated as equivalent in Table 1.1, there are in fact large variations in status and scope between the different instruments cited. In some cases, the same piece of legislation or policy influences several different areas of higher education, while others are more specific.

Most countries have a hierarchy of legal instruments. These range from general acts passed by the national or federal government and approved by Parliament, to specific decrees, decree-laws or *arrêtés* which are formulated and passed by the national or regional government without parliamentary intervention, right through to very detailed government regulations or statutes drawn up by the higher education institutions themselves. The references to legislation in higher education used in this chapter and detailed in the attached country tables are those taken from the national descriptions. It remains possible that differences in the reporting of legislation, such as whether or not all subordinate legislation is included, may have contributed to the impression that more pronounced differences exist in the process of introducing reforms.

During the study period, major reforms in higher education have, in most countries, been heralded by the passing of a major legislative act, often described as a framework act or a reform act. This piece of legislation usually covers a wide area and either sets the legal framework for further, more specific, legislation or apportions responsibility for the direct implementation of change. The use of the word 'framework' usually implies the establishment of legal boundaries within which the higher education system, particularly the institutions, may freely operate. Such wide-ranging acts must be approved by the national Parliament and are often preceded by a discussion and consultation phase based on policy documents such as Memoranda, or Green or White Papers.

In Belgium, responsibility for higher education was passed to the Communities in 1989. Since only the national government is empowered to pass acts, the major decrees covering higher education passed at Community level since this time have been included in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: Major pieces of legislation in higher education since 1980

Country	Year legislation was passed	Legislation	Antecedents and implementation
European Union			
B fr	1994	<i>Décret du 5 septembre 1994 relatif au régime des études universitaires et des grades académiques</i> (Decree on university studies and academic degrees)	Implemented in 1995/96. Replaced laws dating from 1949.
	1995	<i>Décret du 5 août 1995 fixant l'organisation générale de l'enseignement supérieur en Hautes écoles</i> (Decree on the general organisation of higher education at <i>Hautes écoles</i>)	Came into force in 1995/96 replacing the 1970 Law.
	1996	<i>Décret du 9 septembre 1996 relatif au financement des Hautes écoles organisées ou subventionnées par la Communauté française</i> (Decree on the financing of the <i>Hautes écoles</i> organised or subsidised by the French Community)	First basic law on the financing of the non-university higher education (<i>Hautes écoles</i>). Came into force in 1996/97.
B nl	1991	<i>Decreet betreffende de universiteiten in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap van 12 juni 1991</i> (Parliament of Flanders Act on universities in the Flemish Community)	Followed the 1989 Decree passing responsibility for overseeing and funding higher education to the Communities.
	1994	<i>Decreet betreffende de hogescholen in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap van 13.07.94</i> (Parliament of Flanders Act on hogescholen in the Flemish Community)	Implemented in 1995/96.

Table 1.2: Major pieces of legislation in higher education since 1980 (continued)

Country	Year legislation was passed	Legislation	Antecedents and implementation
DK	1993	<i>Bekendtgørelse No 334 af lov om universiteter m.fl.</i> (Consolidation Act on Universities)	Replaced the <i>Styrelseslov</i> (Higher Education Institutions Administration Act) of 1973 and its amendments.
D	1976	<i>Hochschulrahmengesetz - HRG</i> (Higher Education Framework Act)	Still valid with amendments from 1985, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1997 and 1998. It is the task of the <i>Länder</i> to fill the framework established by this act with specific details and provisions, as it gives them the right and the responsibility to shape their own specific higher education legislation.
EL	1982 1997	<i>Nomos 1268</i> (Framework Act on a new structure and the functioning of universities) <i>Ekpedevsi 2000</i> (Education 2000 Act)	
E	1983	<i>Ley Orgánica de Reforma Universitaria - LRU</i> (Organic Act on University Reform)	The 1978 Constitution had set the framework including equal rights to higher education, autonomy of universities and establishment of education powers of the Autonomous Communities. Slow implementation (still in progress).
F	1984	<i>Loi sur l'enseignement supérieur du 26 janvier 1984 - Loi Savary</i> (Higher Education Act - Savary Act)	Replaced the <i>Loi d'Orientation sur l'enseignement supérieur du 11 novembre 1968</i> (Faure Act). Opposition from professors and change of government meant that this act was not fully implemented until 1988.
IRL	1997	Universities Act	Preceded by 1992 Green Paper and 1995 White Paper discussing the future form of higher education.
I	1990 1991 1997	<i>Legge n. 341, 19.11.1990</i> (Law on the reorganisation of university teaching) <i>Legge n. 390, 2.12.1991</i> (Law on the right to higher education) <i>Legge n. 127, 15.5.1997</i> (Law on autonomy in public administration)	Preceded by Presidential Decree 382 of 1980 on the reform of university teaching and Law 168 from 1989 establishing the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research. Autonomy to set curricula was implemented by decrees in 1999.
L	1996	<i>Loi du 11 août 1996 portant réforme de l'enseignement supérieur</i> (Act reforming higher education)	
NL	1992	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW</i> (Higher Education and Scientific Research Act)	Implemented in the summer of 1993 this law combines for the first time all higher education previously governed by three different laws: the Open University Act (<i>WOU 1984</i>), the University Education Act (<i>WVO 1985</i>) and the Higher Professional Education Act (<i>WHBO 1985</i>).
A	1993 1993	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten - UOG</i> (University Organisation Act) <i>Bundesgesetz über Fachhochschul-Studiengänge - FHStG</i> (Federal Law on <i>Fachhochschule</i> Programmes)	Reformed 1975 Act. Coalition agreement in 1990 laid the ground for university reform and involved extensive consultation with different interest groups. Phased implementation. Implemented in 1994.

Table 1.2: Major pieces of legislation in higher education since 1980 (continued)

Country	Year legislation was passed	Legislation	Antecedents and implementation
A (cont.)	1997	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an Universitäten - UniStG</i> (University Studies Act)	Reformed the 1966 Act.
	1998	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten der Künste - KUOG</i> (Universities of Art and Music Organisation Act)	Reformed the Acts of 1970 and 1988.
P	1986	<i>Lei de bases do sistema educativo, n° 46/86 de 14 de Outubro</i> (Education Framework Act 46/86)	Followed the creation of the polytechnics during the 1970s.
	1997	<i>Lei que define as bases do financiamento do ensino superior público, n° 113/97, de 16 de Setembro</i> (Framework Act on Higher Education Finance 113/97)	
	1997a	<i>Lei que revê as bases do sistema educativo, n° 115/97 de 19 de Setembro</i> (Education Framework Act 115/97)	Revised the 1986 Education Framework Act.
FIN	1986	<i>Laki korkeakoululaitoksen kehittämistä (1052/1986)</i> (Higher Education Development Act)	Replaced the 1966 Higher Education Development Act. Implementation of budgeting by results phased until 1994. Came into force in 1987.
	1995	<i>Laki ammattikorkeakouluopinnoista (255/1995)</i> (Act on permanent polytechnics)	Followed the establishment of experimental polytechnics by the Law of 1991. Came into force in 1995.
	1997	<i>Yliopistolaki (645/1997)</i> (Act on Universities)	Came into force in 1998.
S	1992	<i>Högskolelagen 1992:1434</i> (Higher Education Act)	Replaced the 1977 Act. Proposed measures discussed in the 1992 Memorandum on the independence of universities and university colleges.
UK	1988	Education Reform Act (E/W)	The 1987 White Paper proposed funding changes for polytechnics and colleges and a revised policy on access to higher education.
	1989	Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order	
	1992	Further and Higher Education Act Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act	The 1991 White Paper proposed a number of changes, including the abolition of the binary system between university and non-university institutions.
EFTA/EEA			
IS	1997	<i>Lög um háskóla no. 136, 23.12.1998</i> (Higher Education Framework Law)	Two-year implementation period.
LI	1992	<i>Gesetz über die Fachhochschulen, Hochschul- und Forschungsinstitute (106/1992)</i> (Law on <i>Fachhochschulen</i> , Higher Education and Research Institutions)	
NO	1989	<i>Lov om universiteter og vitenskapelige høyskoler</i> (Universities and University Colleges Act)	Based on proposals in 1988 Green Paper produced by the Royal Commission on Universities and Colleges. The Act came into effect in 1990, replacing the 1970 Act on Examinations and Degrees.
	1995	<i>Lov om universiteter og høyskoler</i> (Universities and Colleges Act)	Drafted by 1992 Royal Commission on Legislation in Higher Education. Replaced 1989 Act by covering all higher education institutions.

Source: Eurydice.

Table 1.2 shows that all the participating countries passed major legislative acts during the period studied regarding the structure and function of higher education. Some would legislate separately for the university and non-university sector, while many introduced legislation covering the whole of the higher education sector (Germany 1976, Greece 1997, France 1984, Luxembourg 1996, the Netherlands 1992, Portugal 1986 and 1997a, Sweden 1992, United Kingdom 1992, Iceland 1997, Liechtenstein 1992, and Norway 1995). The latter group of acts was generally part of the process of achieving parity of esteem for the non-university sector of higher education by bringing both universities and non-university institutions under the same legislative framework. In most of the countries (the French Community of Belgium, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Finland, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), the acts were passed during the 1990s as part of an ongoing reform process.

Whichever area they applied to, Table 1.2 shows that, in particular, such major acts addressed the autonomy of higher education institutions, giving them greater financial, administrative and pedagogical independence while often simultaneously increasing accountability through the introduction of quality assurance and evaluation procedures. In a number of countries, an explicit aim of recently-passed framework legislation was to simplify legislative control of higher education institutions by replacing older, complex and prescriptive laws by a more general and flexible legal framework (Germany 1998, Ireland 1997, Italy 1997, Luxembourg 1996, the Netherlands 1992, Austria 1997, Sweden 1992, Finland 1997, Iceland 1997 and Norway 1989). Many such acts also defined new structures for the governance and administration of higher education, clarifying the different levels of responsibility, and some established a National Council of Higher Education (or its equivalent) to advise the Government and lead on the evaluation of the higher education system (Spain 1983, France 1984, Luxembourg 1996, Austria 1993 and 1998, and United Kingdom 1992). The French Community of Belgium established two advisory councils, one for the universities and one for the *Hautes écoles*. Other changes introduced by such major pieces of legislation were amendments to the structure and content of study programmes: increasing flexibility and diversity, offering shorter degree courses, linking courses more closely to the labour market and devolving responsibility for course planning to the institutions. Italy was the only country which did not address the management and control of the higher education institutions in a major piece of legislation during the period.

However, not all major acts were comprehensive. The French Community of Belgium passed separate laws for university (1971, 1994) and non-university education (1995, 1996), on the structure of higher education (1994, 1995), and for financing and control (1971, 1996). Italy (1991) and Portugal (1997) addressed financing of higher education, including financial aid for students, in separate pieces of legislation. Portugal (1997a) and Austria (1997) passed separate framework acts covering course planning and higher education structure. In France, the 1984 Savary Act, while applying to the whole of higher education, focused particularly on changes in the governance of institutions. This caused considerable opposition to the legislation from the academic community due to its perceived erosion of the power of professors. The act was therefore not fully implemented until 1988. It also made a major contribution to the autonomy of the institutions through introducing the possibility of their being funded by the State through negotiated contractual agreements for providing particular services. The role of negotiated funding expanded when previously separate contracts for teaching and research were merged into one single institutional contract and the negotiation process has, according to Chevaillier (1998), laid the foundations for a changed relationship between the institutions and the Ministry which would replace central planning by financial steering.

Comparison of the information presented in Table 1.2 for the individual countries suggests that there are differences in the relationship between policy, legislation and the implementation of change. The table attempts to show whether the major items of legislation are related to previous legislation or policy documents and to indicate, where possible, the process and time-scale for implementation.

In the majority of countries such as the French Community of Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway, higher education reform,

particularly during the 1990s, was primarily the result of a relatively small number of broad major acts which were often implemented gradually according to a planned programme. Most of these countries adopted a bottom-up approach to change. The proposals for reform were developed in consultation with those who would be affected by their implementation, on the basis of published policy documents, consultative fora or pilot projects. These included the Multi-Annual Agreement in Denmark which created the basis for the gradual liberalisation of student intake, for the introduction of a new structure for study programmes and for the financing of institutions according to the 'taximeter' system. In addition to these there were the following: the French *États généraux de l'université* discussions in 1996; the Irish Green Paper (1992) and White Paper (1995) discussing the future form of higher education; the Dutch Memorandum *Higher Education, Autonomy and Quality* (1985); the Swedish Memorandum (1992) on the independence of universities and university colleges; the United Kingdom White Papers on higher education (1987 and 1991) and the 1997 report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report and Garrick Report for Scotland) and the Norwegian Royal Commissions of 1988 and 1992. In some cases such exercises led directly to change which was only subsequently supported by legislation.

In some countries in this group, with a traditionally more centralised approach to administration, the development of the higher education sector was often the result of non-legislative programmes, such as the Special Higher Education Programmes in Germany, or of the expansion of the contract-based financing system in France.

Other countries retained a much more centrally-controlled, legislation-led approach where planning is centralised and major acts are implemented only through formal legal processes which require government approval of the specific changes. This process generated a succession of decrees, decree-laws, by-laws or regulations covering specific areas to be reformed. These countries include Belgium (both the French and Flemish Communities), Greece, Spain (until the Autonomous Communities took over higher education from 1992 onwards), Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

However, the evidence of this study is that most European countries have moved away from a centrally prescriptive approach to reform towards one which recognises the role and responsibility of the higher education institutions and the academic community in the implementation of change.

1.3. SYSTEMS WITH FEW REFORMS

Germany, Spain and France stand out as different from the other countries in this study due to the lack of major legislation on autonomy in higher education after the early 1980s. In most European countries, the debate about the autonomy of higher education institutions, particularly in relation to their financial independence, did not really begin until the mid-1980s and, as Table 1.1 shows, the great majority enacted most legislation in this area during the late 1980s and 1990s. Belgium, France, Spain and Italy decentralised part of their administration during the period under study, though only in Belgium and Spain was responsibility for the higher education institutions decentralised. However, all except Belgium have retained a significant level of central control over higher education through legally-defined rules and standards.

According to Wielemans and Vanderhoeven (1993), Belgian law does not treat the higher education sector as one system but distinguishes between university and non-university institutions. Legislation has traditionally had little impact on the universities which enjoy considerable autonomy. The authors suggest that a further barrier to fundamental reform arises from the linguistic and ideological differences reflected by the separate linguistic Communities and the different organising authorities (*pouvoir organisateur/inrichtende macht*) responsible for the higher education institutions. Certainly most legislation since 1980 in Belgium has focused on the restructuring of the non-university sector, but since 1994 the

French Community of Belgium has been equally concerned with the restructuring of the university sector. Due to the remaining major differences, universities and non-university institutions in the Flemish Community of Belgium do not enjoy exactly the same, but only nearly the same status. It can further be said that developments in this Community are moving somewhat in the direction of the Dutch model.

In Germany, there has been some lively debate about the future structure of higher education during the period under review but little direct legislation, apart from the 1985 amendments to the 1976 Higher Education Framework Act. Teichler (1991) argued that the constitutional guarantee of academic freedom meant that the Federal Government had relatively little influence over the administration of higher education institutions during the 1980s. The challenges of unification from 1990 have no doubt also played a role. However, there were some developments in the higher education system which resulted from the series of Special Higher Education Programmes (*Hochschulsonderprogramm I, II and III*), embarked upon from 1989 onwards which were not accompanied by legislation. Furthermore, the 1997 policy paper '*Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert*' (*Higher Education Institutions for the 21st Century*) laid the ground for revision of the Higher Education Framework Act in 1998.

In France, there has been little explicit legislation relating to institutional autonomy since the 1984 Savary Act. During the 1990s, there have been several large consultative exercises about higher education including the *Assises nationales de l'enseignement supérieur* (national forum on the future of higher education) in 1990, and the 1996 *États généraux de l'université* (nation-wide consultation of all interested parties on university education), but apart from the increase in contract-based funding described above, relatively little has changed in French higher education as a result of these. There are several theories as to why reforms increasing institutional autonomy are apparently so difficult to implement in France. Neave (1991, pp 65-79) suggested that the lack of reform may be due to the difficulty of reconciling the various 'corporative interests' represented by the different ranks of French academics. Chevaillier (1998) argued that, until recently, the universities have not been very powerful as institutions in France and that French academics feel less allegiance to their institutions than to the national collegial group in their discipline.

In Spain, the 1983 Organic Act on University Reform was an ambitious and radical reform built on the new constitution approved in 1978, with the aim of extending the new democracy to the universities. It greatly increased the autonomy of the universities in order to create a system of independent and competitive institutions and it initiated the process of their transfer to the Autonomous Communities. The act provoked some initial opposition from the academic community who felt they had not been sufficiently consulted (Lamo de Espinosa 1993). The full implementation of the act took many years and considerable further legislation; the transfer to the Autonomous Communities was not complete until 1996/97. This long implementation period may explain the lack of further reforms in Spain.

In Italy, change in higher education during the period studied was a slow process. Most legislation was aimed either at a specific part of the higher education system (e.g. the 1990 Law laying down norms for the triennial planning process or the 1991 Law on the right to higher education), or at a wider field than higher education alone (such as the 1997 so-called Bassanini Laws which aimed to decentralise and simplify public administration). It was quite common for reforms approved by Parliament not to have been implemented effectively or for their effect to have been very different at regional or local level than had been anticipated at national level. In many cases, reforms that had been approved, waited many years before they were implemented in relevant decrees or regulations. In contrast, the implementation in 1999 of the 1997 Law on autonomy in public administration seems to be advancing well and may radically change the situation. The 1980 Presidential Decree reforming university teaching is included in the table of legislation above as a precursor to the Law from 1990. According to Moscati (1991), this decree was a very important step in the attempt to reform Italian universities, but its implementation was long and slow. It was apparently originally intended only to alter university career structures but later evolved into a partial reform of the structure and organisation of the whole university sector. However, its

implementation was based on experimentation to encourage 'bottom-up' involvement in the process. This made it unduly dependent on the cooperation of the university sector to put the legislation into practice. Moscati suggests that the ideological and organisational gap between the public administration responsible for the legislation and the academic world responsible for the direct running of the university system explained its non-implementation during the 1980s and the general difficulty of reforming higher education in Italy during the period studied. Luzatto (1996) emphasises the lack of national planning and the insufficient impact made by innovations like the new first level degrees (*diploma*) introduced in 1990.

1.4. OVERVIEW OF REFORMS

This chapter has examined the legislative and policy instruments used by governments in the different European countries to bring about change in higher education. It has looked at the main areas of focus for legislation in the participating countries, shown that the reform process followed a different path in different countries, and documented moves towards a less prescriptive legislative approach to higher education in most countries. Its aim has been to introduce the issues to be considered in the rest of this document.

The pattern of legislation in many countries indicates a change in the relationship between the State and the higher education institutions during the period studied with a move towards the passing of broad framework acts which delineate the areas where higher education institutions have responsibility for decision-making. Most countries except Spain, France and Italy, have passed a major act influencing the management and control of higher education institutions during the 1990s. In many cases these acts replaced previous legislation, often combining and simplifying a number of legal instruments. In many countries this move towards the all-encompassing framework act coincided with reforms aimed at decentralising decision-making and reinforcing institutional management and its responsibility for teaching and research output. In the words of Neave and Van Vught (1991), most but not all countries were apparently moving towards the 'facilitatory state' mentioned in the introduction.

It is not easy to bring about change in higher education and, from the evidence of this chapter, it is particularly difficult to impose change from outside the system. The approach to reform in higher education varied in different countries. The Nordic and Northern European countries in particular tended to begin with a consultation process involving the various groups likely to be affected, often based on a published White Paper or Memorandum or carried out by an independent commission or reviewing body. In some cases these discussions led directly to change through experimental or pilot reform projects which were later enshrined in law. This 'bottom-up' approach recognises the importance of gaining the support of those, mainly within the higher education institutions, who will ultimately be responsible for the successful implementation of reform. It appears that change has been more successful and more extensive in such countries compared to those with a more centralised, legislation-led approach such as Greece, Spain and Italy. In these countries legislation which was passed by Parliament often waited many years before being implemented, or was repealed by subsequent legislation. Furthermore, it appears that even in some of the traditionally government-controlled systems such as those of Germany and France, change in higher education has increasingly come about through non-legislative, policy-led initiatives in collaboration with the institutions.

Analysis of the legislation relating to higher education passed during the period under consideration shows that the major focus of legislation and policy was the management and control of higher education institutions and in particular the financing of such institutions. Other important areas were the structure of the higher education system, quality control and evaluation of institutions and programmes, course structure and content, and admission to and dropout from higher education. Teaching and the assessment of students, as well as the internationalisation of higher education, were least likely to be the subject of legislation reflecting the responsibility of individual institutions and academics for such areas. Reforms in all of these areas are discussed in the relevant chapters.

Annex to

CHAPTER 1: LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Country tables

BELGIUM (French Community)

Context

Before the 1980s, higher education in Belgium was strongly influenced by the French model. The development of the non-university sector was much more pronounced in the Dutch-speaking part of the country, where, since the early 1980s, the majority of students in higher education have attended non-university institutions, while in the French-speaking part students have always favoured university education. The 1986 austerity plan (*Plan de la St. Anne*) introduced measures to cut public expenditure in higher education by increasing tuition fees and restricting grant eligibility. After the devolution of responsibility for education to the Communities in 1989, the French Community's higher education system underwent a number of changes. Reforms were undertaken in response to the growing number of students demanding access to higher education and to the economic crisis.

Summary of Reforms

Until 1980, the laws governing university education had remained essentially unchanged. The few changes that had been implemented were primarily budgetary. Reforms have reduced the differences between the university and non-university sectors. Growth in importance of the non-university sector and upgrading of qualifications offered.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1983	<i>Décret réglant, pour la Communauté française, les allocations et les prêts d'études coordonné le 7 novembre 1983</i> (Decree for the French Community on student grants and loans)	Restriction of the number and amount of grants.	Student financial assistance.
1986	<i>Plan de la St. Anne</i> (St. Anne Plan)	Aimed to reduce expenditure on the expanding higher education sector by increasing the minimum number of students in each discipline, reducing the number eligible for grants and increasing tuition fees.	Financing of institutions; access to higher education; student financial aid.
1989	<i>Loi spéciale du 16 janvier 1989 relatif au financement des Communautés et des Régions</i> (Special Law on the financing of the Communities and Regions)	Each of the three linguistic Communities became responsible for organising, financing and overseeing education according to its own objectives and priorities.	Financing of institutions.
1990	<i>Décret du 12 mars 1990 réglant le passage de l'enseignement supérieur de type court d'un cursus de deux ans à un cursus de trois ans</i> (Decree on the organisation of short-type higher education)	The short-type higher education is extended from 2 to 3 years.	Structure of non-university higher education.
1994	<i>Décret du 5 septembre 1994 relatif au régime des études universitaires et des grades académiques</i> (Decree on university studies and academic degrees)	Reformed the structure of courses and introduced the <i>grades académiques</i> as qualifications to replace the separate <i>grades légaux</i> and <i>grades scientifiques</i> .	Course structure and planning; management and control; access and wastage.

BELGIUM (French Community) (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1995	<p>Décret du 5 août 1995 fixant l'organisation générale de l'enseignement supérieur en Hautes écoles</p> <p>(Decree on the general organisation of higher education at <i>Hautes écoles</i>)</p>	<p>A general plan was put forward for restructuring the non-university sector, with the aim of creating multidisciplinary institutions, <i>Hautes écoles</i>, merging institutions on the basis of common teaching programmes. The aim was to control the cost of higher education and to widen the educational offer in non-university higher education. Introduced greater student and staff participation in the management of higher education institutions. Abolished any remaining differences between entry requirements for the university and non-university sector. Stipulates that from now on any secondary school leaving certificate gives access to any type of higher education; grants access to higher education to people with non traditional qualifications.</p>	<p>Restructuring of non-university sector, access to higher education; management and control; quality control.</p>
1996	<p>Decrét du 9 septembre 1996 relatif au financement des Hautes écoles organisées ou subventionnées par la Communauté française</p> <p>(Decree on the financing of the <i>Hautes écoles</i> organised or subsidised by the French Community)</p>	<p>Bases the financing of the <i>Hautes écoles</i> on the attribution of a global budget. Part of this budget evolved historically, the rest is made up of a lump sum and a variable amount based on the course offer of each <i>Haute école</i>. To determine the latter, students are classified into 7 groups and a weighting coefficient is applied to each group.</p>	<p>Financing of <i>Hautes écoles</i>.</p>
1998	<p>Décret du 1er octobre 1998 modifiant la loi du 27 juillet 1971 sur le financement et le contrôle des institutions universitaires</p> <p>(Decree on the financing and control of universities)</p>	<p>Bases the financing on a global budget which is determined by the course offer of each institution. To calculate this budget, students are classified into 6 groups and a weighting factor is applied to each group.</p>	<p>Financing of universities.</p>

BELGIUM (Flemish Community)

Context

Before the 1980s, higher education in Belgium was strongly influenced by the French model. The development of the non-university sector was much more pronounced in the Dutch-speaking part of the country, where, since the early 1980s, the majority of students in higher education have attended non-university institutions, while in the French-speaking part students have always favoured university education. The 1986 austerity plan (*St.-Annaplan*) introduced measures to cut public expenditure in higher education by increasing tuition fees and restricting grant eligibility. After the devolution of responsibility for education to the Communities in 1989, the Belgian Flemish Community's higher education system began to move towards the Dutch model. Reforms were undertaken in response to the growing number of students demanding access to higher education and the economic crisis.

Summary of Reforms

Until 1980, the laws governing the form of university education remained essentially unchanged. The few changes that had been implemented were primarily budgetary. Policies in the 1980s aimed at creating specialised centres of excellence. Reforms have focused on reducing the differences between the university and non-university sectors resulting in the growing importance of the non-university sector and the upgrading of its qualifications. Cooperation with the Dutch umbrella organisation for universities (*VSNLU*) to aid the higher education reform in the Belgian Flemish Community e.g. application of the Dutch model of quality assurance and control. Increased autonomy and change in the relationship between the Community and the higher education institutions following the passing of the 1991 and 1994 decrees.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1970	<i>Wet van 7.07.70 betreffende de algemene structuur van het hoger onderwijs</i> (Law on the general structure of higher education)	Grouped and classified post-secondary courses according to their aims and organisational structure, and established conditions of access to them.	Structure and access to higher education.
1983	<i>Besluit van 13.07.83 betreffende de studietoelagen voor hoger onderwijs</i> (Decree regulating student financial support)	Restriction of the number and amount of grants.	Financial aid for students.
1984	<i>Omzendbrief van 26.06.84 (later bevestigd in decreet van 5.07.89)</i> (Circular of 1984 confirmed by decree in 1989)	Reorganisation of teacher training outside the universities: the 2-year courses for pre-school and primary teachers were extended to 3 years. The non-university sector began to grow in importance.	Structure of higher education, upgrading of non-university institutions.
1986	<i>St.-Annaplan</i> (St. Anne Plan) <i>Koninklijk Besluit nr 60 van 17.09.86 tot vaststelling van het rationalisatieplan en programmatieplan van het hoger onderwijs van het korte type en tot wijziging van de wetgeving betreffende de organisatie van het hoger onderwijs van het lange type</i> (Royal Decree on rationalisation plans in higher education)	Aimed to reduce expenditure on the higher education sector by increasing the minimum number of students in each field of study, reducing the number eligible for grants and increasing tuition fees.	Financing of institutions; access to higher education; student financial aid.

BELGIUM (Flemish Community) (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1989	<i>Bijzondere wet van 16.01.89 betreffende de financiering van de gemeenschappen en gewesten</i> (Special Law on the financing of the Communities and Regions)	Each of the three linguistic Communities became responsible for organising, financing and overseeing education according to its own objectives and priorities.	Financing of institutions.
1990	<i>Decreet betreffende het onderwijs II van 31.07.90</i> (Parliament of Flanders Decree on education no. II)	The short-type higher education in economics is extended from 2 to 3 years.	Structures of non-university higher education.
1991	<i>Decreet betreffende de universiteiten in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap van 12 juni 1991</i> (Parliament of Flanders Decree on universities in the Flemish Community)	Reorganisation and simplification of the university education structure. Outlines the three main tasks of universities: conduct scientific research, strengthen university-level education and promote interaction with society at large by putting academic knowledge/expertise at its disposal. Increased institutional autonomy and introduced a new financing system. Application of the Dutch model of quality assessment whereby the regional government requires each university's governing board to undertake a quality review of departments and personnel once every 5 years under conditions set out by the central authority.	Management and control; financing of institutions; quality control; structure and access to university education; human resources.
1992	<i>Decreet betreffende het Onderwijs III van 9 april 1992</i> (Parliament of Flanders Decree on education no. III)	All short-type higher education is extended from 2 to 3 years.	Structures of non-university higher education.
1994	<i>Decreet betreffende de hogescholen in de Vlaamse Gemeenschap van 13.07.94</i> (Parliament of Flanders Decree on <i>hogescholen</i> in the Flemish Community)	New regulations were introduced in the academic year 1995/96 bringing the status of <i>hogescholen</i> and other non-university institutions closer to that of universities. This entailed the rewriting of curricula to create higher qualifications and the merger of higher education institutions into new <i>hogescholen</i> . More autonomy and new financing system.	Management and control; financing of institutions; quality control.
1996	<i>Decreet betreffende de lerarenopleiding en de nascholing</i> (Parliament of Flanders Decree on teacher initial and in-service training)	Restructuring of teacher training programmes.	Course structure.
1997	<i>Besluit van de Vlaamse regering van 23.07.97 houdende regeling van de procedure en de voorwaarden van subsidiëring van innovatieprojecten op het gebied van het hoger onderwijs</i> (Government of Flanders Order on financial support for innovative projects in higher education)	Offered funding opportunities to higher education institutions wishing to carry out innovative projects.	Financing of higher education.

DENMARK

Context

A wide variety of educational institutions, courses and qualifications was an early characteristic of the Danish higher education system partly as a result of an exceptionally high GDP per capita and partly because of cultural and political choices. This variety has been further increased in the last 20 years by the development of non-academic higher education within the field of vocational (technical and commercial) education. Since 1990, there has been a development of higher level adult or open education. The number of students registered at universities increased greatly between 1960 and 1975, resulting in the introduction of a *numerus clausus* for all types of higher education institutions and courses in 1976. But from the early 1990s, the student intake was gradually liberalised again, and the *numerus clausus* system was abolished for a great majority of courses. The period up to the end of the 1980s was characterised by long actual study times and a high dropout rate, and these factors called for a reform of the study structure, as well as the financing system.

Summary of Reforms

Diversion of students from courses traditionally leading to public sector employment to courses preparing for private sector employment, particularly in industry, and from long *candidatus* degree courses in the university to shorter programmes in the college or vocational sector. Introduction of a new study structure at universities. Opening up of higher education to adults by enabling them to follow open university and other programmes on a part-time basis. Initiatives to decentralise the management of the institutions and to create closer links between the funding of teaching and exams actually passed.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1984	<i>Forskerrekrutteringsplanen</i> (New Blood Recruitment Plan)	Introduced a new staff structure and requirements for the employment of academic staff at universities.	Staffing; personnel structure.
1988	<i>Bekendtgørelse nr. 557 om bachelorgraderne B.A. og B.S.</i> (Ministerial Order on the introduction of Bachelor's degrees)	Students can now obtain a first degree after 3 years of study compared with 5 or 6 years previously. Laid the foundations for the reorganisation of the higher education course structure adopted in 1993.	Structure of higher education.
1988a	<i>Bekendtgørelse af lov nr. 880 om statens uddannelsesstøtte</i> (Consolidation Act on state education grants and loans) <i>came into force in 1989</i>	Major reform of the student support system. Introduction of study voucher system. Study abroad made possible for 4 years.	Financial aid to students; internationalisation.
1989	<i>Lov nr. 210 om erhvervsskoler</i> (Act on vocational colleges)	Changed among other things the principles for the financial management of the vocational colleges offering short-cycle higher education programmes. This reform introduced the 'taximeter' system at vocational colleges, which provides these colleges with grants to cover the cost of teaching (salaries, materials and equipment). Grants are based on the number of students per year irrespective of whether they pass examinations or not, but there is no grant for students repeating a semester.	Financing of institutions.
1990	<i>Bekendtgørelse nr. 370 af lov om videregående teknikeruddannelser m.v.</i> (Consolidation Act on short-cycle higher technical education) <i>both came into force in 1991</i>		

DENMARK (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1990a	Lov nr. 347 om åben uddannelse (Open Education Act)	Allowed universities and colleges to offer their normally full-time programmes on a part-time basis to adults outside working hours. The aim was to provide the entire adult population with the opportunity to achieve further qualifications in accordance with personal aspirations and career requirements. Created the possibility for everyone to upgrade their qualifications to the highest possible level.	Access to higher education; structure of higher education.
1992	Flerårsaftalen (Multi-Annual Agreement)	Seven of the eight political parties in the Danish Parliament signed this agreement covering, among other things, the intake of students and the budget for the higher education sector. Created the basis for the gradual liberalisation of student intake, for the introduction of the 3+2+3 structure, and for the allocation of state block grants according to the 'taximeter' system etc.	Student intake; structure and financing of higher education.
1992a	Finansloven (Finance Acts)	Establishment of the Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education to pilot a new quality assessment system. Initially established for a period of 5 years, but later extended until 1999. The centre is concerned with the implementation of quality evaluations of higher education programmes, and with offering guidance and encouragement to institutions to develop high quality programmes and gain and learn from experience on a national and international level.	Financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.
1993	Bekendtgørelse nr. 334 af lov om universiteter m. fl (Consolidation Act on Universities)	The main aim was scholarly and financial autonomy and clear decision-making powers for university management. A novel element is the presence of two external members in the two highest collegiate bodies, the Senate and the Faculty Council. These two members represent employers and hold expert knowledge in questions of education and research. Higher education institutions were given the autonomy to decide on the combination of courses they can offer and the number of students to be admitted. The role of the external examiners was strengthened.	Structure of higher education; management and control; course planning; quality control; access and wastage; teaching and assessment.
1993a	Bekendtgørelse nr. 573 om studiestrukturen for uddannelser ved universiteter m.fl (Ministerial order on the course structure at universities, etc.)	Constitutes the legal basis for the 3+2+3 structure.	Structure of higher education.

DENMARK (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1994	<i>Budgetreformen</i> (Budget reform)	The budget reform originated in the Multi-Annual Agreement of 1992. Grants for teaching expenditure are allocated based on the 'taximeter' principle. From 1994 onwards, the amount of the 'taximeter' grant is laid down in the annual Finance Act. The reform meant that grants were now allocated by programmes instead of, as previously, by main budget lines.	Financing of institutions.
1997	<i>Lov nr. 1115 om korte videregående uddannelser</i> (Act on short-cycle higher education)	Reform of short-cycle higher education with a view to extending the range of programmes and to facilitating the continuation of studies in other areas of higher education. Programmes are regulated according to demand and must correspond to centrally set quality requirements. New programmes will normally be of two years' duration. Creation of a framework and targets for the reorganisation of existing courses and the development of new courses with a view to meeting the needs of the labour market.	Structure of higher education; quality control.

Context

Continuous growth in demand for higher education from the 1960s onwards. Pressure on higher education resources. Strengthening of Federal Government (*Bund*) role in higher education from the 1950s onwards. Restructuring of higher education institutions to form new types of institutions (*Fachhochschulen* and *Gesamthochschulen*) as part of fundamental reform during the 1970s. Establishing the group university by strengthening the parity power of assistant teachers (*Mittelbau*) and students. German reunification in 1990 and need to integrate two different higher education systems.

Summary of Reforms

Reforms during the 1980s aimed to create higher education institutions which were more competitive, diverse and appropriately organised. However, the failed attempt to introduce systematic planning led to the gradual worsening of conditions for teaching and learning accentuated by the decreases in funding after 1990. Increasing pressure for reforms during the 1990s led to the revision of the *HRG* (Higher Education Framework Act) in 1998. Development of the higher education sector was also the result of non-legislative Special Higher Education Programmes (*HSP I, II & III*). Reunification has given the new *Länder* the responsibility for higher education in collaboration with the supra-regional coordination and planning bodies. The evaluation and subsequent closure of higher education institutions led to a considerable reduction in staffing and a move away from highly specialised institutions in the five new *Länder*.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1976	Hochschulrahmengesetz - HRG (Higher Education Framework Act)	Regulated the structure and organisation of higher education in Germany and served as the first uniform legal basis for higher education institutions. The act introduced a system for the nation-wide recognition of student attainments and examination results and provided the basis for a democratically organised university based on participatory management. Provided for a system of long-term, target-oriented planning which was never put into practice.	Access to higher education; staffing; higher education development planning procedure; management and control.
1985	Series of laws to amend the <i>HRG</i> :		
	a Zweites Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 28. März 1985 (Second law to amend the <i>HRG</i>)	Revision of the application procedure for higher education; introduction of a multi-stage procedure for selective courses.	Access to higher education.
	b Gesetz über befristete Arbeitsverträge mit dem wissenschaftlichen Personal vom 14. Juni 1985 (Law on temporary contracts with academic personnel)	Revision of procedures for employment contracts for temporary academic staff.	Staffing.
	c Drittes Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 14. November 1985 (Third law to amend the <i>HRG</i>)	Introduction of far-reaching changes to the legislative framework for higher education in Germany.	Structure of higher education institutions; reform of courses of study; personnel structure.
1989 (to 1995)	Hochschulsonderprogramm - HSP I (Special Higher Education Programme I)	Special programme aimed at funding 3,200 additional posts to create extra teaching capacity (17,000 study places) for high demand courses, especially management sciences.	Staffing; student intake; multimedia.

GERMANY (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1990	Legislation on restructuring higher education in the new German <i>Länder</i>	Set out the basic principles for the organisation of higher education institutions in the new German <i>Länder</i> by adopting higher education regulations derived from the <i>HRG</i> .	All aspects of higher education (legislation, staffing, curriculum, <i>Fachhochschulen</i>).
1990a (to present)	Hochschulsonderprogramm - HSP II (Special Higher Education Programme II)	Special programme to maintain the level of performance of higher education institutions by introducing measures in favour of younger academic personnel (creation of 2,500 new posts and accelerated promotion of younger staff).	Staffing.
1996 (to present)	Hochschulsonderprogramm - HSP III (Special Higher Education Programme III)	Special programme to improve the infrastructure of higher education (tutoring, multimedia-based teaching, evaluation of teaching, etc.). Development of the <i>Fachhochschule</i> sector; enhancement of international cooperation; promotion of younger academic personnel (support for post-doctoral work, anticipatory appointments, etc.); targeted support for women; completion of the higher education modernisation programme in the new German <i>Länder</i> .	Teaching methods; quality control; staffing; <i>Fachhochschulen</i> ; international cooperation.
1997	'Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert' (Policy paper: <i>Higher Education Institutions for the 21st Century</i>)	This paper laid the ground for the amendment of the <i>HRG</i> in 1998 by examining the development problems and structural deficits threatening the effectiveness and international competitiveness of German higher education.	Access to higher education; staffing; course structure.
1998	Viertes Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 20.8.1998 (Fourth Law to amend the <i>HRG</i>)	Main provisions of the amendment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance-oriented allocation of funds to higher education institutions • Evaluation of research and teaching activities • Redefinition of the standard period of study • Intensification of the academic counselling duties of the higher education institutions • Introduction of an intermediate examination for all courses with a regular course duration of at least four years • Trial examinations in all courses where suitable • Introduction of a credit system for the accumulation and the transfer of points earned • Awarding of Bachelor's and Master's degrees • Introduction of a performance-related quota system for placement of applicants • Introduction of a selection procedure by the higher education institutions in addition to the general selection procedure for courses with restricted admission. 	All aspects of higher education (course structure, financing, access to higher education; evaluation and quality control).

Context

Higher education developed according to the Humboltian model with powerful professorial chairs and little autonomy for institutions. Demand for higher education grew rapidly after the Second World War. A major reform of higher education was delayed until the 1980s due to the military dictatorship. In 1981, accession to the European Community.

Summary of Reforms

During the 1980s, higher education institutions were granted more autonomy. The influence of professors in institutional management was reduced and a more democratic governance allowing for student participation introduced. Large increase in demand for higher education but little increase in places available. The 1997 reforms aimed to consolidate the modernisation of higher education and to increase the participation rate.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1982	Nomos 1268 (Framework Act on a new structure and the functioning of universities)	Most fundamental post-war act to modernise universities. Universities were granted more autonomy in relation to management and course planning; departments, rather than professors, were given the responsibility for their activities; and holders of executive posts (rector, vice-rector, deans, departmental presidents) were to be elected by staff and student representatives. The National Council of Higher Education was created to advise the Government on higher education issues. Postgraduate courses were introduced. Introduction of student loans.	Management and control; financing of institutions; financial support for students.
1983	Nomos 1351 (Act on access to higher education)	Introduced general entrance examinations.	Access to higher education.
1983a	Nomos 1404 (Act on the structure and function of Technological Educational Institutions)	Created the Technological Educational Institutions (<i>TEIs</i>) and the Council of Technological Training with representation from scientific, professional and social organisations to advise the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs about the development of the <i>TEIs</i> .	Organisation and structure of higher education.
1992	Nomos 2083 (Act to modernise higher education)	Reform Act modifying certain articles of the 1982 Framework Act. It only briefly came into force, being largely repealed after a change of government in 1993.	Management and control.
1995	Nomos 2327 (Act to create the National Education Council)	Changed the National Council of Higher Education to the National Education Council to advise the Government on strategic and social priorities across all stages of education. Created links between higher education and the needs of the economy. Abolished student loans.	Management and control; financial support for students.

GREECE (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1997	<i>Ekpedevsi 2000</i> (Education 2000 Act)	Aimed to radically revise higher education provision and to adjust it to international standards. Abolition of the 'general examinations' for the admission to higher education from June 2000 granting free access to higher education. The number of higher education places will be increased to cope with the expected rise in demand. Cross-departmental, flexible, extended university programmes are being created. <i>AEI</i> and <i>TEI</i> programmes will be restructured using new technology and new pedagogic materials. Postgraduate programmes will be developed further and improved. In addition to public financing of education, universities receive funds from Special Research Accounts.	Access to higher education; course planning; structure and content; teaching; quality evaluation; financing of institutions.
1997a	<i>Nomos 2552</i> (Act to establish the Open University 2552/1997)	Establishment of the Open University. Free access to anybody with an upper secondary certificate; no entrance examination. Priority for enrolment given to candidates aged 23 to 45 and those from frontier regions.	Access to higher education.

Context

Development of democracy and a welfare state after 1995. A new democratic Constitution was passed in 1978 preparing the ground for subsequent legislation. Accession to the European Community in 1986. Increasing participation in university education. 95% of higher education is university-based.

Summary of Reforms

Decentralisation of universities to 17 Autonomous Communities. Increased autonomy for universities. Establishment of a national system for the evaluation of universities. Development of a non-university, mainly vocational higher education.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1978	<i>Constitución Española de 27 de diciembre de 1978</i> (The Spanish Constitution)	Stipulates the rights to education and grants universities institutional autonomy. Establishes 17 Autonomous Communities and determines the distribution of powers between the State and these Communities in the educational field. Sets the framework for subsequent reforms.	Management and control.
1983	<i>Ley Orgánica 11/1983, de 25 de agosto, de Reforma Universitaria - LRU</i> (Organic Act on University Reform) Further reforms were implemented via decrees and orders.	Clarified the powers of the State, Autonomous Communities and institutions in relation to higher education. Development of university autonomy (statutory autonomy, academic autonomy plus more power for departments, financial autonomy and autonomy to select and promote lecturers); establishment of a student financial aid system; creation of a Council of Universities with representation from the Ministry, the Autonomous Communities and the universities to coordinate, plan and evaluate the provision for higher education. The act is not yet fully implemented.	Access to higher education; management and control; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation; financial aid to students; course planning and content.
1983a	<i>Real Decreto 2298/1983, de 28 de julio, por el que se regula el sistema de becas y otras ayudas al estudio de carácter personalizado</i> (Royal Decree on grants and other forms of assistance to students)	Established general rules covering grants to students in economic need.	Student financial aid.
1986	<i>Ley 13/1986, de 14 de abril, de fomento y coordinación general de la investigación científica y técnica</i> (Act on the promotion and general coordination of scientific and technical research)	Laid down the National Plan for Scientific Research and Technological Development to promote basic research. Set up the Interministerial Commission of Science and Technology for the coordination and the follow-up of the National Plan. Established the Centre for Technological and Industrial Development in order to promote the introduction of new technologies.	Research.

SPAIN

(continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1987	<i>Real Decreto 1497/1987, de 27 de noviembre, por el que se establecen directrices generales comunes de los planes de estudio de los títulos universitarios de carácter oficial y validez en todo el territorio nacional</i> (Royal Decree 1497/1987 establishing guidelines for course structure and official degrees and their nationwide recognition)	Laid down general guidelines for the planning, structure and content of university courses and for the recognition of degrees.	University higher education; course planning and structure.
1990	<i>Ley Orgánica 1/1990, de 3 de octubre, de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo - LOGSE</i> (Organic Act 1/1990 on the general organisation of the education system)	The act does not specifically refer to higher education but regulates the structure and content of specific vocational training and art education at higher education level.	Non-university higher education.
1992	<i>Ley Orgánica 9/1992, de 23 de diciembre, de transferencia de competencias a Comunidades Autónomas que accedieron a la autonomía por la vía del artículo 143 de la Constitución</i> (Organic Act 9/1992 on the transfer of powers to the Autonomous Communities)	Allowed the devolution of responsibility for universities to Autonomous Communities whose autonomy is stipulated in Art. 143 of the 1978 Constitution.	Management and control; financing of institutions.
1993	<i>Real Decreto 676/1993, de 7 de mayo, por el que se establecen directrices sobre los títulos y las correspondientes enseñanzas mínimas de formación profesional</i> (Royal Decree 676/1993, establishing guidelines on the qualifications and the corresponding minimum level of vocational training required)	Laid down general guidelines for qualifications and curricula for higher level vocational training.	Non-university higher education; vocational training; course structure.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1994	<i>'Informe sobre la financiación de las universidades'</i> (Report on the financing of the universities)	Recommended increases in spending on higher education, especially on the non-university sector, and in self-financing of the public universities, especially through tuition fees and contract-based funding. Further recommended the introduction of new funding formulae promoting quality and competence and a new student aid system including loans. Insisted on institutional reform to improve coordination between universities and to render institutional management more efficient.	Financing of higher education.
1995	<i>Real Decreto 1947/1995, de 1 de diciembre, por el que se establece el Plan Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad de las Universidades</i> (Royal Decree 1947/1995, on the quality assessment of universities)	Established the National Plan for the Quality Assessment of Universities in order to promote and harmonise the evaluation process. Evaluation results are intended to give the educational authorities, students and society at large an objective view of the quality of higher education.	Quality control and evaluation.

FRANCE

Context

Higher education system with open access to universities and selective access to prestigious *Grandes écoles*. Strong growth in higher education student population during 1960s. Student protests of 1968. 1970s economic recession. Continuing growth and diversification in the student population with the creation of technical and vocational *baccalauréats*.

Summary of Reforms

Continued expansion of higher education provision, particularly outside traditional universities and *Grandes écoles*. Diversification of higher education provision with the creation of the higher technical sections (*sections de techniciens supérieurs*) and the technical university institutes (*instituts universitaires de technologie*). Introduction of the right to continuing education (Delors Act 1971) and involvement of universities in such provision. Increasing regional involvement in funding and planning higher education. Strengthening of the autonomy of higher education institutions within a centrally-imposed framework: increasing use of steering through funding contracts with the Ministry of Education; introduction of a new financing system in early 1994 granting institutions more freedom to decide on how to spend the allocated budget; simplification of study courses.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1968	<i>Loi d'Orientation sur l'enseignement supérieur du 11 novembre 1968 - Loi Faure</i> (Blueprint Act on higher education - Faure Act)	Major reform of the university sector. Replaced Napoleonic faculties by a large number of multi-disciplinary universities divided into teaching and research units (<i>UERS</i>). They were intended to be fairly autonomous with primarily <i>a posteriori</i> control, but until the end of the 1980s their autonomy was restricted mainly to teaching methods. Students and academic personnel were to be involved in decision-making. The multi-disciplinary format had little success with the <i>UERS</i> adopting the old administrative approach of the departments or former faculties. The act was not completely implemented before the adoption of the 1984 Act.	Management and control.
1984	<i>Loi sur l'enseignement supérieur du 26 janvier 1984 - Loi Savary</i> (Higher Education Act - Savary Act)	Applied to the whole of the public higher education sector. Strengthened institutional autonomy by giving them the right to enter into four-year contracts with the State based on a development plan addressing both national objectives and local training needs. Creation of <i>CNE (Comité National d'Évaluation)</i> , the national body for the evaluation of universities. Selection of students was not permitted but prepared the grounds for better guidance of students during their first study cycle. Professional skills could be validated for entry to higher education. Students and lecturers were granted more representation on the institutions' councils provoking much opposition from professors who often found themselves in a minority. Many universities initially refused to implement the required changes and only in 1988 were all institutions forced to amend their statutes in accordance with the Faure Act. Student grants were increased and a new calculation method was introduced.	Management and control; access to higher education; financing of institutions; student financial aid; quality control.

FRANCE (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1983 to 1985	Lois de décentralisation (Decentralisation Laws)	Higher education explicitly remained the responsibility of the State, but regions were invited to contribute to its financing, particularly in relation to vocational training, which became a regional responsibility, and research.	Management and control; financing of higher education.
1989	Loi d'Orientation sur l'éducation du 10 juillet 1989 - Loi Jospin (Blueprint Act on education - Jospin Act)	Had little effect on higher education itself except to create the <i>instituts universitaires de formation de maîtres (IUFMs)</i> to train primary and secondary teachers at university level.	Upgrading of non-university courses.
1989a	Assises nationales de l'enseignement supérieur: 'Université 2000: Quelle université pour demain' (National forum on the future of higher education)	Discussed the future development of higher education and the role of the regions in this. Led to a series of agreements between the State and the regions to finance a significant programme of construction of new higher education institutions in collaboration with the territorial entities of <i>départements</i> and <i>communes</i> .	Financing of institutions.
1990	Plan Université 2000 (University 2000 Plan)	University building development programme.	Financing of institutions.
1992	Arrêté du 26 mai 1992 (Order of 26 May 1992)	Reform of the first and second university cycles introducing more guidance and information for students, including a tutoring system.	Access and wastage; internationalisation.
1994	Décret du 14 janvier 1994 relatif au budget et au régime financier des établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel (EPSCP) (Decree on the budget and financial system of the EPSCP) <i>came into force in 1997</i>	Allowed all scientific, cultural and vocational public higher education institutions (<i>EPSCPs</i> - <i>universities</i> , <i>instituts nationaux polytechniques</i> , <i>écoles normales supérieures</i> and <i>écoles et instituts extérieurs aux universités</i>) to construct their budget based on policies ('management budgeting') rather than on administrative entities. It reinforced management control but also encouraged the devolution of decision-making within institutions.	Financing; management and control.

FRANCE (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1996	<p>Consultation nationale: 'États généraux de l'Université'</p> <p>(Nation-wide consultation of all interested parties on university education)</p>	<p>Discussion based on a series of proposals by Minister Bayrou focusing mainly on the simplification and updating of university programmes and on student aid. Universities were encouraged to organise systematic evaluation of teaching. Some propositions were implemented before the change of government in 1997.</p>	<p>Quality control and evaluation; course planning; structure and content; student financial aid.</p>
1996a	<p>Conclusions de la Commission Fauroux: 'Pour l'École'</p> <p>(Conclusions of the Fauroux Commission)</p>	<p>The Commission investigated the whole of the education system. With regard to higher education it made recommendations in relation to autonomy, teaching and management, and for the improvement of the transition from secondary to higher education through guidance and tutoring.</p>	<p>Management and control; access and wastage.</p>

Context

Rapid development of higher education after joining the European Community in 1973 due to support from Structural Funds, with special emphasis on vocational training.

Summary of Reforms

Major growth in student numbers (600% between 1965 and 1995). Further development of vocational higher education through regional technology colleges with some recently upgraded to institutes of technology. Increasing parity between university and non-university sector. Institutions are given more autonomy from direct government control due to the creation of intermediary bodies, like the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA). Modern legal framework for universities adopted in 1997.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1971	Higher Education Authority Act	Established the Higher Education Authority (HEA) with advisory and planning responsibility for the whole of higher education in Ireland. The HEA became the main funding agency for universities and 'designated institutions'.	Management and control; financing of institutions.
1979	National Council for Educational Awards Act	Established the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) responsible for the promotion, coordination and development of the non-university higher education sector for approving and recognising courses and for awarding degrees, diplomas and certificates to students.	Quality control.
1989	Dublin City University Act University of Limerick Act	The two National Institutes of Higher Education (NIHEs) were awarded university status and the nearby colleges of education were linked to these, upgrading teacher training to university level.	Upgrading of non-university institutions.
1992	Regional Technical Colleges Act	Gave statutory recognition to regional technical colleges, providing courses in the areas of business, engineering and science. Granted these institutions a large degree of institutional autonomy over staffing, property, budgeting and development planning.	Structure of higher education; management and control.
1992a	Dublin Institute of Technology Act	Established the Dublin Institute of Technology.	Structure of higher education.
1992b	Green Paper: <i>Education for a Changing World</i>	Strategic document outlining the future form of higher education: new admission procedures, modularisation of curricula, credit accumulation and transfer, quality assurance and a single funding body for higher education.	Course structure; financing of institutions; access to higher education; quality control.
1995	Abolition of student fees in higher education (no legislation necessary)		Access to higher education; financial aid to students.
1995a	White Paper: <i>Charting our Education Future</i>	A new approach to education by including all educational provision, from school to higher education, within continuing education. Proposals in relation to higher education later formed the basis for the 1997 Universities Act.	Financial support for students; access and wastage.

IRELAND (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1997	Universities Act	Provided a modern legal framework for the universities. Legislated in relation to financial and academic accountability, governance and autonomy, transparency, quality assurance, equality and funding of institutions. Amended the 1909 Act in such a way that the University College Dublin, the University College Cork, the University College Galway and the St Patrick's College Maynooth are now constituent parts of the National University of Ireland, each enjoying a higher degree of autonomy.	Structure of higher education; management and control; financing of institutions; quality control.

ITALY

Context

Higher education, for the purposes of the following table, is academic, university provision only. Massive increase in demand for university places as a result of Law 910 of 1969. During the 1970s and 1980s, universities suffered from low investment and low productivity whereby only 6% of registered students graduated and 30% had out-stayed the maximum course time '*fuori corsi*'. The reform of the higher education system in the 1990s was made necessary by a profound crisis in the university system reflecting the political, economic and social problems in Italy. The traditional political parties which had governed Italy since the Second World War lost power and new political alliances arose, favoured by a new electoral law which transformed the primarily proportional system into a primarily majority one. There were long time gaps between the passing of legislation and its implementation via decrees and regulations. The centre-left coalition Government which came to power in 1996 continued restructuring public finances with a view to meeting the Maastricht criteria and decentralising public administration.

Summary of Reforms

Gradual process of liberalisation and devolution of autonomy to higher education institutions. Most reforms were introduced after 1989.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1969	Legge n. 910, 11.12.1969 (Law 910)	Following the massification of higher education, which had started at the beginning of the 1960s, Law 910 liberalised higher education by granting to all upper secondary school leavers free access to all faculties. Liberalised study plans and increased the flexibility of university curricula.	Access to higher education; course planning.
1973	Legge n. 766, 30.11.1973 (Law 766)	Addressed the need for additional university teaching staff and its re-organisation in response to the rising demand for university education.	Staffing.
1980	Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 382 (Presidential Decree 382 on the reform of university teaching)	Initiated a slow reform process which altered the recruitment and career path of university staff, authorised, on an experimental basis, a departmental structure with financial and administrative autonomy to coordinate research activities instead of control by individual professors, and created a range of new collegiate bodies such as the degree course councils to oversee teaching activities and coordinate coursework and students' study plans. Introduction of doctoral programmes with postgraduate scholarships.	Staffing; course planning; management and control; research.
1989	Legge n. 168, 9.5.1989 che istituisce il Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica (MURST) (Law 168 establishing the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research)	Established the Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research to coordinate university activities and allocate funding. Increased the institutional, administrative and cultural autonomy of universities by allowing areas which were previously subject to national regulations to be covered by the university statutes.	Management and control.
1990	Legge n. 245, 7.8.1990 (Law 245)	Norms governing the universities' triennial development plans. Aimed to introduce equitable university planning to avoid regional imbalances. The measures did not have the desired effect.	Development planning at a national level.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1990a	Legge n. 341, 19.11.1990 (Law 341 on the reorganisation of university teaching)	Defined three levels at which universities could award degrees: first level diploma after 2-3 years, second level diploma (<i>laurea</i>) and third level diploma (<i>diploma di specializzazione</i>). Course planning according to tables of courses defined by the Ministry. Introduced university training for nursery and primary school teachers, though the latter was not implemented until 1998.	Course structure.
1991	Legge n. 390, 2.12.1991 (Law 390 on the right to higher education)	Defined the role of the State, regions and universities in student aid following the transfer of certain responsibilities to the regions in 1977. The State acts as coordinator, while the regions are responsible for administering grants and providing services such as cafeterias and accommodation for students. Individual universities were allowed to grant exemptions from fees and to give part-time work to students. Introduction of interest-free loans. Aid to students was refocused on merit.	Student financial aid.
1991a	Legge n. 243, 29.7.1991 (Law 243 on private universities)	Established legal recognition of, and financial support for, private universities.	Private higher education.
1993	Legge n. 537, 24.12.1993 (Law 537 on the rationalisation of public finances)	Gave universities full autonomy in budget spending. Increased the institutional autonomy for the management of staff and in setting tuition fees. Internal evaluation centres were set up in each university.	Institutional finance; management and control.
1994	Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 13.4.1994 (Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers)	This Decree and associated executive rulings (see also under 1997) were required to implement Law 390 of 1991. Introduced measures to ensure uniform treatment of students when awarding grants and assessing the amounts of fees to be paid across different regions.	Financial support to students.
1996	Decreto Ministeriale, 22.2.1996 (Ministerial Decree on the assessment of the university system)	Created the Observatory (<i>Osservatorio</i>) to assess the university system through the evaluation of research and teaching activities in relation to the triennial development plan.	Quality control and evaluation.
1996a	Legge n. 622, 23.12.1996 (Law 662 on the rationalisation of public finances)	Tackled extreme overcrowding by agreeing with largest universities to create new campuses and divide faculties. Reform of development planning system to end indiscriminate quantitative expansion and to focus on quality.	Management and control; financing of institutions.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1997	<p>Legge n. 59, 15.3.1997</p> <p>(Law 59 on the transfer of functions and tasks to the regions and local bodies)</p> <p>Legge n. 127, 15.5.1997</p> <p>(Law 127 introducing urgent measures to facilitate administrative activities, decision-making and supervisory procedures)</p>	<p>The so-called 'Bassanini Laws' granted universities financial and teaching autonomy in an attempt to simplify and deregulate public administration. The development of curricula, previously defined by rigid tables established by the Ministry, was now the responsibility of individual universities which were guided by very general national regulations. The laws provided norms for the development, planning and assessment of the university system and its activities and reorganised the university councils to make their representation more balanced. The <i>ISEFs</i> (<i>istituti superiori di educazione fisica</i> - higher institutes of physical education) were upgraded to university level.</p>	<p>Management and control; finance; course planning; upgrading of vocational higher education.</p>
1997a	<p>Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 30.4.1997</p> <p>Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri, 28.7.1997</p> <p>(Decrees of the President of the Council of Ministers on the right to higher education)</p> <p>Decreto Ministeriale, 24.7.1997</p> <p>(Ministerial Decree of 24.7.1997)</p>	<p>These and associated executive rulings were required to implement Law 390 of 1991. They introduced uniform criteria for awarding grants and for assessing the amount of fees to be paid by students across different regions. Introduced a regional tax on enrolment destined entirely to finance student support.</p>	<p>Student financial aid.</p>
1997b	<p>Legge n. 196, 24.6.1997</p> <p>(Law 196 on the labour market and access to it)</p>	<p>Established a system of non-university higher education 'higher technical training', on an experimental basis. In 1999, the system was further developed.</p>	<p>Structure of higher education.</p>
1997c	<p>Decreto Ministeriale 245, 21.7.1997</p> <p>(Ministerial Decree on the access to higher education and related guidance activities)</p>	<p>Allowed universities to limit the number of students admitted for some types of courses: human and veterinary medicine, architectural courses and studies requiring specialist training as part of the course. Introduced a pre-enrolment system to help institutional planning and to provide a student guidance system through upper secondary schools in collaboration with universities.</p>	<p>Access and wastage.</p>
1998	<p>Legge n. 210, 3.7.1998</p> <p>(Law 210) 1969</p>	<p>Transferred the responsibility for recruiting researchers and appointing university professors from the central level to the individual universities. The majority of the members of the selecting committees are however elected by professors in the relevant field on a nation-wide basis.</p>	<p>Employment of teaching staff.</p>

LUXEMBOURG

Context

Limited higher education offer, entirely state-financed. Most students study abroad.

Summary of Reforms

Development of technical and vocational higher education offer and of research capacity. Upgrading of many vocational and professional courses to higher education level. Increase in the autonomy of the two main institutions, the Luxembourg University Centre (*Centre universitaire de Luxembourg - CUNLUX*) and the Higher Institute of Technology of Luxembourg (*Institut supérieur de technologie de Luxembourg - IST*).

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1969	<i>Loi du 18 juin 1969 sur l'enseignement supérieur et l'homologation des titres et grades étrangers d'enseignement supérieur</i> (Act on higher education and the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications)	Establishment of the basis for the present Luxembourg higher education system and of the Luxembourg University Centre (<i>CUNLUX</i>).	Structure of higher education.
1977	<i>Loi du 8 décembre 1977 concernant l'aide financière de l'État pour études supérieures</i> (Act on state financial assistance for higher education studies)	Introduction of a student financial aid system. The amount of grants and loans (interest-free and/or interest-bearing) is linked to the parents' and/or student's income. The cost of living is also taken into account.	Student financial aid.
1979	<i>Loi du 21 mai 1979 portant création d'un Institut supérieur de technologie</i> (Act on the creation of a Higher Institute of Technology)	Created a Higher Institute of Technology (<i>IST</i>).	Structure of higher education.
1983	<i>Loi du 6 septembre 1983 portant création d'un Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques</i> (Act on the creation of a Higher Institute for Pedagogical Studies and Research)	Increase in the length of training of primary and pre-school teachers from two to three years.	Upgrading of professional courses.
1990	<i>Loi du 6 août 1990 portant organisation des études éducatives et sociales</i> (Act on the organisation of training educational childcare staff)	Established training courses for educational childcare staff at the Institut for Educational and Social Studies (<i>Institut d'études éducatives et sociales - IEES</i>).	Upgrading of professional courses.

LUXEMBOURG (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1992	<p><i>Loi du 13 mars 1992 portant modification à la loi du 8 décembre 1977 concernant l'aide financière de l'État pour études supérieures</i></p> <p>(Act modifying the Act of 8 December 1977 on state financial assistance for higher education studies)</p>	<p>Aimed to further encourage young people to study by offering more financial support. Grants were linked to family income and loans with 2% interest rates offered. Special grants for students who progress well (successful completion of the first stage of university study within the normal period of time plus one additional year). Increase of the maximum grant amount. Interest-free loans were abolished. More aid for students from families with several dependent children.</p>	<p>Student financial aid.</p>
1996	<p><i>Loi du 11 août 1996 portant réforme de l'enseignement supérieur</i></p> <p>(Act reforming higher education)</p> <p><i>came into force in 1997</i></p>	<p>Introduction of financial, administrative, pedagogical and scientific autonomy for the main higher education institutions (<i>CUNLUX</i> and <i>IST</i>). Creation of a National Council of Higher Education to advise, co-ordinate and evaluate the sector.</p>	<p>Management and control; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.</p>

Context

In the 1970s, there was an increasing demand for higher education, which was considered essential for economic growth. At the same time the poor performance of the universities which translated into a high student dropout ratio and long actual periods of study, gave rise to concern. Public spending in general and on higher education in particular suffered extensive cuts. There was a need for greater differentiation in higher education.

Summary of Reforms

Government policy aimed at encouraging the higher education system to develop into a flexible, differentiated, efficient and cost-effective system. Upgrading of professional education to higher professional education (*hoger beroepsonderwijs - HBO*)¹. During the 1980s, some institutions were merged and others closed down in an effort to cut costs, stimulate cooperation and promote specialisation. Institutions were granted more autonomy and were at the same time made more accountable for the use of public funds by the introduction of a system of external quality control. Increased institutional autonomy also required a new approach to development planning and a two-year planning cycle was introduced in 1987. Every two years, the government issues a Higher Education and Research Plan (*hoger onderwijs en onderzoek plan - HOOP*) and, during the following year, the other parties concerned are invited to submit their views on the Plan.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1978	Nota 'Hoger onderwijs voor velen' (Memorandum <i>Higher Education for the Many</i>)	Set out a number of principles for higher education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyone entitled and showing the appropriate aptitude and interest should be put in a position to pursue a course of higher education • attempts will be made to create a two-phase structure for university education • the length of degree courses must not exceed four years • the period of registration as a student may exceed the course length by only one year, i.e. comprise a total of five years • after the degree examination, selection will take place for a second study phase lasting one or two years. 	Structure of and access to higher education.
1981	Wet Twee-Fasenstructuur (Two-Phase Structure Act)	This act divided university education into two phases. The length of the first phase was fixed at four years, beginning with a preliminary year and ending with the degree examination. The second phase lasted for two years and was intended for specific professional courses (such as medical or pharmaceutical training), specific training for scientific researchers or teacher training. The act forced the universities to take a careful look at their study programmes and to reorganise them in such a way as to allow students to complete their course within the prescribed period of time.	Course structure and planning.
1982	Taakverdeling en concentratie in het wetenschappelijk onderwijs - TVC (White Paper on the allocation of tasks and concentration in university education)	Aimed to reduce the cost of the university sector, stimulate cooperation and concentrate research activities. The Minister determined the general framework and the institutions themselves decided whether they wanted to realise savings through regional cooperation, the concentration of courses in specific universities, the division of tasks between universities or the closure of certain university departments.	Financing of institutions; structure of higher education.

¹ The *HBO* is taught in *hogescholen* which abroad generally call themselves 'universities of professional education'.

NETHERLANDS (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1983	Schaalvergroting, taakverdeling en concentratie in het hoger beroepsonderwijs - STC (Memorandum on the increase in scope, allocation of tasks and concentration in higher professional education)	Proposed the creation of medium-sized, multidisciplinary <i>HBO</i> institutions and outlined a new internal structure for these institutions. Aimed to strengthen, restructure and upgrade <i>HBO</i> institutions both from a management and educational point of view.	Structure of higher education; management and control.
1984	Machtigingswet beperking inschrijving hoger beroepsonderwijs (Enabling Act regulating access to higher professional education)	Regulated student influx by adapting it to the needs of the labour market. A <i>numerus clausus</i> was introduced for specific courses.	Access to higher education.
1984a	Wet op de Open Universiteit - WOU (Open University Act)	Creation of the Open University.	Access to and structure of higher education.
1985	Wet op het wetenschappelijk onderwijs - WWO (University Education Act) <i>came into force in 1986</i>	The main aim of this Act was to increase the efficiency of university administration. An intermediate step along the route that would ultimately lead to the <i>WHW</i> .	Management and control of universities; quality control; course planning.
1985a	Nota 'Hoger Onderwijs, Autonomie en Kwaliteit' - HOAK Nota (Memorandum <i>Higher Education, Autonomy and Quality</i>)	Outlined a new approach to government steering, 'control at a distance'. Accountability of institutions was based on <i>post-hoc</i> external quality control via the Association of Dutch Universities (<i>VSNU</i>). Introduced the idea of a two-year planning cycle as later introduced by the <i>HOOP</i> .	Management and control; quality control.
1985b	Wet op het hoger beroepsonderwijs - WHBO (Higher Professional Education Act)	Transferred higher professional education from the secondary education sector to the higher education sector as a distinct type of education. The principle of institutional autonomy was extended from the universities to the higher professional institutions.	Upgrading and restructuring of <i>HBO</i> sector; management and control; financing of institutions; quality control; teaching and assessment.
1986	Notitie 'Kaderstelling selectieve krimp en groei universiteiten en academische ziekenhuizen' (White Paper <i>Framework for the Selective Contraction and Expansion of Universities and University Hospitals</i>)	Used quality arguments to implement budget cuts in universities. The Minister, on the basis of recommendations from experts, determined the measures to be introduced.	Financing of institutions.

NETHERLANDS (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1986a	Invoeringswet WHBO (Implementation Act <i>WHBO</i>)	Regulated practical aspects of the <i>WHBO</i> . Higher professional institutions became hogescholen.	Structure of <i>HBO</i> sector; management and control; financing.
1986b	Invoeringswet WWO (Implementation Act <i>WWO</i>)	Amendments to the 1985 <i>WWO</i> aimed at increasing the effectiveness of university planning, financing and administration.	Development planning; financing; management and control.
1986c	Wet op de studiefinanciering (Student Finance Act)	Introduction of a universal basic grant system with the possibility of awarding supplementary grants to students from lower income families as well as interest-bearing loans. Duration of support limited to 6 years maximum.	Financial aid to students.
1987	Hoger Onderwijs Onderzoek Plan - HOOP (First Higher Education and Research Plan - <i>HOOP</i>)	A two-year planning cycle came into effect. In the first year the Government issues a so-called draft Higher Education and Research Plan (<i>HOOP</i>), presenting the Government's ideas and perspectives on the development of higher education over the subsequent four years. During the second year of the cycle, the institutions respond to this draft with their own institutional development plans. The views of other groups concerned (e.g. employers) are also taken into consideration. The <i>HOOP</i> also includes an estimate of the financing required to cover the institutions' activities during next four years.	Management and control; development planning.
1988	Stimuleringsprogramma Internationalisering - STIR (Internationalisation Incentive Programme)	A programme running from 1988 till 1997 and mainly intended to promote an international orientation among students, to encourage institutions to introduce an international dimension into their courses, to encourage studying and placements abroad and to develop facilities to host foreign students.	Internationalisation.
1991	Nota 'Grenzen verleggen: Internationalisering van het onderwijs' (Memorandum <i>Pushing Back the Borders: the Internationalisation of Education</i>)	Promotion of the internationalisation of education in general and of relations with neighbouring countries in particular.	Internationalisation.

NETHERLANDS (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1992	<p><i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek WHW</i></p> <p>(Higher Education and Scientific Research Act)</p> <p><i>came into force in 1993</i></p>	<p>The act replaced a large number of laws and regulations by creating a single legal framework for higher professional education, university education and higher education through distance learning. It recognised university education and higher professional education as two similar but distinct types of education. It stipulated that courses must be defined either as university education or higher professional education. Already then many of the regulations were identical for the universities and higher professional institutions, but have since been even further harmonised.</p>	<p>Management, finance and control; course planning; structure and content; financial aid to students; quality control; teaching and assessment.</p>
1996	<p><i>Wet kwaliteit en studeerbaarheid</i></p> <p>(Act on the quality and feasibility of study)</p>	<p>Aimed to improve course completion rates and reduce wastage. Introduced a fund of 500 million guilders for improving education in a way that would allow students to complete their studies within the standard period of study. Introduced guidelines for the self-evaluation of institutions.</p>	<p>Wastage; quality control.</p>
1997	<p><i>Wet modernisering universitaire bestuursorganisatie - MUB</i></p> <p>(Act on the modernisation of university governance)</p>	<p>Student and staff organisations lose their positions on the governing bodies. The administration of higher education institutions is placed in the hands of an Administrative Board (responsible for day-to-day management) which is appointed by and accountable to a Supervisory Board, whose members are appointed and dismissed by the Minister of Education. The Supervisory Board includes members of the business community.</p>	<p>Management and control; internationalisation.</p>

AUSTRIA

Context

1965-1995: expansion of higher education in terms of both the number of students (quadrupled since 1970) and of courses (with a 60% increase in courses over the 30-year period, especially in social and economic sciences). Enormous growth in university enrolment. The system of joint management and decision-making involving universities and government ministries became increasingly inefficient and cumbersome. Family contribution is a key element in financial support to students. Change to coalition government in 1990 precipitated reform phase. Until the mid-1990s, uniformity of provision with virtually no non-university vocational higher education. European Union membership in 1995. Budgetary cutbacks in 1997 to control growth in higher education expenditure.

Summary of Reforms

Increase in university autonomy and independence from government. Increase in monitoring and evaluation of higher education institutions. Establishment of *Fachhochschulen (FHS)* offering vocational higher education courses. *FHS* represented the introduction for the first time of mixed public and private sector financing with no direct state control over curricular development. Student financial assistance remains narrowly targeted, eligibility is extended to *FHS* students and for studies abroad. Increase in percentage of direct aid (grants, subsidised accommodation and meals) in total student assistance: 18% direct aid in 1990, 44% in 1997, an increase partly due to a reduction in levels of family allowances and in free transport.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1966	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an den wissenschaftlichen Hochschulen - AHStG</i> (General Studies Act for Higher Education)	A new legal framework for universities which gave rise to a complex set of legal instruments and decrees enacted to regulate different aspects of higher education and aimed to standardise the organisation of teaching and examinations.	Teaching and course content.
1970	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Kunsthochschulen - KHOG</i> (Universities of Art and Music Organisation Act)	Restructuring and upgrading of art education.	Management and organisation; recruitment of personnel; location of institutions.
1975	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten - UOG</i> (University Organisation Act)	Introduction of participatory management: involvement of university teaching staff, students and administrative personnel in university decision-making and reorganisation.	Management and control.
1983	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an Hochschulen künstlerischer Richtung - KHStG</i> (Studies Act for universities of Art and Music)	Harmonisation of the legal framework concerning studies at universities (<i>AHStG</i>) and universities of art and music.	Teaching and course content.
1988	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Akademie der bildenden Künste in Wien - AOG</i> (Academy of Fine Art Organisation Act)	Restructuring of art education at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna.	Management and organisation; recruitment of personnel; location of institutions.
1992	<i>Studienförderungsgesetz - StudFG</i> (Study Support Act)	Reform of the 1963 Act. Eligibility for grants increased slightly by lowering the expected level of parental support. Grants now intended to cover the full cost of living. Grants eligibility extended to <i>Fachhochschule</i> students and to those involved in recognised studies abroad.	Student financial assistance.

AUSTRIA (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1993	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten - UOG</i> (University Organisation Act)	Substantial decentralisation of decision-making to universities. Supervision and funding by Federal Government retained. A National University Board was set up to advise the Federal Ministry responsible on the introduction of new study courses, overall university development plans, finance, evaluation of teaching and research. University advisory boards were established to advise the rector and the university senate on development planning, personnel, internal evaluation of teaching and research, and links between universities and industry/society. The act led to more university autonomy in relation to staff recruitment (including professors), management, internal organisation, application for and allocation of task-oriented budgets and detailed course content (with the support of curricular committees). Introduction of a system for performance assessment of teaching and research. Phased implementation.	Management and control; financing of institution; quality control and evaluation.
1993a	<i>Bundesgesetz über Fachhochschul-Studiengänge - FHSStG</i> (Federal Act on <i>Fachhochschule</i> Programmes)	Framework regulations relating to the recognition of <i>Fachhochschule</i> programmes. These are academically-based vocational higher education courses with compulsory work placements leading to an academic degree. Initial course funding is determined by points awarded in relation to a set of fixed criteria. Continued course recognition depends on ongoing monitoring of costs, courses, students and teaching staff, as well as results.	Course structure.
1994	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Errichtung des Universitätszentrums für Weiterbildung mit der Bezeichnung Donau-Universität Krems</i> (Danube University Krems Act)	Federal act establishing the publicly-funded University Centre for Further Education otherwise known as the Danube University Krems.	Higher education structure.
1997	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an den Universitäten - UniStG</i> (University Studies Act)	Reform of the 1966 <i>AHStG</i> . A framework act which further strengthened university autonomy. It replaced a complex set of higher education study laws by a set of flexible legal instruments aimed at making training more labour-market oriented. Definition of educational tasks of universities. Attempt to reduce the dropout rate through the introduction of preparatory courses, and to lessen the length of courses. Involvement of employers in curricular committees whose tasks include organising course content and examinations, monitoring and evaluating study programmes and teaching, facilitating international mobility and the use of distance learning techniques for individual courses.	Wastage; management and control; monitoring and evaluation; course content and planning; internationalisation; teaching and assessment.

AUSTRIA (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1998	<p><i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten der Künste - KUOG</i></p> <p>(Universities of Art and Music Organisation Act)</p>	<p>Substantial decentralisation of decision-making to universities. Supervision and funding by Federal Government retained. Activities of the National University Board were extended to the universities of art and music. Creation of university advisory boards. The act led to more university autonomy in relation to staff recruitment (including professors), management, internal organisation, application for and allocation of task-oriented budgets and detailed course content (with the support of curricular committees). Introduction of a system for performance assessment of teaching and research.</p>	<p>Management and control; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.</p>

PORTUGAL

Context

Major changes after the 1974 revaluation with the adoption of a democratic Constitution in 1976. The limited institutional capacity was unable to meet the sharp increase in demand for higher education which led to the introduction of national *numerus clausus* in 1976. Efforts to increase the provision of higher education by establishing new public universities, polytechnics and privately-funded institutions. In 1986, accession to the European Community. The need for higher-level vocational training led to the creation of the polytechnic system in 1979/80.

Summary of Reforms

Development of vocational higher education at polytechnic institutions. Growth of private and cooperative sector due to insufficient public provision. Increased autonomy for higher education institutions. Numerous small changes in the admissions system introduced by governments trying to respect the right to higher education of all those having successfully completed secondary education. Increase in tuition fees and reform of the student support system.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1979	Decreto-Lei n° 448/79, de 13 de Novembro (Decree-Law 448/79)	Legal basis for university academic personnel.	University staff careers.
1980	Lei 19/80, de 16 de Julho (Law 19/80)		
1979a	Decreto-Lei n° 513-T/79, de 26 de Diciembre (Decree-Law 513-T/79)	Creation of polytechnic institutions providing non-university vocational higher education.	Structure of vocational higher education.
1980a	Decreto-Lei n° 303/80, de 1 de Agosto (Decree-Law 303/80)		
1981	Decreto-Lei n° 185/81, de 1 de Julho (Decree-Law 185/81)	Legal basis for the academic personnel in polytechnic institutions.	Polytechnic staff careers.
1986	Lei de bases do sistema educativo, n°46/86, de 14 de Outubro - LBSE (Education Framework Act 46/86)	Confirmed the binary organisation of higher education with the more autonomous universities on the one hand and the polytechnic institutions on the other. Introduced <i>bacharel</i> and <i>DESE</i> (<i>diploma de estudos superiores especializados</i> equivalent to university <i>licenciado</i> degree) to be awarded by polytechnic higher education institutions.	Course planning; structure and content; management and control; access and wastage; quality control.
1988	Lei n° 108/88, de 24 de Setembro (Law 108/88)	Gave universities more executive autonomy over their internal organisation, creation and running of courses, research, internal staffing and administration of premises.	Management and control; course planning (universities).
1989	Decreto-Lei n° 271/89, de 19 de Agosto (Decree-Law 271/89)	Legal basis for private and cooperative higher education. Established the requirements for the recognition of institutions and for course approval.	Organisation of private and cooperative higher education.

PORTUGAL (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1990	Lei n° 54/90, de 5 de Setembro (Law 54/90)	Gave more autonomy to polytechnic institutions. Courses still have to be approved by the Ministry of Education.	Management and control (polytechnic institutions).
1992	Lei n° 20/92, de 14 de Agosto (Law 20/92)	Introduced a sharp increase in tuition fees. The intention was to further increase fees until they would cover half of the educational costs per student. Following strong opposition from students, the new Government suspended the law in 1995.	Financing of higher education.
1993	Decreto-Lei n° 129/93, de 22 de Abril (Decree-Law 129/93)	Creation of social support services at the public higher education institutions and of the National Council for Social Action in Higher Education.	Student support.
1994	Estatuto do Ensino Superior Particular e Cooperativo, Decreto-Lei n° 16/94, de 22 de Janeiro and Lei n° 37/94 de 11 de Novembro (Decree-Law 16/94 and Law 37/94)	Established the requirements for the recognition of private and cooperative higher education institutions and the approval of courses.	Organisation of private and cooperative higher education.
1994a	Lei n° 38/94, de 21 de Novembro (Law 38/94)	Established the basis for the quality assessment of higher education programmes.	Quality evaluation.
1997	Lei que define as bases do financiamento do ensino superior público, n° 113/97, de 16 de Setembro (Framework Act on Higher Education Finance 113/97)	Introduced funding of institutions via contracts: development contracts (longer term) and programme contracts (shorter term). Fixed the level of tuition fees to be paid by students. Created a student support fund responsible for developing new forms of support and extending these to students at non-public institutions. Institutions were given the right to set their own selection criteria for the admission of students.	Financing of institutions; student support; access to higher education.
1997a	Lei que revê as bases do sistema educativo, n° 115/97, de 19 de Setembro (Education Framework Act 115/97)	DESE was abolished, both universities and polytechnic institutions now award <i>bacharel</i> (2 to 3 years) and <i>licenciado</i> (4+ years) degrees. All teacher training leads to the <i>licenciado</i> degree.	Degree structure; teacher training course structure.
1997b	Decreto-Lei n° 252/97, de 26 de Setembro (Decree-Law 252/97)	Increased autonomy of universities with regard to staffing and university buildings.	Management and control.
1998	Decreto-Lei n° 296-A, de 25 de Setembro (Decree-Law 296-A)	Established requirements and procedures for access to higher education.	Access to all institutions of higher education.
1998a	Decreto-Lei n° 205/98, de 11 de Julho (Decree-Law 205/98)	Creation of the National Council for Assessment.	Quality assessment of higher education institutions.

FINLAND

Context

Rapid expansion of the provision of higher education during the 1960s and 1970s, which till then had been concentrated in the southern part of Finland. Several specialised institutions of business and technology were established in response to the demands of a rapidly growing economy. The aim was to increase the number of students in higher education and to ensure geographically balanced development of the country. Economic crisis and high unemployment in the early 1990s.

Summary of Reforms:

Apart from legislation-based reform, steering of universities has, since 1992, been based on consultations between the Ministry of Education and the universities. In 1991, the *ammattikorkeakoulu* system (polytechnics) was introduced on an experimental basis for the provision of vocational higher education. In 1995 the scheme was extended to all vocational higher education and each institution is carefully assessed before being granted a permanent licence. Major reform in the financing of institutions during the 1990s with the introduction of objective-based funding systems. Reform of the student financial aid system.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1966	<i>Laki korkeakoululaitoksen kehittämisestä vuosina 1967-1981 (228/1966)</i> (Higher Education Development Act for the period 1967-1981) <i>originally in force till 1981, later extended to 1986</i>	Intended to counteract the disproportionate increase in the provision of university education in social sciences and classical studies. Promotion of studies in technology and natural sciences as well as research to cater for the demands of the labour market. Paved the way for regionally balanced development of higher education.	Structure of higher education; vocational higher education; research.
1986	<i>Laki korkeakoululaitoksen kehittämisestä (1052/1986)</i> (Higher Education Development Act) <i>came into force in 1987</i>	Guaranteed the supply of necessary resources for the development of universities until the mid-1990s and prepared the ground for institutional reform. The act applied a completely new approach in relation to the management of higher education institutions. The main goals were the gradual introduction of management by objectives and of an assessment system providing information on the results and cost of teaching and research, as well as on the demand for more efficient undergraduate and postgraduate education. By the beginning of 1994, all universities had adopted 'budgeting by results', replacing itemised appropriations by appropriations linked to objectives and actual performance. Funding is split into two categories, operational expenditure and investment, and universities are free to decide on how to use the funds allocated to them. The act led to an increase in funding for higher education institutions.	Management and control; financing; quality assessment.
1991	<i>Asetus opetusministeriön hallinnonalan koulutuksen ja korkeakouluissa harjoitettavan tutkimuksen kehittämissuunnitelmasta (165/1991)</i> (Decree on the Government Development Plan for Education and University Research)	The decree aimed to achieve high quality in education and research, internationalisation, increased efficiency and the delegation of more decision-making powers from the Government to the institutions themselves. University administration was streamlined by reducing the number of levels in decision-making and by delegating authority. In the universities' central administration the decision-making authority lies with the rectors, at lower levels with deans and heads of units. Introduction of a national evaluation process covering both programmes and institutions.	Management and control; quality evaluation; internationalisation.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1991a	<i>Laki nuorisooasteen koulutuksen ja ammattikorkeakoulujen kokeiluista (391/1991)</i> (Act on experimental polytechnics)	Creation of a non-university higher education sector parallel to the universities. Upgrading of vocational education to higher education in the form of experimental polytechnics (institutions of vocational higher education).	Structure of higher education.
1991b	<i>Laki ammatillisista oppilaitoksista (146/1991) (muutos)</i> (Act on vocational education institutions)	General eligibility for access to universities and polytechnics was extended to students with post-secondary level vocational qualifications.	Access to higher education.
1992	<i>Laki korkeakouluopiskelijoiden opintotuesta (111/1992)</i> (Act on financial aid for higher education students)	A profound reform was introduced to the student financial aid system. Until then, banks had applied a government-fixed rate on state-guaranteed student loans. In the radically changed economic environment of the 1990s, banks started to charge interest at the market rate.	Student financial support.
1993	Revision of the 1991 Government Development Plan	Intended to reduce the dramatically increased unemployment rate by reforming degree structure and course contents of higher education to better meet the demands of the labour market. Promotion of research and development with a view to strengthening the national innovation structure. Much emphasis was placed on international cooperation.	Course planning and content; research; internationalisation.
1994	<i>Opintotukilaki (65/1994)</i> <i>Opintotukiasetus (260/1994)</i> (Act and Decree on student financial aid)	The financial aid scheme had two elements: the grant and the repayable loan. The basic idea of the amendments was to increase the proportion of the grant in relation to the loan. Support for a Master's degree course was limited to a 55-month period.	Student financial support.
1995	<i>Laki ammattikorkeakouluopinnoista (255/1995)</i> (Act on permanent polytechnics)	Following the very positive experience with polytechnics, the first nine experimental polytechnics were established as permanent institutions.	Structure of non-university higher education.
1995a	<i>Koulutuksen ja korkeakouluissa harjoitettavan tutkimuksen kehittämissuunnitelma 1995-2000</i> (Development Plan for Education and University Research 1995-2000 Government Decision)	The plan comprised ten priority areas: lifelong learning; labour market orientation; internationalisation; language teaching; implementation of the national information strategy for research and education; sustainable development; improvement of mathematics and science skills; emphasis on the cultural mission of the universities; establishment of centres of excellence and strengthening of the role of quality evaluation.	Access to higher education; course structure; internationalisation; quality evaluation.

FINLAND (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1996	<i>Asetus korkeakoulujen arviointineuvostosta (1320/1995)</i> (Decree to establish the Finnish Council for Higher Education Evaluation)	A Finnish Council for Higher Education Evaluation was established at the beginning of 1996 replacing the Higher Education Council as the advisory body to the Ministry of Education. The main task of the newly established Council is to assist universities and polytechnics in the self-evaluation process and to promote evaluation in Finland in general. The Council is also responsible for the evaluation of polytechnics seeking an operating licence.	Quality evaluation.
1996a	Joint proposal on the financing of universities by the Ministry of Education and the Universities' Working Group	Since 1988, a certain proportion of the appropriations for universities had been allocated on the basis of performance with different indicators used over the years. The new proposal introduced a major change in the financing of universities whereby basic funding is based on an agreed target number of Master's and doctoral degree course students. The phased implementation of the new formula-based budgeting system is expected to be completed by 2003.	Financing of institutions.
1997	<i>Yliopistolaki (645/1997)</i> (Act on Universities) <i>came into force in 1998</i>	Replaced the separate acts and decrees stipulating the mission of each university, its administrative system, curriculum, languages of instruction, research activities, etc. with a loose legislative framework leaving room for each university to decide on its administration.	Management and control.

SWEDEN

Context

Unified post-secondary education system. Links between study programmes offered and the labour market. Strong element of national planning and regulation in 1980. Restrictions on public spending in early 1990s.

Summary of Reforms

Moves towards greater institutional autonomy and deregulation, especially in course planning and staffing. Quality evaluation programme introduced. Continuing international emphasis.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1977	Högskolelagen (1977:218) (Higher Education Act) Högskoleförordningen (1977:263) (Higher Education Ordinance)	Incorporated all post-secondary education into the same system: the <i>högskola</i> , under the Ministry of Education and Science. Distinction between universities (with permanent research funding) and university colleges remained. Central planning of national course offer. Students were given the right to be represented in the undergraduate studies programme committees and in the faculty boards.	Structure of higher education; management and control; internationalisation.
1985	SFS 1985:601 (Amendment to Higher Education Ordinance 1977)	Extended the right to receive credit for studies abroad.	Internationalisation.
1985a	SFS 1985:702 (Amendment to Higher Education Ordinance 1977) <i>came into force in 1986</i>	Introduction of a simplified system for teaching posts within higher education. All teachers now have to fulfil the tasks of teaching, research and administration.	Staffing.
1987	SFS 1987:992 (Amendment to the Higher Education Act 1977) <i>came into force in 1988</i>	Regional boards abolished (move towards more institutional emphasis in management with participation of social partners and local authorities transferred to institutional board).	Management and control.
1988	SFS 1988:877 (Amendment to the Study Assistance Act 1973) SFS 1988:1381 (Amendment to the Study Assistance Ordinance 1973) <i>both came into force in 1989</i>	Reform of student aid system. Grants, as a proportion of total aid, were increased. Annual loan repayments were limited to 4% of borrower's income. Measures aimed to reduce indebtedness of graduates.	Student financial aid.
1992	'Fria universitet och högskolor' (Utbildningsdepartementet Ds 1992:1) (Memorandum <i>The Independence of Universities and University Colleges</i>)	Discussion of measures to increase institutional autonomy in a proposed Higher Education Act.	Management and control.

SWEDEN (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1992a	<p>SFS 1992:397</p> <p>(Ordinance containing directives for the National Agency for Higher Education - <i>Verket för högskoleservice</i>)</p> <p>SFS 1992:814</p> <p>(Ordinance containing directives for the Office of the University Chancellor - <i>Kanslersåmbetet</i>)</p>	<p>The National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges (<i>UHÄ</i>) was abolished. Quality assurance becomes a task for the Office of the University Chancellor.</p>	<p>Management (decentralisation); quality assurance.</p>
1992b	<p>Högskolelagen 1992:1434</p> <p>(Higher Education Act)</p> <p>Högskoleförordningen 1993:100</p> <p>(Higher Education Ordinance)</p> <p><i>came into force in 1993</i></p>	<p>Increased independence for universities and university colleges. Financing of universities and colleges on the basis of performance. The ordinance defines the right of students to be represented on university councils dealing with education. Counselling and careers guidance for students strengthened. Course planning transferred to institutional level.</p>	<p>Access and wastage; course planning (at institutional level); staffing (institutions can establish professorships); management; financing of institutions.</p>
1995	<p>SFS 1995:943</p> <p>(Ordinance containing directives for the National Agency for Higher Education)</p> <p>SFS 1995:945</p> <p>(Ordinance containing directives for the National Admissions Office to Higher Education)</p>	<p>A new National Agency for Higher Education, <i>Högskoleverket</i> formerly called <i>Verket för högskoleservice</i>, was established and made responsible for quality issues amongst other things. The responsibility for admissions was transferred to the new National Admissions Office to Higher Education now called <i>Verket för högskoleservice</i>.</p>	<p>Quality evaluation; access to higher education (simplification).</p>
1996	<p>SFS 1996:984</p> <p>(Amendment to the Higher Education Ordinance 1993)</p>	<p>Clearer and more uniform national rules for eligibility, selection and admission to universities and university colleges.</p>	<p>Access to higher education.</p>
1996a	<p>SFS 1996:1392</p> <p>(Amendment to the Higher Education Act 1992)</p>	<p>Cooperation and interaction with society defined as a third task of universities and university colleges besides teaching and research.</p>	<p>Structure of higher education; management.</p>
1997	<p>SFS 1997:797</p> <p>(Amendment to the Higher Education Act 1992)</p>	<p>Reorganisation of management of higher education institutions and increase in the number of professors. Requirement for an independent chair of the governing board.</p>	<p>Management and control; staffing.</p>

UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND)

Context

Expansion of university sector in 1960s following the Robbins Report (1963). Increase in demand for higher education. Establishment of polytechnics under LEAs during 1970s.

Summary of Reforms

Strong increase in full-time student numbers while funding per student fell; ceiling imposed in 1994. Polytechnics removed from local education authority control in 1988 then gained university status following 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. Strict limits imposed on public spending and increased government steering, via Funding Councils, of funding of higher education institutions. The 1997 Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) set the agenda for the future development of higher education.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1981	The Government's Expenditure Plans 1981-82 to 1983-84 (Cm. 8175). (White Paper)	Plans to reduce expenditure in Further and Higher Education by 8% over the next 3 years. Heralded change in policy and reshaping of higher education under conditions of severe resource restraint.	Financing of institutions.
1987	Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge (Cm. 114). (White Paper)	Change in policy: commitment to increase participation rates and widen access to higher education for mature entrants and those without conventional A-level qualifications. Need for further efficiency gains.	Access to higher education; financing of institutions.
1988	Education Reform Act	Applied to all levels of education. Establishment of the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC) to assume funding responsibilities for universities and for polytechnics and higher education colleges in England respectively.	Financing of institutions; management and control.
1989	Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order		
1990	Education (Student Loans) Act Education (Student Loans) (Northern Ireland) Order	Introduced loans as part of a student aid package comprising a means-tested grant, a loan and the payment of fees.	Student financial aid.
1991	Higher Education: A New Framework (Cm. 1541). (White Paper)	Proposed abolition of the 'binary system' between university and non-university institutions and the establishment of a unitary system of higher education.	Higher education structure; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.
1992	Further and Higher Education Act	Introduction of fundamental changes to the structure of further education. Abolition of the binary system allowing all higher education institutions to include 'university' in their title, subject to fulfilling certain criteria. Establishment of the Higher Education Funding Councils in England and Wales responsible for funding and quality control assessment. Funding of higher education institutions in Northern Ireland continued to be the responsibility of the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).	Structure of higher education; management and control; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.

UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND) (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1997	Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the UK (Dearing Report)	Most comprehensive review of the higher education sector since the 1963 Robbins Report. Recommendations covered institutional funding, student finance, teacher training, quality assurance, research, use of information and communications technology and the relationship between higher education and industry and commerce.	Financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation; student finance; course planning; structure and content; teaching.
1998	Teaching and Higher Education Act Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order	Introduction of changes to the financial support arrangements for students.	Financing of institutions; financial aid to students.

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTLAND)

Context

Higher participation in higher education than in rest of the United Kingdom and showing a steady increase. Many higher education courses are offered in further education institutions.

Summary of Reforms

Mainly from the early 1990s onwards: expansion of higher education by the establishment of new universities; increased access for women, mature-age entrants and those from less academic backgrounds; changes to funding of higher education institutions, quality assurance and student financing.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1988	Central Institutions (Scotland) Regulations	Increased the autonomy of directly-funded central institutions (non-university institutions) by establishing a governing body in which ministers had no direct role.	Management and control.
1990	Education (Student Loans) Act	Introduced loans as part of student aid package comprising a means-tested grant, a loan and the payment of fees.	Student financial aid.
1992	Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act	Introduced fundamental changes to the organisation of post-school education. Establishment of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) responsible for funding and quality assessment of Scottish higher education institutions, separately from those of the rest of the UK. Removed the divide between universities and central institutions (now higher education institutions) leading to the creation of 5 new universities from among these.	Management and control; financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation.
1997	Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the UK (Dearing Report) Report of the Scottish Committee of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Garrick Report)	Most comprehensive review of the sector since the 1963 Robbins Report. Recommendations covered institutional funding, student finance, teacher training, quality assurance, research, use of information and communications technology and the relationship between higher education, and industry and commerce.	Financing of institutions; quality control and evaluation; student finance; course planning; structure and content; teaching.
1998	Teaching and Higher Education Act	Introduction of changes to the financial support arrangements for students.	Financial aid to students.

ICELAND

Context

Small, homogeneous, unitary higher education system. Until 1971, the only university was the university of Iceland. Steadily increasing demand for higher education, especially from women. Restrictions imposed on public financing during early 1990s. Highly internationalised higher education system.

Summary of Reforms

Some reforms were not a result of specific legislation. Upgrading of specialist training colleges to higher education level. Establishment and rationalisation of new higher education institutions to increase their status and efficiency. Increase in the number of postgraduate programmes (no specific legislation). Establishment of private institutions encouraged. Student financial support linked to study progress and students' financial contributions increased by charging interest on loans.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1988	Lög um Háskólann á Akureyri no. 18, 5.5.1988 (Law to establish the University of Akureyri)	The law aimed at strengthening higher education outside Reykjavik. Emphasis is put on shorter courses relevant to the local economy.	Access to higher education; geographical spread of higher education institutions; course structure.
1992	Lög um Lánaþjóf íslenskra námsmanna no. 21, 25.5.1992 (Law on the Icelandic Government Student Loan Fund)	In order to be eligible for a loan, students now had to provide proof of examinations passed. The financial conditions were tightened by increasing the proportion of income earmarked for repayment and by charging interest on the indexed capital.	Financial aid to students.
1995	Lög um listmenntun á háskólastigi no. 43, 7.3.1995 (Law on art education at higher education level)	Proposed to merge three colleges of art (of which one was privately-run) on a trial basis to form a new art academy run by a private organisation offering higher education courses. The planned new institution has so far not been established.	Structure of non-university higher education.
1997	Lög um Kennaraháskóla Íslands no. 137, 18.12.1997 (Law on the University College of Education)	Merging and upgrading of four teacher-training colleges, some at upper secondary level, to form a new University College of Education.	Upgrading and restructuring of non-university higher education.
1997a	Lög um háskóla no. 136, 23.12.1998 (Higher Education Framework Law)	Set out a framework for the operation of higher education institutions. Gave them greater financial independence but made them more accountable and changed the composition of the university governing council. Establishment of rules for the public funding of private institutions. Two-year implementation period.	Management and control; financing of institutions; access and wastage; quality evaluation.

LIECHTENSTEIN

Context

The tertiary education sector is a relatively recent development. The existing institutions of tertiary education offer a very limited amount of study courses and cannot even begin to cover the demand. Therefore most Liechtenstein students study abroad.

Summary of Reforms

The Law on *Fachhochschulen*, Higher Education and Research Institutions from 1992 introduced autonomous institutions of tertiary education.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1972	<i>Gesetz über staatliche Ausbildungsbeihilfen (33/1972)</i> (Law on government financial aid to students) <i>Several amendments passed between 1974 and 1992</i>	Grants, loans and contributions towards study costs especially for studies abroad.	Student financial aid.
1992	<i>Gesetz über die Fachhochschulen, Hochschul- und Forschungsinstitute (106/1992)</i> (Law on <i>Fachhochschulen</i> , higher education and research institutions)	Framework law consisting of 15 articles containing regulations governing the said institutions.	Establishment of higher education institutions.
1997	<i>Gesetz zur Änderung des Gesetzes über die Fachhochschulen, Hochschul- und Forschungsinstitute (133/1997)</i> (Amendment to the Law on <i>Fachhochschulen</i> , higher education and research institutions)	Recognition of the <i>Fachhochschule</i> Liechtenstein as a <i>Fachhochschule</i> with the legal status of a foundation under public law. Further development of higher education.	Management and control.

NORWAY

Context

The 1960s and 1970s saw a considerable expansion of higher education, with increased student enrolment and the creation of regional colleges, a new kind of degree-awarding institution, with new types of study programmes in new subject areas as well as multidisciplinary programmes. Regional colleges were geographically spread across the entire country, due to a general concern for local development. The economic growth since the beginning of the 1980s, mainly due to the exploitation of oil and gas, suffered an important setback at the end of the 1980s, marked by a banking crisis and some years of higher unemployment rates. After 1993, the Norwegian economy again experienced a strong cyclical expansion. During the 1990s, despite overall nominal growth, the higher education sector was challenged, both quantitatively and qualitatively, by relative cuts in funding.

Summary of Reforms

State policy of taking over vocational post-secondary schools from counties and municipalities, notably in nursing and engineering, and of upgrading them, resulting in a vast number of higher education institutions. The term 'Network Norway' was coined to denote a national higher education and research network based on the principles of specialisation, cooperation and communication. In 1994, the former regional and vocational colleges were reorganised and merged to create larger state colleges. In 1995, a new law on higher education was passed, and in 1996, seven colleges and academies of arts, crafts and design were merged into two new institutions.

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1970	<i>Lov om eksamener og grader ved universiteter og høyskole, 58, 1970</i> (Act on examinations and degrees)	A first step towards a more integrated system of higher education in that it introduced common legislation for the regulation of examinations and degrees at the universities and the university colleges.	Course structure.
1981	<i>Kongelig resolusjon</i> (Royal Decree)	The 1970 Act was extended to the regional colleges and the colleges of engineering, teacher education, social work, journalism and library studies. This extension meant that the institutions concerned became degree-awarding higher education institutions, and that completed study programmes, examinations and degrees from these institutions were legally recognised and approved by all other institutions.	Course structure; upgrading of non-university institutions.
1985	<i>Lov 21/1985 om utdanningsstøtte til elever og studenter</i> (Act on financial support for pupils and students)	Regulated grants and loans to students.	Financial aid to students.
1986	<i>Lov 53/1986 om private høyskoler</i> (Act on private higher education)	The recognition of study programmes and the state funding of private higher education institutions.	Private non-university higher education.
1987	<i>Med viten og vilje (NOU 1988:28)</i> (Royal Commission Report on higher education - Green Paper)	Review of the higher education sector. The report was used as the basis for the 1989 Royal Decree.	Course structure; course planning; teaching and assessment.

NORWAY (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1989	Kongelig resolusjon (Royal Decree)	The 1970 Act was extended to the arts, crafts and design colleges.	Course structure: upgrading of non-university institutions; teaching and assessment.
1989a	Lov om universiteter og vitenskapelige høyskoler (Universities and University Colleges Act/University Act) <i>came into force in 1990</i>	The act applied only to universities and university colleges. It replaced the 1970 Act on examinations and degrees. In addition to simplifying the legislation, the act implied delegation of powers to and increased self-governance of the institutions to which it applied, in that the institutions were given the right to appoint all staff.	Course structure; management and control.
1990	Kongelig resolusjon (Royal Decree)	Chapter 11 on degrees and examinations of the University Act was extended to all colleges covered by the 1970 Act. Upgrading of non-university higher education institutions to degree-awarding institutions.	Course structure: upgrading of non-university higher education.
1991	Kongelig resolusjon (Royal Decree)	Chapter 11 of the University Act was extended to maritime colleges, colleges of music, the college of hotel management, and to colleges of nursing and of other health-related/paramedical professions.	Course structure; upgrading of non-university higher education.
1991a	St. meld. nr. 40 (1990-91) Fra visjon til virke. Om høgre utdanning (White Paper on higher education)	The White Paper suggested reorganising and merging higher education institutions. The term 'Network Norway' was coined to denote a national higher education and research network based on the principle of specialisation.	Structure of higher education.
1992	Lov om universiteter og høyskoler: Om lov og rett i Norgesnett (NOU 1993:24) (Royal Commission Report on legislation in higher education - Green Paper)	Green Paper serving as a draft for a new act covering the whole of the public higher education sector.	All areas of public higher education.
1993	Kongelig resolusjon (Royal Decree)	The reorganisation of the non-university sector by merging 98 regional and vocational colleges into 26 state colleges.	Structure of non-university sector.

NORWAY (continued)

Year	Legislation / policy documents	Main provisions	Aspects affected
1995	Lov om universiteter og høgschooler (Universities and Colleges Act) <i>came into force in 1996</i>	This act replaced the 1989 Act on universities and university colleges and gave higher education institutions a considerable degree of academic and administrative autonomy, while leaving decisions on overall organisation to the Ministry. This legislation extended to the non-university higher education institutions which from then on enjoyed the same degree of autonomy. The recognition of professional and educational programmes and of degrees was regulated by a series of royal decrees.	Management and control; unified system for university and non-university sectors.
1996	Lov 54/1996 om studentsamskipnader (Act on the organisation of student welfare)	Organisation of student welfare (housing, canteens, sport facilities, etc.).	Financial aid to students.
1996a	Kongelig resolusjon (Royal Decree)	A new set of regulations became applicable for the financial management of state funding, implying more specific and strict requirements concerning the management, reporting and control of funds for all state institutions, including those of higher education.	Financing of institutions.
1997	O.t. prp. nr. 65 (1996-97) Om lov om endring av lov om universiteter og høgschooler av 12. Mai 1995 nr. 22 (Amendment to the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act)	Application of the 1995 Act to art colleges/academies.	Upgrading of art colleges to higher education level.

CHAPTER 2: MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

This chapter discusses the management and control of higher education taken here as referring primarily to the division of regulatory and decision-making powers between the higher education institutions and government, though it also covers the internal management of higher education institutions and the involvement of outside bodies, such as representatives of business, the social partners and local or regional government in the planning of higher education. It is a key aspect of higher education which has changed enormously in many European countries since 1980.

As Chapter 1: Legislation for Change shows, the universality of reforms affecting the autonomy, financing and quality control of higher education is underlined by the fact that, in every country considered, as far as the general legal framework for higher education is concerned, at least one, and often many more pieces of legislation dealing with these areas were enacted during the period of the study¹. In some countries, one major piece of legislation set the framework for the current higher education system, while other countries legislated for reform with a series of legal instruments dealing with different aspects or steps of the process. The reforms carried out since 1980 generally aimed at increasing the autonomy of the higher education institutions, particularly in the case of the universities, in relation to the planning and delivery of higher education. However, as will be shown below, the degree of autonomy given to higher education institutions in the academic year 1996/97 varied enormously between countries and between the university and non-university sectors. In the United Kingdom the reforms were generally intended to increase efficiency, quality and accountability (for the use of public funds) whilst maintaining an already high level of institutional autonomy.

In their conclusions to a study of the relationship between government and higher education in Europe, Neave and Van Vught (1991) suggested that institutional autonomy is not a monolithic, indivisible concept but that it has become divided into two separate spheres: control over the **process** of higher education, that is, the daily activity of institutions, teaching, the curriculum, etc.; and control over the **product**, the number, type and level of qualified students, publications, etc. They argued that the increased autonomy given to Western European higher education institutions during the 1980s related mainly to autonomy over the process and that this was counterbalanced by measures to keep government control over the product through quality control and assessment. Although financial autonomy is not specifically treated in this model, the distinction will be used to examine the different outcomes of reforms in the comparative analysis below.

For greater clarity, the general reforms in the management and control of higher education will initially be examined separately from the reforms in the financing of higher education institutions and in the processes of quality control and evaluation. It is, of course, recognised that the three areas are closely linked: changes in the methods of funding higher education institutions have made a key contribution to their autonomy by giving them more control over spending. Equally, more autonomy over spending has often gone hand in hand with the introduction of more systematic, externally-determined systems of administrative, financial and quality control which may, in some cases be linked to funding formulae. An examination of the legislation shows moreover, that in some countries, reforms in these areas were introduced in the form of broad framework acts that encompassed the entire domain of institutional autonomy, finance and quality control.

¹ See country tables in the Annex to Chapter 1: Legislation for Change which list the legislation and policy documents for each country in chronological order.

The chapter begins by discussing the responsibilities of higher education institutions in the different countries in 1997 and comparing these with the responsibilities of governments and other external bodies. It looks briefly at the composition and role of the different management organs within the higher education institutions. Finally, reforms relating to quality assessment and control in higher education since 1980 are examined.

Section 2.2. deals with the financing of institutions. It looks at the funding systems for public university and (where applicable) non-university institutions in 1997 and then discusses the reforms since 1980. Section 2.3. looks at the systems for quality assessment and control currently in place, the different actors involved and the outcomes of the evaluation process. The reforms in the system since 1980 are discussed.

The final section summarises the reforms and tries to link the changes in autonomy, financing and evaluation of higher education in order to look for common patterns and major divergences.

2.1. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAIN ACTORS

2.1.1. THE STATE

In European countries the State is an important actor in public higher education in that it continues to provide the majority of funding. In Belgium and Spain, most state responsibility for higher education was transferred to the Communities or Autonomous Communities respectively during the period of the study. In the majority of countries, reforms since the 1980s have focused on the transformation of the role of the State from direct management of the universities through detailed legislation to provision of a broader legal framework for the system, together with supervision of its activities.

In most countries the role of the State in 1997 was to define and allocate the budget for higher education as well as providing a general legal framework for higher education, covering areas such as the planning of educational provision at national level, the creation of new institutions, the validation of qualifications and monitoring and evaluation of the system. In a number of countries (German *Länder*, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria and Portugal) the State had further responsibilities for employing staff, for defining course formats and examinations and/or for the admission of students. The French Community of Belgium can also be included in this group of countries, despite the fact that a system for the centralised evaluation of higher education, although foreseen by law, is not yet put in place.

In 1999, Luxembourg established a new Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research (*Ministère de la culture, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche*) and thereby underlined the growing importance it attaches to higher education.

2.1.2. THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In most countries, universities, regulated by the Ministry or Department of Higher Education, were more autonomous at the beginning of the study period in 1980 than non-university higher education institutions which frequently came under the Ministry of Education and, therefore, the legislation for schools. In many countries at this time, universities already had a high degree of autonomy over their teaching and research activities deriving from the basic principle of academic freedom. However, they often had much less control over the spending of their budget which was usually allocated strictly to a specific set of budget lines, over their internal management and administration, the creation and format

of courses, the ownership of buildings and the employment and recruitment of staff who were, in many countries, civil servants.

In 1980, the internal management of universities in most countries was based on a democratic, collegiate model where academic staff, non-academic staff and students were elected to a hierarchy of councils at several levels ranging from programme level, through department and faculty level, to representation on the main governing councils. There were also elected individuals with responsibility for the internal organisation of the institution, ranging from the rector or vice-chancellor who was legally responsible for the activities of the institution, to the deans of faculties and heads of department. Sometimes, as in Greece (up to 1982) and France, the *de facto* power lay in the hands of a few powerful professors. The main focus of internal management was on the administration of teaching and research.

During the period of this study, except in the Netherlands and Sweden, there have apparently been only small changes in the structure of the governing bodies of university institutions. However, the function of the more senior bodies has changed significantly. These senior bodies have become considerably more powerful as more responsibilities have been devolved to institutions from central government. Table 2.1 shows that in most countries in 1997, they were no longer only responsible for the internal administration of the institution but also had to manage its budget, appoint and employ staff, look after buildings, organise and develop courses, carry out self-evaluation and negotiate and manage contracts with external organisations. Most importantly, in many countries they were responsible for planning the future development of their institution in line with general objectives laid down by the Government. This planning process was often closely linked to their future funding.

The response in some countries has been an attempt to clarify the relative responsibilities of the institutions and the Government through non-prescriptive framework legislation (Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway). In many of these countries, layers of administration were reduced and responsibilities devolved where possible, to the lowest level.

Furthermore, as they have become more autonomous, institutions in most countries have been encouraged to become more market-oriented and to link their development more closely to the labour market and to the local economy. This increased awareness of their role and identity as organisations has mainly been economically driven, as they have had to look to external sources of funding. This has been reinforced in some countries, by legally-driven changes to their governance. An important reflection of this change is that in 1997, external or lay members were included in the more senior governing bodies of institutions in all the countries studied except Germany (although envisaged in some *Länder*) and Greece. Sweden has gone a particularly long way down the road towards externalisation and external members form the majority on the governing boards of higher education institutions. From 1998, the external influence will be increased as these boards must be chaired by an external member.

Many of these external members of governing bodies of higher education institutions were from commercial or industrial backgrounds and the aim was apparently to bring higher education closer to the world of work both in terms of its product and, in some countries, in terms of its management. Other members were from the local or regional government reflecting the fact that the regions acquired an increasingly important role in funding higher education, particularly the more vocationally-related courses, in a number of countries (Spain, France, Italy, Finland, Sweden). The state's partnership with privately or partly privately-run higher education institutions in Austria may also be seen as a step towards opening up higher education to external influences.

In some countries the move towards strengthening the management of institutions and encouraging an entrepreneurial culture strengthened the influence of certain groups in the management of institutions. In the Netherlands, the internal management structure of the public universities was reorganised in 1997

in order to limit the powers of the bodies on which students and staff are represented and a government-appointed supervisory board has been introduced into each institution to approve the decisions of the administrative board. In Denmark, the 1993 reforms to some extent reduced the power of students in the management of institutions.

In other countries, democracy has apparently increased during the period studied. Reforms during the early 1980s in Greece, France and Italy broadened the representation of students and lecturers on governing bodies in order to restrict the power of the individual professors. In Luxembourg, student representation on the governing body of the *Centre universitaire* (University Centre) was introduced in 1996.

In 1985, Germany passed an amendment to the Higher Education Framework Act providing a choice between a rectorship and a presidential constitution to govern higher education institutions. Professors were given the absolute majority of seats and votes on the body electing the governing body of the institution. The 1997 policy paper '*Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert*' (*Higher Education Institutions for the 21st Century*) reviewed German higher education and established the basis for an amendment of the Higher Education Framework Act passed in 1998. On the whole, this amendment will lead to the deregulation of the organisation and administration of higher education institutions. Institutions will no longer be subject to detailed legal regulations at the federal level, as hitherto, the rights in relation to organisation in higher education are transferred back to the *Land* level.

Table 2.1 shows the main areas over which higher education institutions in the different countries had control in 1997 and the date when this was conferred through legislation. In most cases the change in law was the start of an often year-long process of implementing the desired reforms, while in some cases a new or amended law was the later legal recognition of an already changed situation. The table does not include research activities since the universities' autonomy over research has not changed significantly over the period under review in any country. Non-university institutions are only included, where specified, for the countries where they are treated in an equivalent way to universities. Full autonomy in the different areas, in the order presented in Table 2.1, is understood as meaning that the institutions are able to: freely spend any income derived from government grants, fees and contracts; decide on the employment of academic staff and their salaries (even if any legal requirements for minimum qualifications and minimum salaries have to be met); be responsible for internal management without the obligation to include specific external members on governing boards or similar bodies; own buildings and equipment used for teaching purposes; freely change course structure and content; determine when and how to assess the quality of their educational provision and, finally, determine any policy significantly affecting the institution's future development. The term 'limited' indicates that institutional autonomy is not complete but is determined by a framework of rules and conditions laid down by the government or any other authority.

Table 2.1: Degree of autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions in 1996/97 and the year the relevant legislation came into force

Higher education institution		Budget spending	Employment of teaching staff	Administration and internal regulations	Buildings and equipment	Course planning	Self-evaluation	Development planning
European Union								
B fr	Universities	1998	1995	pre-1980	1991	1994	pre-1980	
	<i>Hautes écoles</i>	1996	1996	1996	pre-1980	1995	pre-1980	
B nl	Universities	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991
	<i>Hogescholen</i>	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994	1994
DK	Universities	1993	pre-1980	1993	1993	pre-1980	1992	1993
D	Universities and <i>Fachhochschulen</i>			pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	1990	pre-1980
EL	<i>AEIs and TEIs</i>	1997	1982	1982	pre-1980	1982	1997	1982
E	Universities	1983	1983	1983	1983	1983	1991	1983
F	Universities	pre-1980		1984	1989	pre-1980	1989	1984
IRL	Universities	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980
I	Universities	1983	1998	1989	1993	1990	1993	
L	University Centre	1997	1997	1997	1997	1997	1997	1997
NL	Universities	1986	pre-1980	1986-1997	1994	1993	1993	1986
	<i>HBOs</i>	1986	1986	1986	1994	1986	1993	1986
A	Universities	1993	1993	1993		1997	1993	
	<i>Fachhochschule</i> programmes	1993	1993	1993	1993	1993	1993	
P	Public universities	1988	1988	1988	1997	1989	1994	1997
FIN	Universities	1988-1994	pre-1980	1986	1988	pre-1980	pre-1980	1997
	Polytechnics	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991	1991
S	Higher education institutions	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980
UK	Universities established before 1992	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980	pre-1980
	Higher education institutions with university status since 1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992
EFTA/EEA								
IS	University	1990	1997	1997		1997	1997	1997
LI	<i>Fachhochschule Liechtenstein (FHL)</i>	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992	1992
NO	Universities	1991	1990	1990	1991	1996	1991	pre-1980
	Non-university institutions	1991	1996	1996	1991	1996	1991	pre-1980

Source: Eurydice.

FULL

LIMITED

NONE

- Belgium (B fr):** Administration and internal regulations: institutional autonomy in this area has been and still is very comprehensive, albeit not full.
Self-evaluation: institutions enjoy autonomy over self-evaluation, but rules and regulations governing this area are currently being developed by the Community.
- Germany:** Budget spending: some *Länder* run pilot projects giving autonomy to institutions.
Employment of teaching staff: institutions have autonomy to employ some junior staff.
Buildings and equipment, and course planning: shared responsibility between the *Land* and the higher education institutions concerned.
- Greece:** Employment of teaching staff: universities can employ professors only on one-year contracts and by using their own funds.
Buildings and equipment: universities usually own their buildings and equipment.
Development planning: decisions with regard to development planning must be approved by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and financed mainly by the state budget.
- Spain:** Employment of teaching staff: institutions have autonomy in the employment of temporary staff only.

France:	Development planning: in relation to contracts with the State only.
Italy:	Course planning: almost full autonomy was established in 1997 by a law due to be implemented in 1999/2000.
The Netherlands:	Administration and internal regulations: autonomy has been granted gradually since 1986. In 1997 supervisory boards were introduced. Self-evaluation: although introduced in the 1980s, the legal basis was only established in 1993.
Finland:	Budget spending: the major reform on budget spending was possible without any legislative change. In 1988 the Ministry of Education and some universities agreed to implement 'budgeting by results' on a trial basis. By 1994, this approach had been extended to all universities which now enjoyed full autonomy over their budget spending. Employment of teaching staff: key staff (professors and the director of administration) used to be appointed by the President of the Republic. From 1998, their appointment became the responsibility of the institution. Course planning: The decrees introduced in 1994 considerably increased institutional autonomy in relation to course planning.
Sweden:	Employment of teaching staff: autonomy for the employment of professors was only granted in 1993/94. Buildings and equipment: buildings are normally rented by <i>Akademiska hus AB</i> .
Liechtenstein:	Buildings and equipment: the <i>FHL</i> has no autonomy with regard to its buildings, and limited autonomy for equipment.
Norway:	Budget spending: autonomy was first conferred in 1991 through binding parliamentary instructions (<i>bevilgningsreglement</i>) but not through legislation. Buildings and equipment: autonomy is limited with regard to buildings but full autonomy is enjoyed in relation to equipment. Self-evaluation: institutional responsibility for quality evaluation is included in the 1991 White Paper on higher education, but does not form part of any legislative act.

Table 2.1 suggests that in the majority of countries studied, universities had a high degree of autonomy over a wide range of their activities in 1996/97. Institutions in the Nordic countries of Finland, Sweden and Iceland as well as those in the French Community of Belgium, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom and Liechtenstein have full autonomy over most areas of their operation. In France and Austria the activities of higher education institutions were in fact quite closely controlled by rules defined by the government and in Germany by *Länder* regulations. Course planning was the area where most of the countries suffered restrictions in institutional autonomy, followed by development planning, budget spending and employment of teaching staff. Self-evaluation was the area where all countries except the French Community of Belgium (*Hautes écoles* only), Denmark, Greece, France and Norway had full autonomy.

Countries where universities had least autonomy were Germany (with the exception of some pilot projects in selected universities and *Fachhochschulen*), France and Austria. In these countries universities could spend the budget allocated to them by the State, usually as one or more block grants and they were usually responsible for their own internal administration. They did not employ or appoint their own teaching staff, although they managed them. These institutions did not usually own their buildings and course planning was usually strictly controlled by nationally-determined formats which left the institutions with relatively little leeway. The management of the institutions in Austria did not have the authority to undertake long-term development planning, while French universities enjoyed autonomy only in relation to contracts offering their teaching and research services.

In 1980, only the old universities in the United Kingdom and universities in Ireland enjoyed full autonomy while institutions in Sweden had been granted at least partial autonomy in all areas studied. The dates shown in the table suggest that autonomy over administration and internal regulations was given somewhat earlier than autonomy over other areas such as employment of teaching staff, self-evaluation or course planning. In the French Community of Belgium, universities had been given early autonomy over their budget spending in 1971, but were still required to operate within a framework imposed by their organising authority. In contrast, other countries such as the Flemish Community of Belgium, Spain, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein gave autonomy over most areas simultaneously. These different legislative approaches are discussed in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change. Most countries increased the autonomy of their institutions during the 1990s with the exception of Ireland and the United Kingdom where universities had already enjoyed full autonomy in all areas before 1980, as well as Spain where institutional autonomy in most areas was conferred during the 1980s. Buildings and equipment, and self-evaluation appeared to be the most recent areas over which institutions had been given autonomy in the

majority of countries though institutions in Austria and Iceland still, in 1997, neither owned nor managed the buildings they worked in.

An important new development since 1980 is the increased power that institutions in all countries except Germany have been given to raise additional money through contracts with external organisations, regional authorities and the State. This will be discussed in the following section on financing.

2.2. REFORMS IN THE FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

During the period of the study, changes in the financing of higher education institutions were an important component of their increasing autonomy. The reforms fell into four main areas: a change from earmarked to lump-sum or block grant budgets for recurrent funding; a move towards the introduction of more objective funding formulae; the linking of funding to outputs rather than inputs and the introduction of contract-based funding. In countries with a binary higher education system, non-university institutions saw changes in their funding which were similar to those in universities. In some countries, they were given less autonomy in their funding than universities, especially for buildings, and none had access to funding for research. The dates when the different reforms in the funding of higher education were introduced in the countries under study are shown in Table 2.2 below. The table refers primarily to the financing of institutions for recurrent costs associated with running courses and teaching, but not for basic research.

Table 2.2: Reforms in the financing of higher education and the year the most recent relevant legislation came into force

Country	Awarding of block grants	Formula-based funding		Contract-based funding	Tuition / registration fees
		Primarily input-based	Primarily output-based		
European Union					
B fr Universities <i>Hautes écoles</i>	pre-1980 1996	pre-1980 1996	(-) (-)	(-) 1995	pre-1980 pre-1980
B nl	pre-1980	pre-1980	(-)	1995	pre-1980
DK	1993	pre-1980	1980	1985	(-)
D	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
EL	1982	1982	1997	1982	(-)
E	1983	1983	(-)	1983	1983
F	1984	pre-1980	(-)	1984	pre-1980
IRL	pre-1980	pre-1980	(-)	pre-1980	1995
I	1993	1993	(-)	1993	1994
L	1997	(-)	1997	1997	(-)
NL	1985	pre-1980	1993	1983	1993
A	1993	(-)	(-)	pre-1980	(-)
P	1988	1994	(-)	1988	1997
FIN	1988	1986	1994	pre-1980	(-)
S	pre-1980	pre-1980	1993	(-)	(-)
UK	pre-1980	pre-1980	1992	pre-1980	1998
EFTA/EEA					
IS	1990	1990	(-)	1997	pre-1980
LI	1992	1992	(-)	1992	pre-1980
NO	1991	1991	(-)	1988	(-)

Source: Eurydice.

- Belgium (B fr):** Contract-based funding: only a small number of contracts relate to teaching services.
Formula-based funding: although applicable to the *Hautes écoles* before 1980, this way of financing was extended in 1996.
- Germany:** Awarding of block grants and formula-based funding: the Higher Education Framework Act was amended in 1998 to allow for the introduction of block grants and formula-based funding.
Tuition/registration fees: in 14 of the 16 *Länder* no fees are charged. In 1996, only 2 *Länder* (Baden-Württemberg, Berlin) introduced registration fees.
In 1997 Baden-Württemberg introduced tuition fees for students extending the standard period of study by 2 years.
- Greece:** Formula-based funding: output-based financing has not yet been implemented.
- Austria:** Contract-based funding: passed in 1975, the law was extended in 1987.
- Sweden:** Awarding of block grants: since 1993/94, one single block grant has been awarded for undergraduate studies.
- Norway:** Output-based funding: this type of funding constitutes a negligible part of total funding.
Contract-based funding: although the use of this type of funding dates back to before 1980, regulations governing this type of funding were introduced only in 1988.

2.2.1. THE AWARDING OF BLOCK GRANTS

There was a move in all the countries except in the majority of *Länder* in Germany away from itemised budgets approved by the Ministry to the giving of recurrent funds in the form of block grants which the institutions could spend as they pleased within the regulations for public sector finance. In most countries (Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway), the majority of educational funding was provided in this way in 1996/97 though there may also have been separate sums for research, capital expenditure or specific projects and developments. In France, a large proportion of institutional funding is in the form of staff salaries and is therefore not under the control of the institutions themselves. However, as mentioned above, a small, but increasingly important proportion of French institutional finance is based on formulae and contracts, and institutions are increasingly free to allocate their grants to different budget lines.

In Germany, higher education institutions are mainly financed through a process of negotiation with the appropriate Ministry of the *Land* on the basis of proposals submitted by the institutions which are usually linked to past funding. There is limited scope for the transfer of funding between different types of expenditure and there are no objective funding criteria. The Higher Education Framework Act was amended in 1998 to allow for the introduction of block grants.

In almost all the countries studied, the introduction of funding by block grants represented a significant increase in autonomy for the institutions, which then had considerable freedom to decide their own internal spending priorities. In the United Kingdom, the changes in the system of financing institutions during the period of this study were aimed at increasing efficiency, quality and accountability in the use of public funds whilst maintaining institutional autonomy.

In the United Kingdom before 1988, funding was provided as a block grant to universities based on criteria decided by the University Grants Committee which was dominated by academic members. The grants were agreed in quinquennial settlements and based primarily on student numbers. The changes during the period of this study have meant that funding for teaching is now based on a quasi-contractual system which increasingly reflects government, not university, priorities. At the same time, much research funding has been separated from the block grant and is now allocated through a competitive bidding system by the Research Councils. The remaining block grant research funding is now based on performance as assessed periodically at three to five year intervals. The trend in the United Kingdom has, therefore, been away from a system of funding allowing for substantial institutional autonomy and based mainly on higher education sector priorities towards a system of government steering of higher education through performance-related funding of both teaching and research. This change has brought the United Kingdom closer to other countries which use the output-related funding models discussed below.

2.2.2. FORMULA-BASED FUNDING

Table 2.2 shows that the move towards giving recurrent funding to institutions as a block grant was usually accompanied by the introduction of more objective formulae for allocating these funds to institutions. These formulae were often based on the numbers of students on different types of courses. The adoption of such formulae introduced more uniformity across the higher education system by avoiding the lengthy process of negotiation with institutions and the reliance on past funding levels which had often resulted in inequalities between institutions.

Furthermore, formulae are more transparent and easier to adapt to different public spending levels. The funding weighting given to the different courses also allowed governments to steer the system by encouraging institutions to offer courses in priority subject areas by allocating them larger subsidies.

The move towards formula-based funding took place after 1990 in a number of countries (Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and in Germany in the form of pilot schemes), with France only allocating a small proportion of education-related funding by formula to the higher education institutions.

Most countries have adopted an input-based funding model, but a number of countries have increasingly tied their funding to the output of the higher education institutions. However, there are differences in the extent to which the funding models emphasise the meeting of numerical targets or measurements of course success.

The Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway, as well as Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have all incorporated objective-related measures in their formulae for funding educational expenditure in higher education institutions. However, within this group of countries, some have gone further than others in linking funding for teaching to specific outputs. The Netherlands and Finland have witnessed a move towards linking funding to medium-term objectives which are agreed between the appropriate ministry and the institutions. In Denmark, the amount of funding for universities is determined by the actual number of students passing the required exams and is laid down in the annual Finance Act.

The models used for funding teaching costs in the United Kingdom and Norway were least closely linked to course success in 1996/97. In Norway, a block grant for teaching and research was traditionally allocated on the basis of proposals made by the institution to the Ministry but, after 1990, increases in funding were linked to increases in student numbers. In the United Kingdom, there was a much stronger element of government steering since funding was based on a target number of students. Numbers were determined by the appropriate Funding Council for each university based on historical levels and government priorities. Those universities which failed to meet their numerical targets were penalised financially.

In Ireland, the Higher Education Authority uses a formulae-based system to determine core grants to institutions. Further targeted funding is then provided and linked to particular initiatives. In Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden, the funding model was based on a formula which incorporated the number of students, the courses followed and the number of exams passed or qualifications obtained. These formulae have been amended since 1992 in all four countries. An important consequence of such formulae is that institutions are often given less or no funding for students who fail so there is a strong incentive for institutions to promote student success. The models also permit government steering of the course offer through differential subsidies and, in some countries, like Sweden, by setting targets for student numbers and for the number of students graduating in different subjects.

Denmark (1994) and Sweden (1993) recently changed their funding system to base funding for each year on the actual performance of students in that year, rather than on a projection of previous years' results. The Swedish system appeared to be particularly tightly steered in that funding was based on an annual educational contract between the government and the institution which sets out the minimum number of full-time equivalent students. The minimum number of degrees overall was specified as well as targets in specific professional areas such as engineering, teaching and pharmacy. Institutions are given a provisional allocation of funds at the beginning of the year with an adjustment at the end of the year related to performance measured against the objectives set.

During the period reviewed, basic research funding and teaching-related funding have been separated in countries such as Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Iceland, apparently so that resource allocation could be based on different criteria. In Germany, where research and teaching funding are not separated, part of the research

funding is based on competition and promoted through external funding by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Society).

Although the above funding formulae relate primarily to funding for teaching, it should be noted that part of the public funding for research has in most countries been based traditionally on quality criteria through a competitive bidding process based on peer review of research proposals. Moreover, the basic research funding allocated directly to the institutions was the first element of higher education institutional funding to be linked to quality of output in a number of countries. The Netherlands was one of the first countries to introduce quality-related research funding in 1983 followed by the first United Kingdom research assessment exercise in 1986 as the basis for funding research in universities in the United Kingdom.

2.2.3. CONTRACT-BASED FUNDING

The final trend in the funding of institutions, which is also linked to greater institutional autonomy, is the encouragement given to institutions in most countries since 1980 to raise money by selling their teaching or research services. As Table 2.2 shows, in 1996/97 some form of contract-based funding was possible in all the countries studied except Germany. This freedom for institutions to sell their services on a more or less open market represented a significant conceptual change in countries where education is seen as a public service and in some countries (Spain, France, Luxembourg and Portugal) required a change in the juridical status of the higher education institutions.

Among the countries studied there appear to be two main types of contract undertaken by institutions: contracts with central or regional government for specific additional course programmes or research projects and contracts obtained on the open market with private organisations. The first type of contract usually allows the institutions to raise additional public funds by offering specific courses or research studies in addition to their usual activities which respond to particular central or regional government needs. Contracts of this sort may not be based on a competitive tendering procedure in an open market but their output is usually closely monitored. They may be seen as a restricted version of the objective-based public funding systems described above and often co-exist with input-based funding in countries such as the French Community of Belgium (*Hautes écoles* only), Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Iceland.

For the institutions themselves, the development of medium-term, contract-based services may bring additional benefits by encouraging investment in strategic planning and management. In France in particular, the expansion of contract-based public funding has proved an important stimulus for institutional change. In a funding regime where a large proportion of the public higher education subsidy was salary-based and therefore inflexible, the contract system has encouraged development of increased institutional autonomy in both the planning of bids and in the management of the funding received.

Contracts with external, non-public organisations are also increasingly common and have been actively encouraged by many governments during a period of public spending restrictions as an alternative source of income for the higher education system. Institutions have therefore started marketing both their teaching and research services. Most countries (the French Community of Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway) have recognised the need for higher education institutions to remain essentially publicly funded while encouraging them to sell their services on an educational market. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom have adopted a more strongly pro-market approach where institutions are encouraged to sell their services to commercial organisations as a result of reductions in their public funding.

2.2.4. TUITION/REGISTRATION FEES²

The present section deals with two types of fees paid to institutions and constituting income in addition to government grants and contract-based funding:

- tuition fees intended to cover the cost of the education offered and
- registration fees intended to cover the administrative cost associated with the enrolment and examination of students.

Fees solely intended to cover health care, membership of student organisations, social services or similar costs are not taken into account as they do not increase the funds available for the provision of higher education. This includes the regional taxes (*tassa regionale*) introduced in Italy in 1996 and, although payable on enrolment at higher education institutions, are levied by the regions and entirely destined to cover student support schemes.

To respect the definition of reform as a substantive, intentional change, an increase or decrease in fees can only be considered a reform if the underlying policy has undergone a review. The most radical reform undertaken was the abolition, or introduction, of such fees.

Before examining the reforms in the individual countries, it might be worth looking at the basic arguments for and against fees in higher education. Supporters of fees claim that higher education benefits the individual, who as a consumer of a service, should be made to pay for it; that the additional income is crucial to ensure the adequate provision of higher education at a time of reduced public funding; that the quality of higher education benefits from the increased competition between institutions trying to attract fee-paying students, and finally that tuition fees increase the likelihood of successful academic performance. Opponents argue that investment in higher education is above all an investment that benefits society as a whole, justifying the fact that all taxpayers are asked to contribute towards the cost; that fees act as a barrier or filter to the involvement of students from disadvantaged groups; and that it is the socio-economic background rather than tuition fees that influences academic achievement.

The main motivation for reform was the reduction of state participation in higher education - students and their families were asked to step in where the government withdrew, as a consequence of a restriction in public spending and the political will to encourage self-reliance and consumer choice. The second most influential factor for reform was the desire to improve equal access to higher education either by imposing increased fees only on those whose personal finances would not prevent them from pursuing higher education or by completely abolishing fees paid by students. It is therefore worth noting that reforms with respect to fees were generally linked to a reform of the student support system.

From the ten countries charging tuition/registration fees in 1980 (Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom, Iceland and Liechtenstein) all have maintained this policy, while only two German *Länder* (Baden-Württemberg and Berlin) joined their ranks in 1996. Until the beginning of the 1990s fees had been kept at insignificant levels and developments in various countries have shown that the concept of free or almost free higher education is so engraved in people's minds that plans to introduce or significantly raise fees were met with strong opposition. In Italy and Portugal, major fee increases were accepted by students only when accompanied by a review of the student support schemes in favour of students from low-income families as well as tax allowances.

² The information in this section has to a large extent been taken from the study published by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe, 1999*, where more detailed information on this subject can be found.

In the United Kingdom, tuition fees have traditionally been paid by the relevant authorities (the Local Education Authorities in England and Wales, the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland and the Students Awards Agency in Scotland) rather than the students themselves. In the recent past, the Government has adjusted its tuition fee levels to reflect its policies. Fees were first increased to encourage higher education institutions to recruit more students on a marginal cost basis. Later, when the Government's target for around one in three of young people to enter higher education was met, fees were decreased to discourage institutions from recruiting more students than the Government had planned. Following the recommendations of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, new arrangements for student support were incorporated into the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998. Students were now required to make a means-tested contribution towards the cost of tuition fees. The maximum contribution represents approximately a quarter of the full cost of an average course. The remaining cost is met by the Government.

Following a reduction in public spending on higher education accompanied by the political will to create more study places on the one hand and to make students pay for a service from which they draw a personal benefit on the other, institutions in Portugal and Italy were granted the freedom to supplement public funding by an increase in tuition fees. In Portugal fees were increased in 1992 with the intention to gradually increase them further until they would cover 50% of the total cost of higher education. Due to strong opposition by students, fees were suspended in 1995 and only reintroduced in 1997 at a level representing 8% of the total study cost and accompanied by measures alleviating the financial burden for students in need. In Italy, the Prime Ministerial Decree of 1994 replaced a system based on low tuition fees and low support for students by a system of higher tuition fees and some support for students in need. Since 1994, Italian institutions have been free to set and levy the major part of tuition fees, the *contributi universitari*, as long as they respect the upper and lower limits set by Government in the budget of state universities. The total income derived from fees must not exceed 20% of the contribution to the budget coming from the Ministry.

A similar approach had been adopted by the Netherlands at the beginning of 1990s, with the introduction of a 'high fee/high aid' strategy which raised tuition fees and the financial support for students from low income families simultaneously. Another significant change was introduced by the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act in 1993 when fees were no longer considered a source of income for the State but for the institutions themselves.

Unlike other countries, Ireland, which in 1994 charged the highest tuition fees in the EU, has since abandoned the route of increased fees. In the 1980s, at a time of severe economic recession and growing participation in higher education, the Government decided to increase tuition fees to an unprecedentedly high level. Although students with maintenance grants had their fees paid by their sponsors, various reports showed that the majority of school leavers entering higher education in the 1990s still came from the higher social groups. The Government concluded that there was a need not only to redirect expenditure towards disadvantaged groups but also to dismantle psychological barriers, and it decided rather than to abolish tuition fees altogether, to shift the burden from the students to the Government. In the academic year 1995/96, half the fees were paid by the public authorities for most full-time students on undergraduate courses in order to promote equality of access. The following academic year the entire amount was taken in charge by the Government.

Despite their abolition in all German *Länder* during the 1950s and 1960s, registration and tuition fees have been the subject of recent discussions aimed at reforming the Higher Education Framework Act. In 1997, representatives from the federal and *Länder* governments rejected the idea of tuition fees being charged to students. Nevertheless, in 1996, two of the sixteen German *Länder* (Baden-Württemberg and Berlin) decided to introduce enrolment fees in an attempt to increase the efficiency of the higher education system while at the same time reducing public spending.

In 1983, the Autonomous Communities or other relevant national authorities in Spain were granted the right to fix the level of tuition fees and the income generated was no longer considered income for the Government but for the institutions themselves. These increased fees are considered a major source of income for Spanish universities, expected to fund 30% of their expenses from non-public sources by the year 2004. So far however, any increase above the rate of inflation has been met with strong social resistance.

Reforms were, however, not limited to the question of whether fees should be charged and at what level, but also dealt with the authority responsible for collecting fees and fixing their amount. In 1980, it had been mainly the public authorities (Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Iceland and Liechtenstein) that decided on the amount of fees to be charged and the allocation of the resulting income. During the 1990s, in an effort to strengthen their financial autonomy, institutions were granted the right to set their own fees in the Belgium Flemish Community, Italy, and to some extent in the Netherlands. In 1997, funds stemming from fees were considered income at the disposal of the institutions in all participating countries except in the French Community of Belgium where fees charged by the *Hautes écoles* are offset against Community grants.

In summing up this section, it becomes clear that reforms in this area were rare during the period of this study, with only six countries changing their system during the period under consideration. Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom have introduced significant increases in fees to be borne by students, while Ireland shifted the financial burden of tuition fees from the student to the Government. The modifications brought about in Germany, although possibly the first sign of a move away from the tradition of free higher education, have so far been limited to two *Länder*.

2.3. QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL

In all the countries except the French Community of Belgium and the majority of the German *Länder*, the devolution to higher education institutions of power over the spending of their budgets was accompanied by the introduction of a considerably more formalised process of evaluation of the quality of their provision. It should be emphasised that this is a very new process. In most of these countries a systematic, nationally-defined process of quality evaluation of higher education has been introduced since 1984, but in many this is still at an early stage of implementation or, as in Germany, limited to certain regions or *Länder*. The Belgian French Community has been planning the introduction of such a system for the *Hautes écoles* since 1995, but no measures have been put in place yet. Only in the United Kingdom is any specific link made between the outcome of the evaluation process and the funding of institutions. In countries where funding is based on output-linked models (Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Liechtenstein), the control process may include the verification of funding-related information. In most countries the stated primary purpose of such evaluation is to improve the quality of provision.

The evaluation of quality in higher education appears to consist of three main elements which may be evaluated in different ways and to a greater or lesser extent in different countries:

- **Institutional evaluation** focuses on the operation of the higher education institution as a whole - its teaching and learning environment and its management. In the majority of countries it is evaluated primarily through a self-evaluation process combined with external peer review. In some countries, the external evaluation is restricted to ensuring the internal systems of quality assessment are effective, whereas in others it comprises a detailed inspection of the operation of the institution. Comparisons may be made between different institutions in the same country.
- **Programme evaluation** focuses on a particular discipline or subject area and compares the provision of several (or all) higher education institutions within a country. Once again, evaluation usually comprises a combination of self-evaluation and external peer review using experts in the

subject area from the academic and the business world where relevant. Experts may be drawn from other countries in order to encourage an international perspective.

- **Research evaluation** focuses on the quality and output of research in universities and is most frequently evaluated through a process of peer review.

This section focuses mainly on the process of institutional evaluation, though changes in the assessment of programme and research quality will also be discussed. Table 2.3 summarises some important aspects of the process of university evaluation in the countries under study in 1996/97, though it also takes account of some of the changes since then. Information on the evaluation of non-university institutions was less detailed than for universities and could therefore not be included. The table includes the date when the current systematic national process of evaluation was introduced, the evaluating body, the destination of the evaluation report and the body responsible for monitoring such evaluations at national level. Since the duties of this central agency vary according to the country, the term monitoring must be seen as embracing coordination, supervision, verification and follow-up.

Table 2.3: Aspects of nationally defined systems for the evaluation of higher education institutions in place in 1996/97

Country	Year current process introduced	Evaluating body				Evaluation reports made available to	Central monitoring agency
		Institution concerned	Academic community	Business community	Students		
European Union							
B fr	(-)						
B nl	1991	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Vlaams Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR)</i>
DK	1992	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Evalueringcenteret</i>
D	1991	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	Several agencies at <i>Land</i> level
EL	1997	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs	<i>Simvoulia Ekpedeftikis Aksiologissis ke programmatisinou (CEPE)</i>
E	1995	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Consejo de Universidades</i>
F	1984	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Comité National d'Évaluation (CNE)</i>
IRL	1997	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	Higher Education Authority
I	1993	Yes	Yes	No	No	Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research	<i>Osservatorio per la valutazione</i>
L	1997						<i>Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur</i>
NL	1993	Yes	Yes	No	No	Public	<i>Vereniging van Universiteiten (VSNU)</i> <i>HBO-raad, Vereniging van hogescholen</i>
A	1993	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Rector of institution concerned. In case of cross-university evaluations, reports are made public.	<i>Fachhochschulrat</i> (for the <i>Fachhochschulen</i>) and <i>Universitätskuratorium</i> (for universities)
P	1994	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Conselho Nacional de Avaliação</i>
FIN	1991	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Korkeakoulujen arviointineuvosto</i>
S	1993	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	<i>Högskoleverket</i>
UK	1992	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Public	UK (E/W): as of 1997 Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK (NI): till 1999 Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), thereafter Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE) UK (SC): Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
EFTA/EEA							
IS	1997	Yes	Yes	No	No	Public	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
LI	1997	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Institution concerned	(-)
NO	1992	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Public	<i>Norsk institutt for studier av forskning og utdanning (NIFU)</i>

Source: Eurydice.

Belgium (B fr):The Decree of 5 August 1995 provides for the introduction of self-evaluation at the *Hautes écoles*.**Germany:**The individual *Länder* take different approaches.**Greece:**

The systems for self-evaluation and the evaluation by students are not yet fully implemented.

Spain:

Following the pilot programme 'Evaluation of the Quality of the University System' during the period from 1992 to 1994.

Italy:

Self-evaluation is mainly concerned with financial control.

Luxembourg:

A comprehensive evaluation system of public higher education is currently being developed.

The Netherlands:

There is only programme evaluation, but no institutional evaluation.

Norway:

In 1992, a 5-year pilot project was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs with nation-wide evaluations of five selected study disciplines (business administration, sociology, engineering, mathematics and music).

Table 2.3 shows a number of aspects of institutional evaluation in higher education which were in place in 1996/97. Firstly, the dates given for the introduction of the current systematic nationally-defined evaluation process for institutions indicate that these systems are very recent in the great majority of countries and are clearly still under development. The French Community of Belgium had no nationally-defined system of quality assessment in place in 1996/97 and quality control was the responsibility of the individual institution with no externally-imposed norms or rules. In Germany, it was the Rectors' Conference which initiated a harmonised evaluation system in 1991 rather than the public authorities. In Ireland the Universities Act, which came into force in June 1997, specifically requires each university to establish procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university. The Higher Education Authority has a statutory role under the act to assist the universities in the achievement of this objective, to review the quality assurance procedures established and to publish a report on the outcome of its review. Only France and the Netherlands based their current system on one introduced before 1990; the Netherlands provided the legal basis for this system only in 1993. All the other countries have made modifications to their systems during the 1990s. This indicates the desire to test and review the effects of such newly-introduced evaluation processes in a number of countries, which is reflected in the piloting of the evaluation system during the 1990s in Denmark, Spain, the United Kingdom and Norway.

With regard to evaluation methods, all countries incorporated an element of self-evaluation supplemented by peer evaluation using academic experts. The views of the business community were canvassed in the majority of countries studied (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) and students were consulted in all countries except Italy, the Netherlands and Iceland. In Austria and Sweden, self-evaluation was the most important component of the process of institutional evaluation while in France and the United Kingdom, the judgements of external experts were more influential.

In most countries, the reports were made public, except in Italy and Greece where they were distributed only to the Ministry (and the Evaluation Observatory in Italy). In Austria and in Liechtenstein reports on individual institutions were made available only to the institution concerned which would take the findings into account in its decision-making. In Austria, evaluation reports on various institutions in the same field were however made public.

Finally, in all the countries with a systematic nation-wide evaluation process, this was coordinated at national level by a non-ministerial body or council, apart from Iceland. This body may have been linked primarily to the government which nominated its members (Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom) or may have been closer to the academic world (the Flemish Community of Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands and Norway). Only in Ireland, and the United Kingdom did this body also have the responsibility of funding higher education, a situation which has changed since 1997 in parts of the United Kingdom. The setting up of such bodies clearly indicated the desire of governments for higher education evaluation to be seen to be independent of the political process. Neave (1994) described such bodies as a 'supervisory layer' inserted between the ministry and the individual institution but warned that they may nevertheless allow governments to steer higher education by determining priorities while apparently maintaining a distance from their operationalisation in the evaluation process.

The major reform seen in most countries, except in the French Community of Belgium and the majority of *Länder* in Germany, was the introduction of a systematic nationally-defined quality control system to a sector which had previously relied on institutions to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, together with ministerial approval and verification of spending. Because the systems of quality evaluation in place in 1996/97 in most European countries had been developed relatively recently, some changes were still ongoing during the period of the study. In many of the countries which had developed a nationally-defined system of quality control during the 1980s (Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and

the United Kingdom), there was a change in emphasis during the 1990s from a reliance on the judgement of the institutions themselves in assessing teaching and learning to the increasing use of external peer review. This trend can be seen in the strengthening of the role of the external examiners in Denmark, the incorporation of 'visitation committees' into the evaluation process in the Netherlands, the strengthening of the external moderation of the system in Sweden with the creation of the National Agency for Higher Education, and in the assigning of responsibility for quality assessment to the Funding Councils in the United Kingdom.

2.4. OVERVIEW OF REFORMS

In all the countries studied except the United Kingdom, the direction of reforms in management and control of higher education since 1980 was towards giving more autonomy to the higher education institutions, with the State devolving many of its powers of detailed prescription. At the same time, institutional accountability was increased through the implementation of nationally-defined systems of quality assurance and, in some countries, by the introduction of objective-based budgeting. However, the extent to which government control has been decentralised varies greatly between the different European countries; Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden appear to be furthest ahead in this process.

Overall, there are a number of patterns of reform evident from the trends identified in different areas in this chapter. Firstly, there is the distinction which is discussed in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change between countries which have legislated for reform in different areas of higher education gradually, step-by-step and those which have introduced a complete new legal framework for higher education in the form of one or more framework acts. The first pattern was reflected in the area of autonomy and control in countries such as the French Community of Belgium, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Finland by the gradual delegation of tasks of institutional management such as budget spending, administration or course planning. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, Iceland and Liechtenstein, the legal basis for reforms in the autonomy, financing and quality control of higher education institutions was introduced as a single act. The latter approach allowed changes in the financing and management of institutions to be introduced simultaneously, giving greater coherence to the reform process. A third approach is demonstrated by Portugal where a major act was passed in 1988 leading to further developments in the form of laws and decrees.

Secondly, the devolution of some state powers to the higher education institutions was clearly accompanied in most countries by the establishment of formal systems of funding and quality control. These gave governments tighter control of the overall funding of higher education institutions both by the use of funding formulae and through giving an increasing proportion of funds for both teaching and research through contracts or through objective-based budgeting linked to the performance of institutions. In the area of quality control, the overall tendency has been to move away from a reliance on the institutions to carry out their own quality assurance, towards the introduction of a nationally-defined system mediated by an independent, often government-appointed agency. This trend was visible in all the countries studied except Germany and the French Community of Belgium. However, such systems were most developed in the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom where higher education funding has been refocused on performance objectives agreed by the institutions and the ministry, or, in the case of the United Kingdom, by the Funding Councils. In addition, institutions in all countries except the Flemish Community of Belgium and Germany have been given freedom to raise money through contracts to provide specific educational or research services to either central or regional government or to the private sector.

These changes appear to support Neave and Van Vught's (1991) argument that the reforms in higher education during the 1980s focused mainly on the giving of process autonomy while strengthening government steering of the product through planning and funding on the basis of agreed objectives and

through quality assurance systems. However, it is argued here that during the 1990s, in some countries at least, the continuing reform process may result in other potential consequences entailing still greater autonomy for institutions.

The third trend visible from the reforms in this area is linked to the increasing responsibility given to institutions during the 1990s to manage their own affairs, to enter into contracts for their services and, in particular, to engage in a process of development planning. In the countries at the forefront of these changes, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and Norway, this has required the development of a strong institutional identity combined with a more explicit management culture. In the United Kingdom, increased government steering through the system for funding teaching and research has brought institutions into direct competition for funds and has stimulated many similar changes. In some countries, management responsibilities at institutional level have been redefined, though there have apparently been few major changes to the structure of the internal management bodies of institutions. However the inclusion of external members on the most senior governing bodies of higher education institutions is now universal in all countries except Greece and the majority of *Länder* in Germany. Furthermore, in some countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands elected councils have been given a reduced role in decision-making.

In their international study of higher education policy which encompassed both European and non-European countries, Goedegebuure et al. (1994) identified a general trend away from a state-control model of higher education towards a state-supervisory model where the Government prefers to steer the system from a distance by setting broad parameters for development. They also argued that this trend was accompanied by the strengthening of management in institutions through changes in the composition of governing bodies, the streamlining of decision-making within institutions and changing the role of the democratic institutional councils from a control-oriented to an advice-oriented one. However their study did not include amongst others Belgium, Spain, Italy and Austria, countries which were shown in Table 2.2 to have moved less towards the adoption of output-based funding and where the tradition of state control remains stronger. Although these countries may eventually move in the same direction, the current analysis suggests that they still have some way to go before they develop the government steering at a distance and managerial culture found in higher education institutions in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER 3: ACCESS AND WASTAGE

This chapter focuses on the development of admission procedures and entry requirements for higher education since 1980. It examines whether restrictions are placed on the number of applicants admitted for certain courses and by whom these are set, which selection criteria are applied and what the access routes for mature-age students and those with non-traditional qualifications are. The chapter concludes with a discussion on measures designed to control dropout and wastage from higher education and any changes which have taken place in this area since 1980.

The upsurge in demand for higher education places since the 1960s experienced in all European countries triggered a re-examination of access policies in many. Countries faced the difficult task of balancing the growing demand for a highly qualified workforce against the cost of a mass higher education system and the need to maintain the quality of higher education provision. Policies governing general access to higher education or access to specific fields of study are mainly a result of the demand for higher education graduates by the national economy, student demand for higher education, the number of places available at institutional level and budgetary considerations. The important role played by the demands of the labour market for qualified workers and the principle of social justice were signalled by the attempt in most countries to widen participation by traditionally under-represented groups such as women and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Table 1.1 in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change shows that all countries except Luxembourg and Liechtenstein have made legislative or policy-based changes to their admission systems since 1980.

3.1. REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSION PROCEDURES

In all countries studied, the standard basic requirement for entry to university is the successful completion of general upper secondary education. In addition, entry to some vocationally-related areas of higher education is usually possible for those with a vocational upper secondary qualification. In a number of countries, holders of such qualifications are, at least in principle, also granted access to other higher education programmes. Entry to specialised higher education courses in art, music and sport has been based on personal aptitude during the entire period and is therefore selective in all countries. In 1994, France abolished selection to sports programmes based on physical ability.

In most countries, the great increase in numbers wishing to study and the need to control the supply of certain professionals has made it necessary to limit access to some extremely over-subscribed university courses and selection has become particularly competitive and demanding for courses such as human and veterinary medicine, dentistry, engineering and architecture. In some countries, this has given rise to controversy and challenges in court. Furthermore, entry to the newer vocationally-related courses offered mainly in the non-university sector has been made selective in most countries, due mainly to limits in the capacity of the institutions.

In order to examine the reforms to admissions policies in higher education it is important to understand the selection process at entry to undergraduate courses applicable at the beginning and the end of the period under review.

3.1.1. CHANGES IN THE SELECTIVITY AT ENTRY TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Table 3.1 compares the level of selectivity at entry to higher education in 1980/81 and 1996/97.

Table 3.1: Selectivity at entry to higher education in 1980/81 and 1996/97

Non-university vocational sector		B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
1980/81		○	○	●	○	(-)	(-)	●	●	(-)	○	○	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	●	○	○	●
1996/97		○	○	○	○	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	(-)	●	○	○	○
University sector		B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
1980/81		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1996/97		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

○ Selective for no courses ○ Selective for some courses ● Selective for most courses

Source: Eurydice.

The table does not include specialised courses in art, music and sport as access to these courses is subject to aptitude tests in all participating countries, except France which grants open access to sports programmes.

The table shows that despite rising demand for places in higher education the selectivity of the system has changed in relatively few countries over the period concerned. Countries selecting their entrants to higher education far outnumber those still granting open access, with roughly the same number of countries applying selection for most of their courses as for some courses only.

Spain has, since 1980, imposed increased selectivity for the majority of courses in an effort to balance the surge in demand with the number of higher education places available. In Denmark and Norway, higher education has become less selective since 1980/81 and Greece is planning to reduce the selectivity of its higher education system from the year 2000. In these three countries, the decrease in selectivity has been primarily a result of an increase in the number of places available on popular courses, although in Norway low unemployment was also a contributing factor. From 1991 onwards, the Danish Ministry of Education and the higher education institutions have made efforts to redistribute the study places offered towards the area of maximum demand in order to make best use of existing capacity and to reduce the number of unsuccessful applications. In addition, the aim of the 1992 Multi-Annual Agreement was to encourage institutions to admit as many qualified applicants as their resources will permit (open intake). Norway introduced a system of 'national access' in 1995/96 whereby students with suitable qualifications applying to study the classics or social and natural sciences would be offered a place for the course they wish to study, but not necessarily at the institution of their choice. Greece's 1997 Education 2000 Act includes provision to increase the number of higher education places available by the year 2000. During the 1990s, Sweden significantly increased the number of higher education places available with the aim of tackling skills shortages, especially in technological areas. At the same time, however, the demand for higher education and the time students spend in higher education has also increased. Therefore the expected positive effect in the form of less selectivity has not yet been realised.

Liechtenstein and Italy (university sector) have both ended open access policies for certain programmes as the demand for places has started to outgrow supply. In countries like France, Italy, Luxembourg and Austria, the non-university sector is currently much more selective than the traditionally open-access university sector.

There was significant growth in the number of higher education places in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s and early 1990s, largely in polytechnics and the Scottish central institutions, which gained university status in 1992 following the passing of the Further and Higher Education Acts. The growth was largely demand driven, but in the mid-1990s, the Government introduced target numbers for undergraduate enrolments which the funding councils and, in turn the institutions, were expected not to exceed. Recent announcements concerning the future funding of higher education will lead to a renewed expansion of higher education, with particular emphasis on initiatives to support access, especially for part-time students.

In Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria and Iceland (for the University of Iceland only), candidates with the appropriate school-leaving qualification have a constitutional right to higher education but not necessarily to a particular field of study. There have been no limitations placed on university education admissions in Luxembourg or Austria during the period considered, although entry to many of the non-university courses continues to be based on selection. Entry to nursery and primary teacher training courses at the Luxembourg *Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques (ISERP)* is based on a language test in French, German and *Letzeburgesch* and requires good grades in the secondary school-leaving exam, while entry to the *Institut supérieur de technologie (IST)* requires the submission of a dossier.

In both, the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, entry to university has traditionally been open to all students with a secondary school-leaving certificate, except for courses in applied sciences which have been selective on the basis of entry exams since long before 1980. As of August 1997, the Government has imposed limits on the number of qualified doctors and dentists and each Community has responded differently to the implementation of this change. In the French Community, entry to medicine and dentistry courses will remain open and potential doctors and dentists will be selected for the second cycle of the course on the basis of their performance during the first cycle. Those not selected will be given the chance to change to another related course. The Flemish Community, in 1997, successfully introduced a centralised entrance examination for medicine and dentistry despite opposition from universities, students and other interest groups. Entry to all other university and non-university courses remains open for all students having obtained a secondary school-leaving certificate. The decision on limiting study places for physiotherapists has been postponed.

In Germany, the introduction of selection criteria for university courses has been controversial and their application is only possible under precisely defined conditions based on capacity as some admission decisions have been challenged successfully in the courts. This required the development of nationwide allocation procedures for over-subscribed courses in 1985 and further changes in the selection process are currently under discussion. The procedure for entry to selective courses was changed in 1985 by introducing an additional multi-stage selection procedure for studies in medicine. Besides the performance in school and the length of time an applicant has been waiting for a place, additional selection criteria in this special selection procedure (*Besonderes Auswahlverfahren*) are the results of a special assessment procedure (*Feststellungsverfahren*) and possibly a selection interview conducted by the institution concerned. Due to the increase in places in medicine paralleled by a relative drop in the number of applicants, this special selection procedure was suspended at the beginning of the academic year 1997/98.

In Italy, during the 1990s, some universities have begun to impose limitations on the number of places offered in architecture, dentistry, and human and veterinary medicine, selecting candidates through entrance examinations. Following various juridical decisions, a regulation was issued by the Ministry in July 1997, giving it legal power to restrict access to the courses mentioned above, and in some other cases, at the request of the institutions for reasons of limited capacity. In 1998, the Constitutional Court, ruled in favour of restrictions on higher education admissions, without a law by Parliament, only for the specific courses quoted above. In August 1999, a law finally clarified the situation by stating for which courses admission is restricted either on a national level or at the request of the institution, and by defining the general selection criteria.

Changes in the selection procedures fell into two main groups: changes in the locus of responsibility for the selection process and changes in the selection criteria applied. Table 3.2 shows the changes in the locus of responsibility for determining the selection criteria for over-subscribed courses between 1980/81 and 1996/97, and gives information on the selection criteria applied.

Table 3.2: Selection criteria at entry to higher education: 1980/81 and 1996/97

Country	Responsibility for setting criteria for over-subscribed courses		Selection criteria applied	
	1980/81	1996/97	1980/81	1996/97
European Union				
B fr (universities)	Government and institutions (<i>sciences appliquées</i> for civil engineers only)	Government and institutions (<i>sciences appliquées</i> for civil engineers only)	Entrance exam	Entrance exam
B nl (universities)	Government and institutions (<i>toegepaste wetenschappen</i> for civil engineers only)	Government and institutions (<i>toegepaste wetenschappen</i> for civil engineers only)	Entrance exam	Entrance exam
DK	Government	Institutions (to national standards)	Marks obtained in school-leaving exam.	Marks obtained in school-leaving exam, subjects studied, tests, interviews, work experience.
D (universities) (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>)	Federal and <i>Länder</i> procedures Institutions	Federal and <i>Länder</i> procedures Institutions	School performance, waiting period, special categories, exams. On the basis of the average mark in the <i>Abitur</i> (secondary school leaving certificate), the period spent waiting before applying for admission.	School performance, waiting period, special categories, exams. On the basis of the average mark in the <i>Abitur</i> (secondary school leaving certificate), the period spent waiting before applying for admission.
EL	Government	Government	Entrance exam	Marks in general examination.
E (universities)	National government	National government	Marks in university entrance exam and the average of grades obtained in general upper secondary education.	Marks in university entrance exam and the average of grades obtained in general upper secondary education.
F	Institutions (medical and vocational courses)	Institutions (medical and vocational courses)	Marks in exams at end of first year (medical courses); marks in exams, interview and previous academic performance (vocational courses).	Marks in exams at end of first year (medical courses); marks in exams, interview and previous academic performance (vocational courses).
IRL	Institutions	Institutions (to national standards)	National University of Ireland introduces first points system for constituent colleges.	Points gained in school-leaving certificate (plus an interview for a tiny proportion of courses).
I	(-)	Government and institutions	(-)	Entrance exam (non-university). Marks in university entrance exam and in school-leaving exam (medicine, surgery, veterinary medicine, architecture).
L (non-university sector)	Government	Government	Marks at secondary school-leaving exam.	Marks at secondary school-leaving exam. For access to <i>ISERP</i> , an exam in French, German and <i>Letzeburgesch</i> is required in addition. Entry to <i>IST</i> is based on a dossier.
NL	Institutions (<i>HBO</i>) Government (universities)	Government	Selection criteria set by institutions (<i>HBO</i>); weighted lottery-type draw based on marks in secondary school-leaving exams (universities).	Weighted lottery-type draw based on marks in secondary school-leaving exams.

Table 3.2: Selection criteria at entry to higher education: 1980/81 and 1996/97 (continued)

Country	Responsibility for setting criteria for over-subscribed courses		Selection criteria applied	
	1980/81	1996/97	1980/81	1996/97
A (<i>Fachhochschulen</i>)	(-)	Institutions	(-)	Entrance exams for <i>Fachhochschulen</i> .
P	Government	Government and institutions	Marks in secondary school-leaving examination.	Marks in school-leaving exam and the results of a national exam in two or three subjects. As a result of the 1997 Law, institutions may now set their own exams or tests.
FIN	Institutions	Institutions	Marks in secondary school-leaving exam and the matriculation examination; entrance tests, work experience and previous studies in some fields.	Marks in secondary school-leaving exam and the matriculation examination, entrance tests, work experience and previous studies in some fields.
S	Government	Institutions (to national standards)	Marks in school-leaving exam, work-experience or work experience in combination with university aptitude test.	Marks in school-leaving exam, university aptitude test, work experience or work experience in combination with university aptitude test.
UK	Institutions	Institutions	Marks in school-leaving examinations or equivalent qualifications, interviews.	Although selection is mainly determined by grades in school-leaving examinations (or equivalent qualifications) and/or interview, other criteria may also be used, depending on the area of study and institution concerned.
EFTA/EEA				
IS	Institutions	Institutions	Grades in a competitive examination at the end of the first semester for medical subjects; grades in school-leaving examinations and work experience for teacher training and technical colleges.	Grades in a competitive examination at the end of the first semester for medical subjects; grades in school-leaving examinations and work experience for teacher training and technical colleges.
LI	(-)	Institutions	(-)	Secondary school-leaving exam and work experience.
NO	Institutions (universities) Government (non-university sector)	Government	Points system based on marks in school-leaving exam (additional points for specialised education and work experience; weighting varies according to type of study and institution).	Points system based on marks in school-leaving exam, subjects studied.

Source: Eurydice.

This table does not include specialised courses in art, music and sport as access to these courses is subject to aptitude tests in all participating countries, except in France where there is open access to sports programmes. In addition, the table does not allow for the use of age, nationality or non-traditional qualifications as selection criteria sometimes applied to fill quotas reserved for special groups of students.

3.1.1.1. Changes in the locus of responsibility for the selection process

Table 3.2 shows that by 1996/97 all countries placed some restrictions on entry to higher education, especially in the non-university sector. In the majority of countries, it was the institutions' responsibility to decide on the criteria for the selection of applicants for over-subscribed courses. The government had full or shared responsibility for deciding the selection criteria in the minority of countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway) often to ensure greater fairness through the use of common criteria. Only two countries had transferred this responsibility from the institutions to the Government: Norway for the university sector and the

Netherlands for the non-university sector. Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and Portugal gave institutions the right to set their own selection criteria while observing government guidelines.

Where access to higher education was limited, the decision about the overall number of places offered was most commonly taken by the institutions themselves in 1980/81 and this was still the case in 1996/97. This decision was based mainly on the capacity of the institution but in some countries it was steered by government-imposed target numbers of places (Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and United Kingdom) and/or graduates (Finland). In most participating countries, however, the Government decided the number of available places or the target number of graduates in medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry and teaching on a labour-market basis. In France, the number of students to be admitted to studies in medicine is determined jointly by the institutions and the Ministries for Health and Education, taking into account the capacity of university hospitals to train students.

In Italy, Portugal and Norway, the number of places offered in all disciplines is decided by the appropriate Ministry taking into account the capacity of institutions and the demands of the labour market. In Germany, the *Länder* ministries only take account of the capacity of institutions, but not the labour market.

A number of countries established a national body to coordinate the admissions process for all higher education institutions or expanded its radius of action during the 1990s. Ireland set up the Central Applications Office (CAO) in 1976 to process applications for places in universities and since 1992 the CAO has covered the institutes of technology, the colleges of education and a number of smaller specialist institutions. The Netherlands created the Information Management Group in 1992, to administer the Central Registration Procedure. The United Kingdom created the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) in 1993 for all first degree courses, following the merger of the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), and the Polytechnics Central Admissions System (PCAS). Although UCAS acts as a clearing house for admissions to higher education institutions, the institutions are autonomous bodies and each determines its own admissions policy. Norway inaugurated the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service in 1991. A pilot scheme started in 1992 and the system became fully operational in 1995.

The Netherlands (1992), Sweden (from 1997), Norway (1995) and institutions in Ireland chose to replace or supplement institution-determined selection criteria by common, national standards for ranking candidates for admission to higher education. This was in order to reduce the variation between institutions and improve fairness. In the Netherlands, the non-university *HBO* institutions, which had previously been able to select students, could no longer do so after 1992 when they came under the same legislation as the universities. The institutions retained responsibility for deciding their own selection criteria for particular courses in Ireland and Sweden.

In a number of countries, institutions were recently given or will soon be given (greater) responsibility for the selection of applicants to their courses and sometimes also for determining the number of places offered for most courses within a quota agreed with the Government: Denmark (1993), Germany (for the selection of part of the applicants from 1998), Portugal (public institutions from 1999), Sweden (1993) and Iceland (1997). The devolution of such responsibility was often part of the process of giving increased autonomy to institutions described in Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control.

3.1.1.2. Changes in selection criteria applied

During the period under consideration most countries increased the range of selection criteria applied to identify students most able to follow certain courses. Grades achieved in the secondary school-leaving exams were the most widespread tool used to measure the suitability of applicants in 1980/81 and this was even more the case in 1996/97. These were often supported by entrance exams at national or institutional level.

In France, the 1980s and 1990s have seen the gradual development and expansion of a vocationally-oriented selective sector both within the traditionally open-access universities and outside. The selective, university-based *IUTs*, *IUPs* and the engineering colleges (*écoles d'ingénieurs*) have doubled or even tripled during this time, while the traditional university courses have expanded only about one and half times. Entry into the second year of university courses in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy remains conditional on passing the first year examinations. Entry to most courses in the non-university sector is selective but the degree of selectivity varies for different courses and institutions.

In the Netherlands, legislation was required to allow the application of a *numerus fixus* to specific courses at universities or, more commonly, at higher professional education institutions. At the beginning of the period considered, restrictions could only be applied on the grounds of limited capacity but in 1984, legislation made it possible to limit places on the basis of labour market considerations. Courses such as biology, medicine, various types of therapy courses, tourism, industrial design and journalism were affected. Institutions decide on the number of students they are able to accommodate, while the Government decides on the number of places necessary to meet labour market demands.

In Norway, admission requirements for courses with a *numerus clausus* are expressed in points obtained through good results and the array of relevant subjects studied at secondary school, through previous higher education, military service, or study at a *folkehogskoler* (folk high school), or simply age. Some courses give credit for work experience. In addition, students are offered the possibility of re-sitting exams in order to improve their grades. This has led to a situation where students delay entering higher education in order to increase their point count and by 1996 over 25 percent of all applicants were aged 25 or over ('backwater effect'). Since 1992, state colleges have tried fighting this trend by reserving a quota of places for applicants between 19 and 21 years of age, and for human and veterinary medicine by a quota for students who have not improved their exam results by retaking them. From 2000 onwards, thirty to forty percent of places will be reserved for those entering on the basis of their original results in the school-leaving exam with no points awarded for other activities.

France and Iceland applied a system of delayed selection for medical courses. The results of an exam at the end of the first year (France) or after the first semester (Iceland) of study are used to determine whether students should be allowed to continue with their studies in medicine. In response to the government-imposed limits on graduates in medicine and dentistry, in 1997, the French Community of Belgium introduced a selection process after the first study cycle which will show its effect in the year 2000.

During the period studied, only Greece, Spain and Portugal organised national exams for entry to higher education and all three made changes to these. In Greece, national entrance exams (general exams) were introduced in 1983 in the face of a great upsurge in demand in order to regulate admission to higher education on a national basis, since secondary school-leaving exams are not externally moderated. Candidates express preferences for programme areas and institutions and are directed to these depending on their performance in the exams and the places available. The 1997 Education 2000 Act includes provision for abolishing general exams from 2000 in parallel with an increase in the number of higher education places. Entry will then be based on marks in the school-leaving exams and in aptitude tests.

In Portugal, a national exam for entry to higher education was introduced in 1989 as a way of widening access by relaxing the relationship between the area of study at secondary school and higher education programmes. It also provided a common basis for assessing prospective students in the absence of an externally-moderated exam at the end of secondary education. However, this exam was abolished in 1993 and, since 1996, entry has been based on a points system taking into account a candidate's results in the newly-introduced national exams at the end of secondary school and their grades at secondary school.

In Spain, the government-controlled *prueba de acceso* (national entrance exam) introduced in 1974, has been retained but the pressure of the increased demand for higher education places has meant that exams intended as a test of maturity and readiness to study have become a vehicle for ranking candidates. As a result, efforts have been made to improve the reliability, quality and objectivity of marking by requiring that this should only be done by specialised teachers, randomly assigned. Since 1986, preference has been given to applicants that have passed their entrance exam in the first session in June and to those choosing study options related to their secondary education or opting for universities in their vicinity.

3.2. WIDENING ACCESS

Despite the high demand and competition for places in higher education, most countries introduced reforms aimed at widening access to higher education during the period studied. These focused particularly on improving access to both non-university and university higher education for mature-age candidates, especially those with non-traditional qualifications and school-leavers with vocational qualifications. In Ireland, the State rather than the full-time undergraduate student has been paying tuition fees charged by institutions since 1995/96. This is seen as an important factor in widening access to higher education, although tuition fees are still charged for part-time courses and registration fees on all full-time courses.

3.2.1. ACCESS FOR MATURE-AGE STUDENTS WITHOUT TRADITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The proportion of mature-age applicants for higher education varies considerably from country to country, as shown by Figure 3.1 (European Commission, Eurydice, Eurostat, 2000, p. 114). Most countries have made changes aimed at increasing the participation of adults without traditional entry qualifications in higher education during the 1980s and 1990s, though not all have succeeded.

Figure 3.1: Participation rates in tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6, 7), by age and by gender, as a percentage, 1996/97

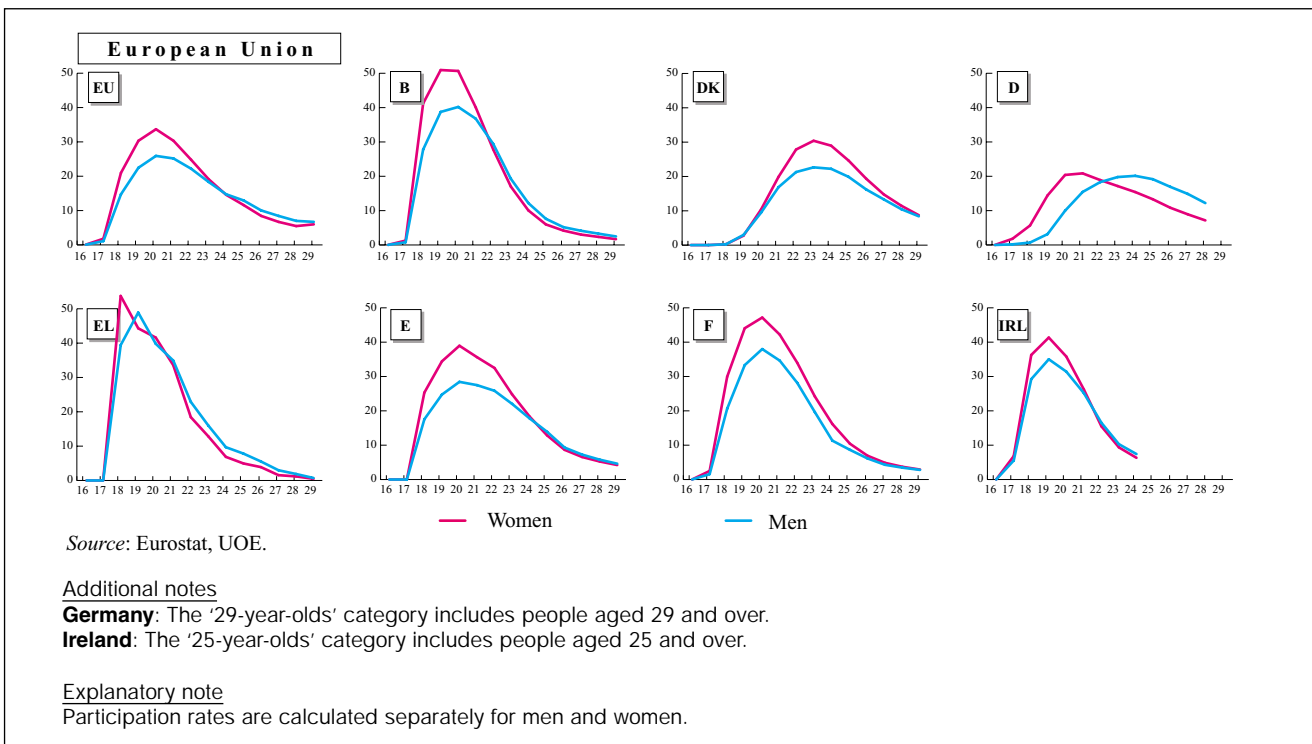
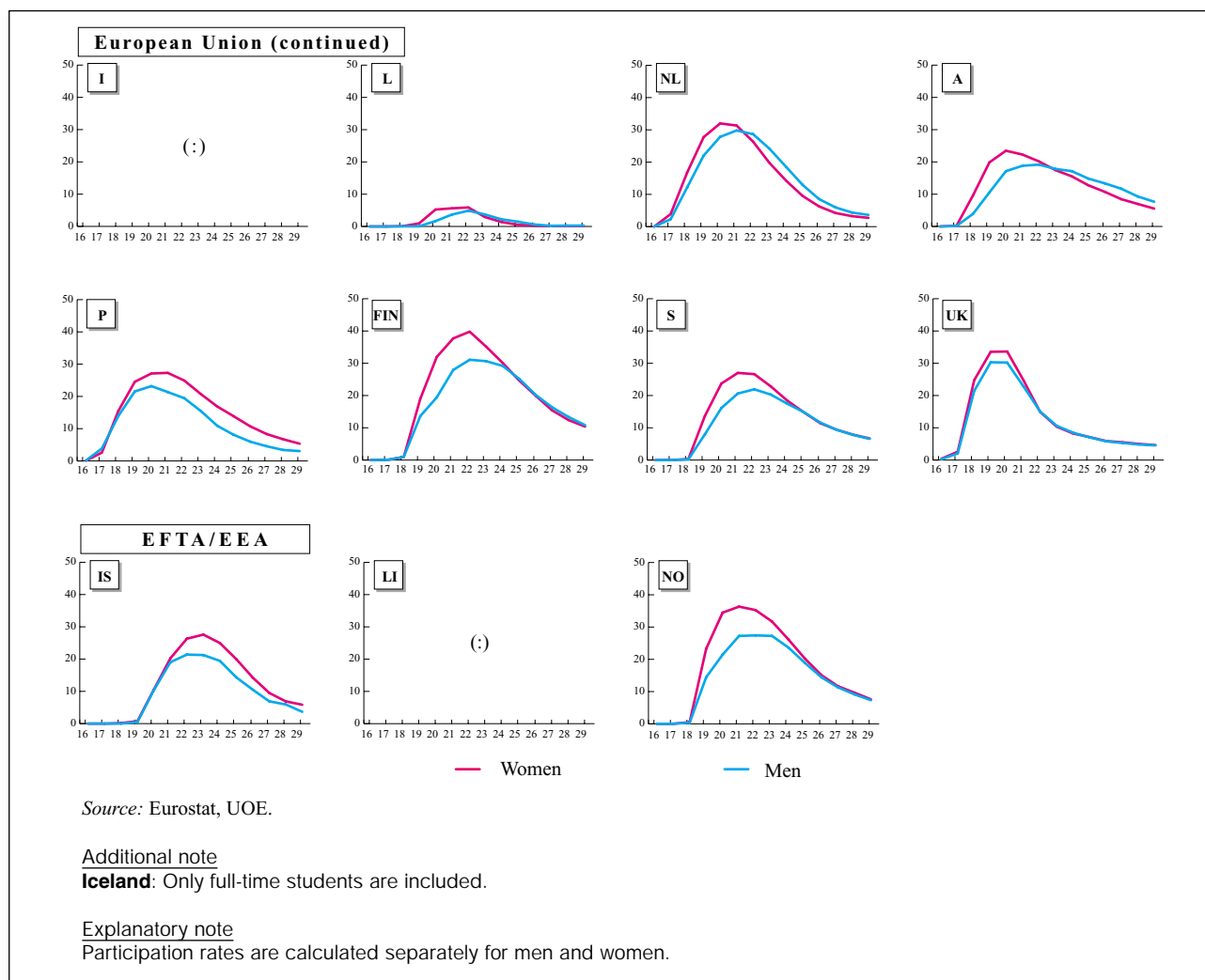


Figure 3.1 (continued): Participation rates in tertiary education (ISCED 5, 6, 7), by age and by gender, as a percentage, 1996/97



As Table 3.3 shows, alternative access routes for adults without traditional school-leaving qualifications were offered in 13 of the countries studied in 1980/81. By 1996/97, all countries except Italy and Luxembourg had introduced some form of access route for mature-age students, with the accreditation of prior experience as well as open university and other forms of distance learning being the most widespread methods of accepting this group of students into higher education.

Table 3.3: Routes to higher education for mature-age entrants without traditional qualifications in 1980/81 and in 1996/97

		B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
Accreditation of prior occupational/study experience	1980/81			•											• ¹	•		•		
	1996/97	•		•	•		• ²	•	•			•			•	•		•		•
Quotas of places	1980/81			•										•	•	•				• ³
	1996/97			•			•		•					•	•	•				
Special entry exam	1980/81	• ⁴			•		•	•				•	•	•		•				
	1996/97	•		•	•		•	•				•	•	•		•			•	
Access courses	1980/81			•			•	•									• ⁵			
	1996/97			•			•	•	•								•	•		
Flexible programmes/open university/distance learning	1980/81						•	•								•	•			
	1996/97		•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•		•

Source: Eurydice.

¹ Universities only

² Vocationally oriented courses only

³ Non-university sector only

⁴ A special entry exam was already in operation in Belgium in a very limited way before 1980

⁵ United Kingdom except Scotland

3.2.1.1. Accreditation of prior experience

In 1996/97, the accreditation of relevant previous experience was possible for older applicants, both for vocationally-oriented courses and academic university courses, in 12 out of the 18 participating countries. In 1980/81, this possibility had been offered by only 5 countries. In the French Community of Belgium, adults without a secondary school-leaving certificate have been able to enter higher education if they could prove they have work experience in the area they wish to study and after assessment by the higher education institution. Very few students however enter via this route. Since 1990, some German *Länder* have been piloting a trial registration arrangement which allows applicants with relevant occupational experience to register for a maximum of four semesters at a higher education institution with the possibility of conversion into a conventional registration on the basis of study progress.

The *LOGSE* established the possibility for students aged 20 or over to access non-university vocationally-oriented courses offered by the Spanish higher education system via a special test. Exemption from this test can be granted on the basis of sufficient professional experience. In France, since 1985, entry to a particular university course has been possible based on a dossier proving relevant occupational experience in the study area and, from 1993, occupational skills can be accredited and will count towards higher education diplomas, allowing those coming from apprenticeships to enter higher education. Although the priority in Ireland is to improve access for disadvantaged students, since 1995, provision has been made to enable those over 23 to be admitted to higher education on the basis of their prior experience if they are judged likely to successfully complete their course.

In Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway, occupational experience and prior studies were taken into account for entry to higher education long before 1980. In Denmark, students with vocational qualifications are eligible for admission to short cycle higher education only. Promoting participation in higher education amongst all citizens has been one of the main characteristics of the Swedish education system. As early as 1969, Sweden introduced special admission regulations increasing the opportunities for adults with work experience to enter higher education. Those aged 25 or over, who have been employed for at least five years and fulfil certain specific requirements, have since been

eligible to pursue higher education studies. In Finland, work experience has been taken into account at polytechnics since their establishment in 1991, while prior studies have always been taken into account by universities. In the United Kingdom, the introduction of and arrangements for accreditation of prior learning (APL) vary from institution to institution. However, the former Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), now the Quality Assurance Agency, published guidelines on the quality assurance of credit-based learning in 1995. A survey of practice carried out by UCAS in 1996 found that the assessment and accreditation of prior learning were used in a wide range of programmes within higher education, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In Scotland, it has been possible to take prior study and work experience into account for modular course credits since 1990 through the Scottish Credit Framework.

3.2.1.2. Quota of places

Higher education institutions may also reserve a certain proportion of places for older applicants. In Denmark since 1977, a quota of study places has been reserved, among others, for those without the traditional school-leaving examinations. Furthermore, since 1990, all those interested and not registered at another higher education institution have been able to enrol in Danish open university programmes. In Greece, whenever the recently introduced open-choice study programmes are over-subscribed, priority will be given to candidates aged between 23 and 45 without higher education qualifications. In Ireland, some higher education institutions have reserved a percentage of places on some courses for adult applicants, while in Finland in 1995, the Government set the goal that, by the year 2000, around one quarter of all new entrants should be mature-age students. Spanish universities and Portuguese higher education institutions reserve a certain number of places for students aged 25 or over and who have passed the special access test.

3.2.1.3. Special entry exam

A number of countries run special entry exams which allow mature-age candidates to obtain an equivalent qualification to the secondary school-leaving exam which permits them to enter higher education. These are usually traditional, formal academic examinations which provide an entry route for relatively few. Such exams are offered in Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, and Austria. In Denmark, there is the 1-1½-year special entrance examination course for the engineering colleges and the ½-1-year supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level, which should allow students to attain the level of knowledge in the subject(s) relevant to their chosen study programme. In Spain, to be admitted to the test of maturity and skills, applicants for vocationally-oriented courses must be aged 20 or over and, for university courses, 25 or over. In France, there is the *DAEU, diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires*, and, in Austria, the study entitlement exam. In Portugal, the *ad-hoc* exam for adults aged 25 or more grants access to higher education without being considered equivalent to secondary education.

Nearly all German *Länder* have, since 1980, offered applicants with exceptionally high professional qualifications the possibility of entering higher education via a special exam. In the Netherlands, prospective applicants over 20 who do not meet the formal entry requirements may be exempted from these through an alternative higher education entry procedure, the *colloquium doctum*. Since 1992, other entrance procedures (aptitude test or test to determine suitability for a specific level of study, interview) are also available to mature-age students.

In Sweden, the university aptitude test had already been specifically designed for this special group of applicants in 1969 and the score obtained in the test as well as work experience could qualify for university studies. Designed originally for specific courses only, it was extended during the 1970s to all university courses and since 1991, all applicants have had the right to sit this test. In Finland, at the end of upper secondary school, a national matriculation exam is offered to those (secondary school-leavers

and other adults) wishing to enter higher education. There have been few changes to these exams during the period studied, although in 1994 in France, the special university entrance exam (*ESEU*), aimed at those over 20 who had not studied for at least two years, was replaced by a one-year course leading to the *DAEU*. This gives the same right of entry to any university as the *baccalauréat*. In 1990, the *LOGSE* introduced the possibility of accessing the Spanish higher education system via a special test for students aged 20 or over.

3.2.1.4. Access courses

Access courses, higher or further education courses which prepare adult students for entry to often related higher education courses, were offered in six countries in 1996/97, of which four had already offered such courses back in 1980/81. In Ireland, courses designed to help adult returners have been offered on a part-time evening and part-time day basis by some higher education institutions such as the National College of Ireland, formerly the National College of Industrial Relations, and the Dublin Institute of Technology since the early 1990s. Since 1995, the Irish Higher Education Links Scheme has provided access to designated higher education courses for a limited number of mature-age students. In the United Kingdom (except Scotland), since 1978, special courses run by further education institutions prepare many mature-age students without traditional qualifications for higher education and sometimes guarantee access to particular courses on successful completion. The growth of these so-called Access courses has been rapid. There were six courses in 1979 and 130 in 1984. By 1996, the total number of recognised courses registered by the then Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland was nearly 1,200. In Scotland, since 1988, the Scottish Wider Access Programme has promoted vocationally-oriented higher education to adults without the traditional entry requirements through cooperation between higher education and further education institutions in running access courses. At the beginning of the 1990s, a foundation year in science and technology was introduced in Sweden. The aim was to widen the base for recruitment. This basic year was also open to adult students and from 1995/96 these students could receive special study support. In Denmark, such courses had been established before the period under consideration.

3.2.1.5. Flexible programmes/open university/distance learning

Part-time higher education courses or courses based on accredited modules have been introduced in many countries to fit in with the work or family obligations faced by adults. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching. Since 1989, Danish institutions offering higher education courses have been able to enrol adult students on single modules of such courses for a small fee. In Greece, open-choice study programmes were introduced in 1997 as an alternative to the over-subscribed conventional programmes to help open up higher education to adults. Factors such as periods of unemployment, age and the number of years spent in post-secondary education are taken into account for entry alongside the usual secondary certificate or its equivalent. In France, the *formations en alternance* (sandwich courses) where periods of study alternate with periods of work have become more and more common in vocational programmes during the period studied. Both Ireland (in the early 1990s) and the United Kingdom have introduced modular course structures allowing students the flexibility to choose units from different subject areas. Although introduced in the 1970s these courses have been more widely available since the early 1990s in the United Kingdom, when the decision to introduce modular course structures was taken by the institutions.

Open universities using distance learning methods to allow students to study part-time from home have been established by a number of countries during the period studied. These provide an important access route to higher education for mature-age students since they offer flexible courses at a variety of levels and often accept students with few conventional qualifications. The Belgian Flemish Community set up an open university in 1995, but entry to degree-level courses requires the secondary school certificate. Denmark's first open university programmes were introduced in 1982 on an experimental

basis and were extended to other universities and higher education institutions in 1990. Spain established the National Distance Learning University (*UNED*) in 1972 to provide university education for those unable to study at a conventional university for logistical or geographical reasons, but it also offers shorter non-degree courses for those without prior qualifications as well as university access courses. The setting up of France's National Centre for Distance Learning (*CNED*) and the Finnish, Swedish and United Kingdom open universities pre-dated this study but the numbers of students have grown considerably during the period under review (e.g. the number of OU students in Scotland has doubled since 1980/81). In Sweden, universities and university colleges are responsible for the management and design of the course offer in distance learning. There is extensive provision of open university instruction in Finland and student numbers have grown considerably during the 1990s. It is however not possible to obtain a degree through the open university and students who wish to do so must gain entrance to a regular university programme. The Dutch Open University was opened in 1984 to provide second-chance education to adults. In Iceland, access to teacher training has been facilitated for adults from remote areas by the use of distance learning techniques since 1993.

3.2.2. ACCESS FOR APPLICANTS WITH VOCATIONAL SCHOOL-LEAVING QUALIFICATIONS

During the period considered access to higher education courses was widened in a number of countries for students with vocational school-leaving qualifications, despite their original aim of preparing students to enter the labour market. In the Belgian French Community since 1993/94, the whole of the higher education sector, including both universities and the non-university *Hautes écoles*, was open to anybody with a secondary school certificate or its equivalent. Holders of a vocational higher secondary education certificate (*CESS - certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur*) were now eligible for admission to short-type higher education. Admission to long-type higher education was however made subject to passing an exam to obtain the certificate of aptitude to gain entry to higher education (*DAES - diplôme d'aptitude à accéder à l'enseignement supérieur*), a qualification no longer required for applicants from other branches of secondary education. In Germany, since 1990, the desire to upgrade the status of vocational secondary education has led to the strategy of granting access to higher education to candidates from vocational secondary schools. In France, since the introduction of the *baccalauréat professionnel* (vocational secondary school-leaving certificate) in 1986, holders of this qualification have been granted the right to enter open-access higher education, a right previously granted to holders of the *baccalauréat technologique* (technical secondary school-leaving certificate). Despite this reform the majority of university students are still recruited among holders of the *baccalauréat général* (general secondary school-leaving certificate). In Austria, access to university was opened to those with a vocational secondary school-leaving certificate (*Berufsmittelschule*) in 1997. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) are part of the framework of qualifications for England, Wales and Northern Ireland which were introduced in response to the Government White Paper *Education and Training for the 21st Century* (May 1991). GNVQs have been designed as a preparation for employment either directly, or through higher education. In Finland, from 1991, general eligibility to higher education was extended to students with post-secondary level vocational qualifications. During the period studied, general eligibility for higher education in Denmark was gradually extended by granting access to all holders of vocationally oriented general upper secondary commercial (*HHX*) and technical (*HTX*) qualifications. In Spain, holders of vocational school-leaving certificates have been granted access to short-course university studies at *Escuelas Universitarias* since 1975/76. Today a minimum of 30% of study places on these courses is reserved for students with vocational secondary qualifications.

3.3. MEASURES TO REDUCE WASTAGE

In an effort to increase efficiency, reforms relating to the higher education admissions procedures were accompanied in most European countries by measures aimed at improving the completion rate of higher education courses. Efforts were focused on reducing both the non-completion rate and the time taken by students to complete their higher education courses successfully.

Dropout from specific courses is not necessarily a good measure of non-completion of higher education, as students may choose to repeat the year, re-sit their exams or transfer to another course which they subsequently complete successfully. Since few countries, however, are able to monitor students throughout their higher education careers, alternative figures are scarce. Taking the number of students who do not complete a particular course in the standard time as a measure of dropout, gives a somewhat inflated dropout rate in the open-entry systems found in Belgium or at French universities where many students fail their end of year exams. Although an average of 50 percent of Belgian university students fail their first year exams, a study carried out by the French Community Directorate for Higher Education and Scientific Research¹ showed that three quarters of those who began their higher education studies finished by obtaining a qualification. In the French Community of Belgium, university entry, except for civil engineering, is open to anyone with a certificate of secondary education. The decrees of 1994 (for the universities) and of 1995 (for the *Hautes écoles*) offer students the option of spreading the first year's study programme across two academic years. Furthermore, a system of tutoring by more advanced students and increased supervision during the first year has been put in place by a number of institutions in an effort to reduce failure levels in the first year exams. Such a system has also been successfully introduced in France in recent years with advanced students (*tuteurs*) supporting and guiding first year students. In other countries (i.e. Sweden and Finland), the introduction of modular programmes, where students themselves decide the combination of courses they will study and the pace at which they progress, makes estimation of the level of non-completion difficult.

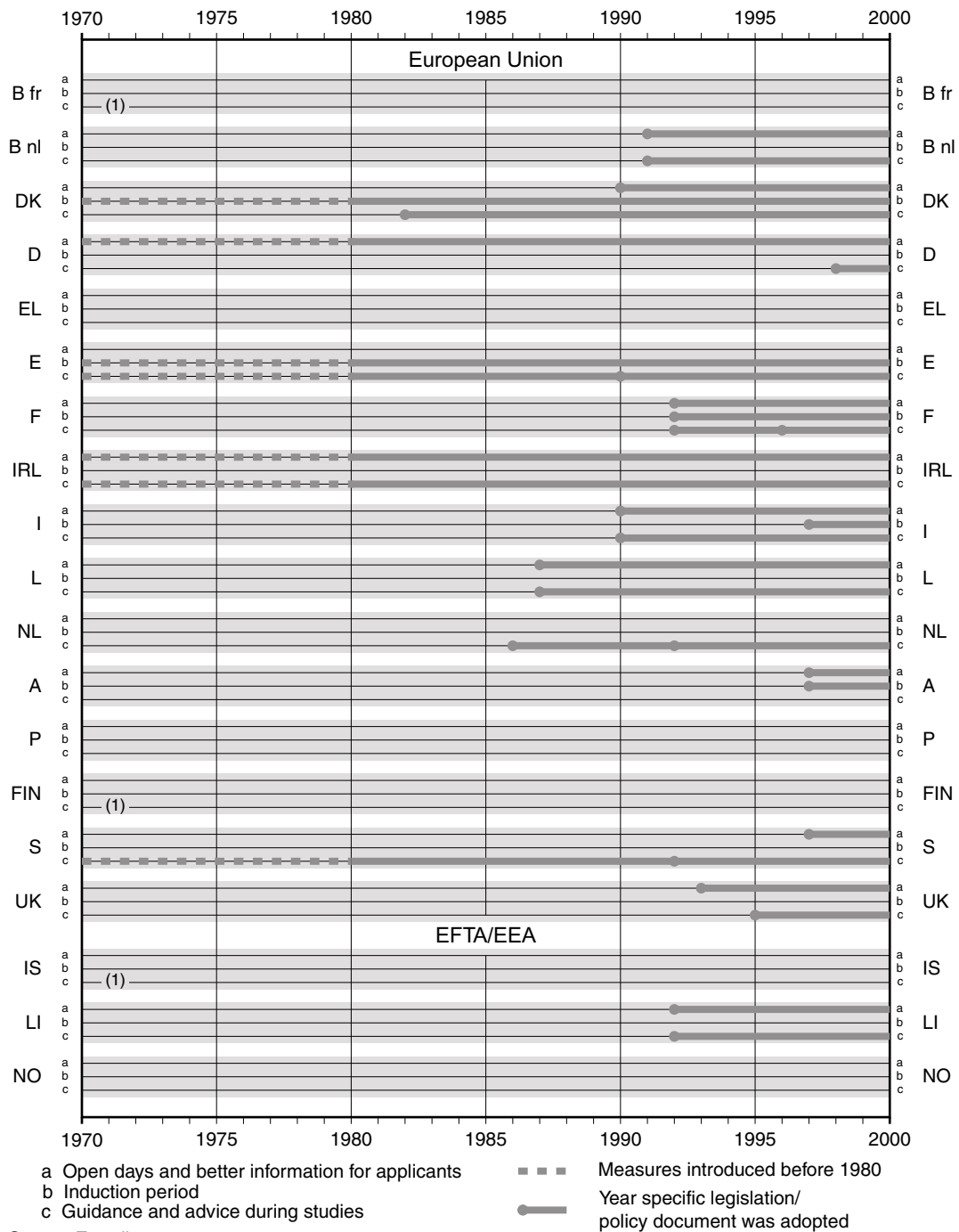
Encouraging students to progress quickly through their higher education courses has been seen by many countries as a way of optimising the use of the higher education system in the face of high demand. In some countries such as Germany and Greece, the academic tradition does not require university students to finish their studies within a set time-frame, but gives them the freedom to decide when to sit their qualifying examinations. This has in the past led to a proportion of inactive students who are enrolled but do not attend classes or sit examinations. To reduce the number of such students, during the period under review, countries have introduced a limit to the number of years a student may enrol. The effect of the 1998 German Higher Education Framework Act in reducing the standard period of study has already been mentioned. Similarly the introduction of trial examinations is intended to encourage students to take their final examinations earlier. As stipulated in the recent Education 2000 Act, Greece will limit study periods from the year 2000. Spain has put restrictions on the number of times a student can resit his or her exams since 1983. In Italy, the reduction of course length and of the very high number of students not graduating in the standard time (*fuori corso*) are the main goals of the 1997 reform now being implemented.

Countries keen to improve the completion rate introduced a number of relevant measures both at institutional and national level. These initiatives focused on improving the information and guidance available to students when choosing their higher education courses. They also included the provision of advice to students during their studies, the introduction of shorter or modular courses, financial incentives to institutions and students. The majority of these measures were implemented during the 1990s.

¹ Ongoing study of the Directorate General for Higher Education and Scientific Research with the support of the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL) and the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB).

Table 3.4: Measures to improve the rate of completion of higher education courses since 1980

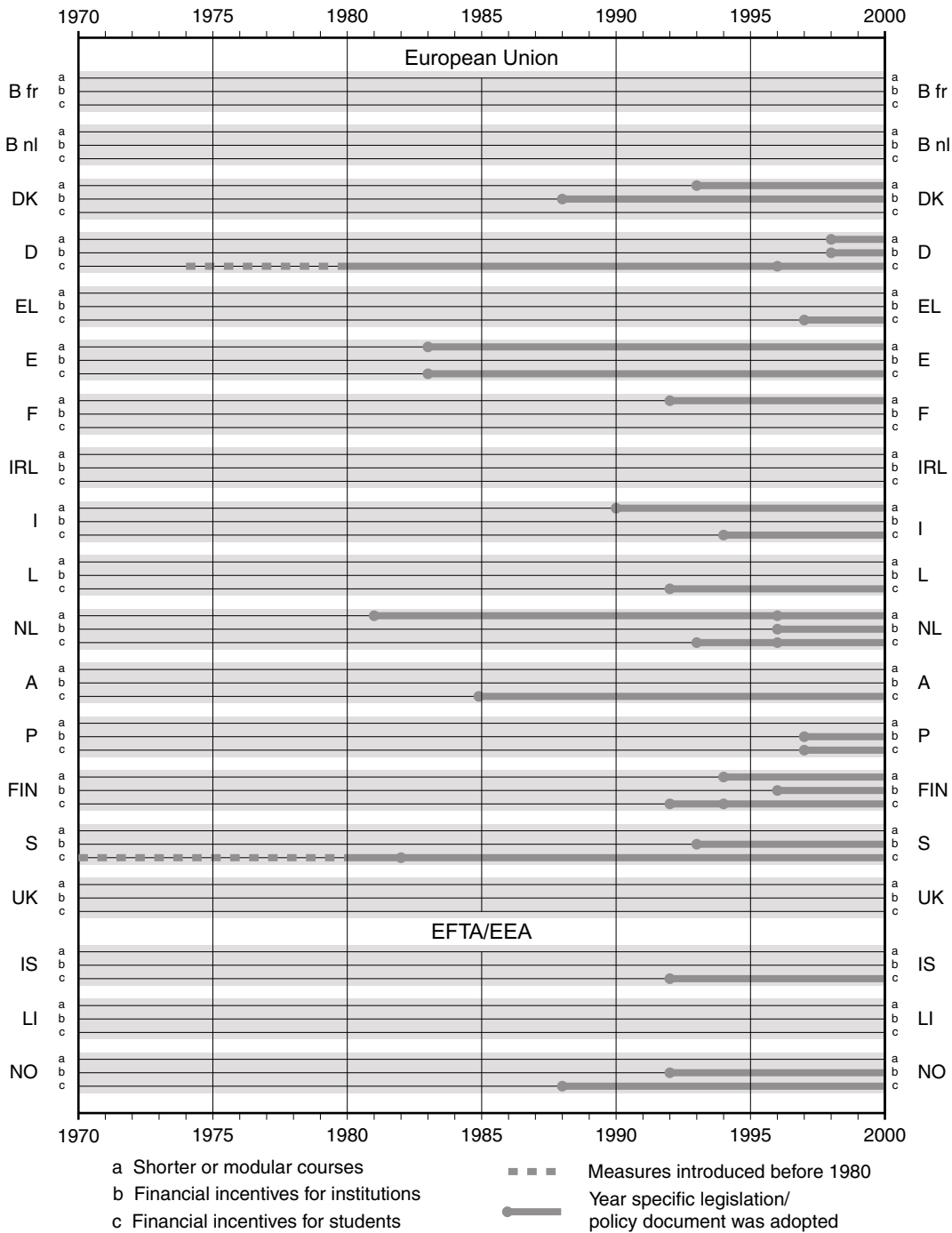
Improved information and guidance



- (¹) **Belgium (B fr), Finland, United Kingdom and Iceland:** Guidance and advice to students have been continuously improved during the period considered, but this cannot be related to one specific legislation or policy document.
- Germany:** Since the amendment of the 1998 Higher Education Framework Act, higher education institutions have to reinforce guidance and advice during studies.
- Spain:** The 1990 *LOGSE* strengthened guidance and advice in the non-university sector.
- United Kingdom:** Open days, and guidance and advice have been available to students on a non-formalised basis since before 1980.

Table 3.4: Measures to improve the rate of completion of higher education courses since 1980 (continued)

Others measures



Source: Eurydice.

3.3.1. INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Table 3.4 shows that, during the period under review, many countries focused their efforts on improving information for prospective students, particularly on admission requirements and assessment procedures. The aim was to ensure that students had a clear idea of the content of their chosen course and the standards required to succeed in it. In the majority of countries, changes or improvements to

the system were made during the 1990s. The most common changes involved organising open days at higher education institutions and improving the flow of information and other links between schools and higher education institutions. France, Italy and Austria instituted a pre-study induction period for future students. Guidance and advice for students was a priority with many institutions introducing or reinforcing mentoring, tutoring and counselling systems for new entrants.

Improvements to the information and guidance available to students were a particular focus in countries with less selective higher education admission systems as a means of reducing failure during the first few years of study. In the French Community of Belgium, efforts to reduce failure included pairing first year students with students from the third or fourth year and offering remedial classes in the main subjects at the beginning of the course. The Higher Education Framework Act which was passed in 1998 in Germany included measures to intensify academic counselling by higher education institutions and the introduction of trial examinations. A major aim of the 1992/93 reforms to the first and second cycles of university education in France was the reduction of wastage through better guidance and supervision of students. The information provided by universities was improved to include information on assessment procedures, and links with secondary schools were reinforced. Implementation was the responsibility of the institutions and included information sessions and exhibitions on certain careers in schools and open days at universities. In addition, an induction period of several weeks is offered to new university entrants in July and a *tutorat* (mentoring system) was introduced where more advanced students help first-year students with problems during their studies. The importance of support and guidance as well as the improvement of study conditions was re-emphasised by the recommendations of the 1996 Fauroux Commission.

In Italy, the 1990 Law on the reorganisation of university teaching required universities to provide guidance for prospective students and tutoring throughout their studies. Implementation however remained uneven. The 1997 Ministerial Decree introduced a formal pre-enrolment system whereby pupils intending to apply to a particular university make an application in the autumn of their final year at school. They are then offered induction sessions providing information on course content and teaching methods as well as on the support available. These sessions put students in a position to assess their suitability for their chosen course. Austria's 1997 University Studies Act introduced a study entry phase which is intended to provide students with as clear a picture as possible of study requirements, statistics on study success and employment opportunities, and profiles of graduates.

Countries with a more selective admission system also found it necessary to improve information and guidance for students. In Ireland and the United Kingdom, university students are usually assigned to a personal tutor who has the task of following their academic progress and helping them with any problems that may arise. In an effort to standardise and improve the guidance offered by different institutions, the United Kingdom Higher Education Quality Council issued guidelines in 1995 to provide a comparable framework for guidance and learner support. These emphasised the fact that guidance should be learner-centred, confidential, impartial, equitable and accessible. In Sweden, the 1993 Higher Education Ordinance re-emphasised students' right of access to course counsellors and careers guidance and required institutions to ensure that prospective students are able to obtain all necessary information about the institution of their choice.

3.3.2. INTRODUCTION OF SHORTER OR MODULAR COURSES

As explained in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching, a number of countries made changes to the structure of courses in order to improve completion rates. These included the introduction of shorter courses with intermediate levels of qualification and the creation of modular or credit-based systems to validate the academic achievements of students changing programmes. Denmark (1993) and Finland (1994-97) introduced a three-year Bachelor's degree and Germany will be introducing such degrees from 1998. The 1998 German Higher Education Framework Act allows for the reduction of the standard

period of study for higher education courses and the introduction of an intermediate examination for all courses lasting over four years. In Spain, the reform introduced by the *Ley Orgánica* in 1983 was intended to improve success rates at universities. It initiated shorter one-cycle courses of three years leading to a *diplomado* which have since been shown to have much higher and constantly improving completion rates and lower dropout rates compared to the four or five-year two-cycle *licenciado* courses. In France, the 1992/93 reform of university courses included the organisation of a first cycle, leading to the *DEUG* diploma, into modules which gave students the possibility of changing course at the end of the first semester or year and of attaining an initial qualification after two years. In Italy, the 1990 reform introduced three levels of university programmes, beginning with three-year (exceptionally two-year) *diploma* courses and was motivated partly by the desire to reduce the dropout rate. The 1997 didactic reform makes the three-year first level cycle a prerequisite for advancement to the second level. In the Netherlands, the implementation of the 1981 Two-Phase Structure Act led to a reduction in the nominal length of most university courses to four years, while the 1996 Higher Education and Research Plan (*HOOP*) gave universities the opportunity to offer three year Bachelor's degrees.

3.3.3. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR INSTITUTIONS

The different systems for financing institutions have been discussed in Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control. In the Netherlands and Finland, the financing of institutions has been increasingly tightly linked to their quality and output in terms of the number of students graduating. Denmark, since the 1994 budget reform, bases its funding on the number of examinations passed, while Sweden links its funding to the number of students and their study attainments.

In the Netherlands, lower funding is given for students who do not obtain a degree. Furthermore, the 1996 Act on the quality and feasibility of study provided financial incentives for institutions to improve the quality of their education and thereby reduce wastage. It also established guidelines for the self-assessment of institutions. In Portugal, the 1997 Framework Act on Higher Education Finance fixed the maximum number of years a student may be counted when determining the amount of funding made available to an institution. This serves as an incentive to move students through the system rapidly, in order to keep the number of eligible students (*estudante elegível*) high. In Sweden, funds are reduced if results are unsatisfactory. In Finland, a new funding system based on target numbers of Master's and doctoral degrees will be implemented by the year 2003. Furthermore, in Finland since the mid-1990s, high quality university teaching has been among the indicators used by the Ministry for allocating performance-based funding to universities while the non-university polytechnics are funded partly on the number of students graduating within the standard course time. In Norway, since 1992, institutions have been awarded a part of their funding on the basis of the average number of weighted credits obtained by their students and additional special funds are allocated on the basis of the number of those graduating with higher degrees.

3.3.4. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR STUDENTS

In many countries, government financial support for students has been made more dependant on successful progress in their studies since 1980, though most such changes took place during the 1990s. The changes often require students both to pass examinations and to finish their studies within a given period.

In the Netherlands, there have been progressive moves towards more performance-related funding during the study period. Since 1996, financial aid to students has taken the form of a *prestatiebeurs*, a conditional loan, which need not be repaid if students pass their exams and graduate within six years. Since 1997, Portugal has been awarding *bolsas de mérito* (merit grants) to the best students in each institution.

Other countries linked aid in the next year to performance in previous years, usually allowing students to repeat one year or semester. The French Community of Belgium and Sweden were already familiar with such systems before 1980, while other countries introduced them during the period under review: Spain (1983), Austria (1985/86), Finland (1992) and Iceland (1992).

A number of countries introduced additional financial rewards to students who obtain good exam results or who complete their course within the standard study period. German students who graduate within the standard period of study with good results have had part of their loan waived since 1974. In Luxembourg, special additional aid has been given to students since 1992, on successful and timely completion of the first study cycle. In Greece, Spain, and Finland (in certain institutions), students may be given financial rewards for outstanding results or for graduating in the minimum time.

All countries imposed some sort of time limit for state financial aid to undergraduate students. A number of countries introduced limits to the period during which students can obtain such aid. In 1988, Denmark introduced a voucher system allowing students to draw financial support for a fixed maximum period, although students are free to interrupt their studies for a certain time and to resume them later without losing their funding. Since 1996, financial aid for German students under *BAföG* (Federal Training Assistance Act) has been available up to the standard period of study. For studies beyond this period students can take out interest-bearing loans. The Netherlands limited grant aid to a maximum of four years in 1996. In 1997, the maximum period for which Portuguese students could draw financial aid was limited to the length of the course plus two years, as long as they could prove a minimum level of academic achievement in the previous year. In Finland, since 1994, financial aid for students has been limited to a total of 55 months for Master's degree courses. Sweden reduced the maximum period for financial aid from eight to six years in 1982.²

3.4. OVERVIEW OF REFORMS

The evidence of this study is that, since 1980, access to higher education has improved in most participating countries for school-leavers with either general or vocational qualifications and for adults with non-traditional qualifications. These improvements in access depended primarily on the ability of the national higher education system to expand in pace with the increasing demand for higher education during the 1980s and early 1990s. There have been relatively few changes both in the selectivity at entry of the different systems and in the selection criteria applied. However, where changes took place they contributed to improving access to higher education for school-leavers with vocational qualifications and mature-age students.

In many countries, additional study places were primarily created on vocationally-oriented courses often at non-university institutions which had recently been created or upgraded to higher education. These courses, many of which were created to respond to the needs of the labour market, sometimes suffered from a lower status and were not always as popular as the traditional university courses. On the other hand, demand for courses leading to the highest status professional qualifications (e.g. human and veterinary medicine, dentistry, engineering, architecture) increased in all countries. Most countries had already limited the number of places on such expensive, practically-based courses before 1980 on the basis of the capacity of the institutions and sometimes also because of government-determined target numbers based on labour market needs. During the period in question, even countries with traditions of open access to higher education such as Belgium, Germany, and Italy began to impose admissions limits on these courses. However, it should be noted that the imposition of limits tends to increase the status and desirability of a course, thereby making an already selective course even more selective.

² For more detailed information on this subject see the publication of the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume I, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe, 1999*.

In Denmark and Norway, increases in the number of higher education places and changes in their deployment have made their higher education systems less selective overall since 1980. In contrast, increases in the number of higher education places offered in Greece and Spain were not sufficient to meet demand, with the result that the selectivity of the system in these countries has increased during the study period. In Greece, this trend has been reversed, at least since 1996, as the number of places in higher education has increased sufficiently due to the establishment of new departments and the introduction of the open-choice study programmes. In Portugal the number of additional study places has increased by 34% during the last four years and in some disciplines, e.g. technology, not all places are being taken up.

In summary, in the majority of countries, whether traditionally highly selective or open access, no fundamental change to the basic entry philosophy has been applied. Entry to the expensive, high status professional courses such as medicine, dentistry, architecture and engineering is limited by governments either directly or through target-led steering and has become increasingly selective. At the same time, higher education capacity has been expanded in professional and vocationally-oriented courses and, also in less costly courses in social sciences and literature. Entry to these courses has tended to become less selective as demand is more fully met. At the same time, this rapid expansion has raised questions in many countries about the quality of the education provided. The introduction of quality control and evaluation procedures is discussed in Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control.

Most countries have introduced initiatives aimed at helping those without general secondary school-leaving qualifications to enter higher education by taking into account their prior experience or vocational qualifications. This move was supported by offering more flexible study programmes which can be combined with the demands of the workplace or family life. However, it appears that, in the majority of countries, such access is mainly to vocationally-oriented courses. Widening access to vocationally-qualified school-leavers and adults with non-traditional qualifications has not only helped to fill places on less popular courses but also satisfied the principles of social justice and encouraged life-long learning. The introduction of more flexible study arrangements for mainstream higher education programmes is discussed in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching. These initiatives are particularly significant in easing access to programmes offered by the open universities which have proved popular with many adults and have often successfully provided a route into full-time higher education.

The study suggests that attempts to widen access to adults have been more recent and less successful in the relatively open university systems in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy and Austria than in the Nordic countries, where encouraging adult continuing education has been an important goal since the early 1980s or even before.

In line with the requirement in many countries to improve the efficiency of their higher education systems, most countries have recently introduced or reinforced initiatives aimed at increasing student completion rates. A major focus has been the improvement of information for prospective students and the provision of continuing support and guidance during their studies. Countries with a tradition of open access were particularly likely to have launched initiatives of this sort during the 1990s. Other measures included changes in course structures, mainly the shortening of courses or the introduction of intermediate qualifications. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands favoured the system of financial incentives for institutions and students to increase completion rates.

CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

This chapter is devoted to reforms that have affected the systems of financial support for students who are engaged in studies leading to a first degree. As a recent study on this subject showed, (European Commission, Eurydice European Unit, 1999) significant variations exist between countries, both in the nature and number of components of the support system. In some countries, support is given to the students' parents in the form of family allowances and/or tax reductions. Reforms of these types of support are not dealt with here. Likewise, where a financial contribution is required of students upon registration, reductions or exemptions are often granted under certain conditions. Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control contains some information on the question of students' personal contributions to the finance of institutions. Some information about financial incentives for course completion is also given in Chapter 3: Access and Wastage. Of the various forms of financial support in operation, this chapter only deals with changes to the cash allowances paid directly to students in the form of grants and/or loans, together with measures relating to services, such as transport, food and accommodation. For a more in-depth discussion of the subject, the reader is referred to the study mentioned above.

4.1. CASH BENEFITS IN THE FORM OF GRANTS AND/OR LOANS

Since 1980, few major reforms have been undertaken with regard to grants and loans. The majority of countries that have had a tradition of offering support mainly or wholly in grant form (Belgium, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Austria and Portugal) have maintained this type of support. Similarly, those that have for a long time combined grants and loans (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Liechtenstein and Norway), or have awarded only loans (Iceland), are continuing in that direction. In Germany, the grant component was abolished in 1983 and reintroduced in a 50% grant - 50% loan combined system in 1990. Among the countries in the first group, some introduced loans during the period under consideration, but without great success. In France and Italy, the possibility of loans guaranteed by the State was introduced in 1991 but loans were not taken up to any great extent. In Greece, loans were introduced in 1991 but abolished in 1995. Only the United Kingdom seems to have succeeded in this area, having put a loan system in place which has progressively replaced the grant system. From 1999/2000, means-tested maintenance grants will be replaced by maintenance loans. Grants are due to be phased out by 1999/2000. Lastly, in Portugal, the Framework Act on Higher Education Finance of 1997 introducing a state benefit in the form of a low-interest loan has yet to be implemented. Only a few selective emergency loans have been awarded by the social services departments.

Within the existing system, reforms have primarily affected the size and number of means-tested grants, or the proportion of the grant component compared to the loan; the interest rates or the loan repayment conditions; how support is linked to academic success and, finally, the limits set for the duration of the award. Belgium, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein have experienced a relatively stable period as regards financial support to students during the last twenty years. In contrast, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries have seen a large number of reforms.

Table 4.1: Types and dates of reforms to grant and/or loan systems between 1980 and 1997

	Size of grants	Grant component to loan component	Degree of dependence on parents' and/or spouse's income	Interest rate charged to the student	Repayment conditions (linked to income or loan period)	Link with academic progress	Time limit to the benefit
European Union							
B fr	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
B nl	↗ 83	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	✕	✕
DK	↗ 88	↗ 88	↘ 80, 86, 96	↘ 82, 88	82	↗ 88, 96	88
D	✕	↘ 83, ↗ 90	✕	✕	✕	↗ 96	✕
EL	✕	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	✕	✕
E	✕	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	✕	✕
F	↗ 84	(-)	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
IRL	↗	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	✕	✕
I	↗ 96	(-)	✕	✕	✕	↗ 94	94
L	✕	✕	✕	92	92	↗ 92	✕
NL	↘ 91, ↗ 92, ↗ >92	↘ 90s	↘ 86, 95	↘ 92	✕	↗ 93	88, 91
A	↗ 92	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	✕	✕
P	>84	(-)	✕	(-)	(-)	↘ 97	97
FIN	↗ 92	↗ 80s, 92	↘ 92	↗ 92	✕	✕	↘ 92
S	↘ <88, ↗ >88	↘ <89, ↗ >89	↘ 80, 88	↗ 88	89	↗ 80s	✕
UK	↘ 90, 98	↘ <90, 98	↘ 90	(-)	90, 98	✕	✕
EFTA/EEA							
IS	(-)	(-)	✕	92	82, 92, 97	↗ 82, 92	✕
LI	↗ 85, 87, 92, 96	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕	✕
No	↗ 90s	↘ <90, ↗ >90	↘ 85	↗ 80s, 90s	89	↗ 90s	✕

Source: Eurydice.

↘ Decrease ↗ Increase ✕ No reform
(-) Not applicable < Before > After

In the majority of countries, before 1980, grants and/or loans were awarded not only according to a student's income but also according to parents' or spouse's income. Sweden ceased taking parents' income into account as part of its award criteria in 1968 and, in Iceland, this criterion has never existed. Norway took student income as the sole criterion on which to base an award, under its pre-1980 system. In Sweden, the spouse's income has not been taken into consideration for the purposes of awarding support since 1980 and, since 1988, it has no longer been included in the calculation of the sum to be repaid. The same system applies in Norway. In Denmark, reductions in the amounts granted related to spouse's income were abolished under the 1980 legislation and the age limit for taking account of parental income was lowered to 22 years. The age limit again became the subject of reform in 1986 and 1996, when it was reduced first to 20 and then to 18 years of age. In Finland, the spouse's and parents' incomes have not been taken into consideration since 1992. In general, countries that offer grants wholly or principally in conjunction with financial support to families with children who are students have retained the level of parental income as a grant award criterion. However, in the Netherlands in 1986, financial support to families was abolished and the basic grant was made available to all students, without regard to their parents' income. Only the supplementary grant still makes reference to this. In 1995, independence of the award from parents' income was extended to loans. In the United Kingdom, maintenance grants were linked to the economic status of students and their families, while loans were not dependent on parental income. However, under the reforms following on from the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998, maintenance grants are being replaced by maintenance loans, part of which will be means-tested. Regarding the size of grants, the principle of automatic indexation has been the norm in most countries for some time. Some countries have introduced changes at this level. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the grant level for the least well-off has been increased annually since 1983 and, since 1998, all grants have been indexed automatically. France undertook a review of the cost

of student living in 1984 and the grant was consequently increased. In Italy, the grant was increased substantially in 1996 within the framework of wider financial reforms: the liberalisation of tuition fees, the introduction of a regional tax levied on all students to fund the social security budget, and the creation of a national fund. In Austria, grant levels were raised considerably in 1992 and the maximum amount awarded to certain students in Austria has since been meant to cover the cost of living. In Portugal, the grant level and number of eligible students has regularly been reviewed since 1984.

By contrast, the income ceiling for grant awards was aligned with the cost of living index in the French Community of Belgium in 1993, but no further revision has been undertaken since then and award conditions have been steadily eroded. In the Netherlands, since the radical reform of 1986 in the course of which a universal basic grant was introduced and family allowance was abolished, the value of the basic grant has diminished steadily since 1991 and that of the supplementary grant, which depends on family income, has increased. In the United Kingdom, grant levels also declined between 1985 and 1995.

In some countries, loans form an integral part of the financial support system. They remain interest-free in Germany for students who finish their studies within certain time limits and in Liechtenstein for those who repay the loan within a maximum period of 6 years after finishing their studies. Elsewhere, costs associated with the loan which are borne by students on repayment have been introduced or revised. Denmark reintroduced state loans at a reduced interest rate in 1982 after having abolished them in favour of straightforward guaranteed bank loans in 1975. In 1992, Luxembourg introduced a very favourable interest rate of 2% on student loans. In the Netherlands, interest-free loans have not been available since 1986.

In Sweden and Norway, state subsidies to the interest rate dropped sharply during the 1980s, thereby raising the cost to the student. Since 1992, Finland has applied market rates to bank loans guaranteed by the State. Since 1992, Norway has applied market rates to student loans. In Iceland, student interest charges were introduced in 1992 on top of the indexation of the capital, introduced some years earlier. This rate is officially fixed at a minimum of 3%.

The increase in the burden of loan costs on the student has to be considered with reference to the evolution of the proportion of financial support awarded as a grant or loan. In Denmark and Finland, the size of the grant compared to the loan increased in the 1980s, reducing the cost borne by the student. In Sweden and Norway, after a long period during which the relative value of the grant diminished, it has progressively increased since the start of the 1990s.

Some countries offering interest-bearing loans have also been faced with the need to introduce changes in repayment conditions. This mainly concerns the Nordic countries, which have modified the link between the graduate's income and the amount to be repaid over a certain period of time. Thus, in Sweden, since 1988, annual repayment amounts have been set according to the beneficiary's income, with a fixed ceiling of 4% of the income. In Norway, since 1987, it has been possible to link repayment to income for a maximum period of 7 years under special conditions. In Iceland, the proportion of taxable income payable was raised to between 5% and 7% in 1992, but then reduced to 4.7% in 1997. In 1992, a decision was taken by the Icelandic Student Loan Fund that student loans should be fully repaid, with repayment starting two years after the successful completion of studies, and not be cancelled after forty years as under the previous regime.

The 1998 Teaching and Higher Education Act introduced changes to the repayment method of student loans in the United Kingdom. Repayments will be made through the tax system and will not begin until a graduate's gross income is over £10,000 a year (to be reviewed annually). Students whose income is above this value will be expected to pay 9% of their marginal income above the threshold. Repayments will be suspended if a graduate's income falls below this level.

In many countries, the use of academic success on entry to higher education as a criterion for awarding financial assistance was abolished before 1980. The few countries that retained this, along with economic criteria, have introduced changes over the last 20 years. Thus in Greece, economic criteria have taken precedence over academic criteria for awarding grants since 1996. In Ireland, academic criteria for grant awards were abolished in 1994. Since 1997, Italy has put less emphasis on achievement criteria based on final secondary school results. Following the example of the public higher education sector, in 1994, Portugal abolished achievement criteria for grant awards in the private sector.

Students' progress in higher education has increasingly become the subject of particular attention in several countries where there has been a tendency for students to prolong their studies. The procedures put in place have differed from country to country, either strengthening the link with achievement or establishing a time limit for assistance. In 1988, Denmark chose as its mechanism the cheque or 'voucher' system under which students can benefit from a certain amount of financial assistance during their studies. The system's novelty is that the student can choose to draw the support either on a continuous basis or else periodically. In the latter case, credits accumulate for periods when support is not taken up and can be used later when required. Since 1996, measures have been taken in Germany to limit the length of studies by replacing the grant plus interest-free loan combination by an interest-bearing loan for those whose studies extend beyond the authorised time limit. Since 1992, Luxembourg has been awarding a special grant to students who finish the first study cycle within a maximum of 3 years (2 years notional study time plus an extra year). In the Netherlands, the law of 1988 simply fixed the length of financial support to 6 years. Academic progress has been taken into consideration since 1993 by the *tempobeurs* system for the continued payment of both the basic and the supplementary grant. If students failed to pass at least 25% of their credit hours, grants were converted into loans. In 1995, the threshold pass level was raised to 50% and in 1996, the system was changed to that of a *prestatiebeurs*. Basic financial support is initially given in the form of a loan that can be converted into a grant if the student passes 50% of the exams during the first year and, as a general rule, completes the studies within 6 years. In Finland, the time limit for the award of financial assistance was reduced in 1992, from 84 months (7 years) to 55 months (4½ years).

In some of the countries that require students to pass their examinations each year in order to keep their grants, the rules have been changed recently. In Portugal, since 1997, students have been allowed to retake twice before they lose a grant, as long as their performance in the previous year was judged as meeting the minimum standards, even if they failed the examinations. In France, the 1998 Student Social Plan introduced the possibility for students to retain their grant, originally awarded for a two-year cycle, for another year even if they fail their examinations. A similar regulation is under debate within the Flemish Community of Belgium.

These changes indicate that systems are tending to converge on one point: the strictest systems are tending to become more flexible while the most lenient are tightening up.

4.2. SUBSIDISED SERVICES

The three principal forms of support linked to services provided specifically for students in higher education are lodgings, transport and food. They can take extremely divergent forms from one country to another and are developed to differing degrees. A fairly detailed description of this type of services and how they are funded is presented in Chapter 4 of the study on financial support for students in higher education in Europe (European Commission, Eurydice, 1999). In general, they have been the object of very few reforms during the last 20 years and only the main changes are outlined here. Generally, subsidised transport and food are offered to students regardless of their means. However this is not the case in Greece, Spain or Italy (since 1993) for meal subsidies.

In relation to transport, measures were taken to reduce transport costs for students in Denmark and in Norway in 1996 and 1985 respectively. Transport costs formed part of the major reform introduced by the 1986 *Wet op de studiefinanciering* in the Netherlands, as a result of which they came to be governed by complex measures for compensation and reimbursement. In 1991, the system was revised by issuing all students with a free public transport pass, with a concomitant reduction in the basic grant. A further modification in 1994 saw students being required to make a financial contribution towards their travel costs to limit the burden borne by the State. Students currently have the choice of Monday-to-Friday passes or weekend passes. Austria removed the right of students to free travel in 1995.

Regarding accommodation, in 1982, France relaxed access to the system for individual accommodation allowances for students depending on their parents' income. Since 1991, the sole criterion for the award of this allowance has been the student's income. Following the consultation process of 1990 on higher education, France developed a social plan envisaging an increase in accommodation, help with transport costs and subsidised places in university restaurants.

On the issue of subsidised meals, the level of family income below which students receive free meals has been indexed in Greece since 1983. In Spain, since 1983, support made available by universities has been offered on the basis of economic and academic criteria which are incompatible with those used to award state grants. In Italy, after a long period during which meals were offered free of charge, a minimum charge was introduced in 1994, along with an increase in grants. In 1997, help with meals hitherto only given to students with grants was extended to students fulfilling the conditions required to obtain a grant but who, for budgetary reasons, had not been able to obtain one. Portugal, on the other hand, is offering all students meals at subsidised prices. In these countries, parallel to this measure, subsidised services have been progressively replaced by cash benefits.

Finally, in Greece, where books are offered free to all students annually, a debate has begun on this system, which appears evermore costly.

CHAPTER 5: CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

This chapter examines reforms relating to the curriculum and teaching in higher education institutions in the participating European countries. For the purposes of this study, 'curriculum' will be broadly interpreted as including the structure and content of higher education courses as well as the type of higher education qualifications they lead to. 'Teaching' covers the pedagogical approach, the student assessment methods as well as training requirements and recruitment procedures for higher education teaching staff and the evaluation of teaching quality.

This is not an attempt to describe in detail the structure and content of the vast range of higher education courses offered by the participating countries. As such information is already available in European Commission publications and databases¹, this chapter seeks to focus primarily on changes in the curriculum and teaching of higher education institutions since 1980.

Table 1.1 in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change shows that in most countries, course planning was the subject of reform during the period of study. As these changes coincided with the transfer of responsibility for many aspects of the curriculum to the higher education institutions, the number of reforms actually derived from legislation declined during the period under consideration. Teaching and assessment on the other hand, were never documented as being at the centre of reform in the majority of countries no doubt because, in all countries, teaching and assessment methods are primarily the responsibility of the individual institution or teacher.

Apart from important structural changes related mainly to the upgrading of institutions offering vocational training, much change in the area of curriculum and teaching was gradual and progressive, emanating from national or institutional policy discussions or planning processes, and in a number of countries was first put into practice through pilot projects. There are often large differences between institutions within the same country in the extent to which they have embraced change.

The chapter attempts to outline the main directions of change while simultaneously recognising that the increasing diversity of curricula and teaching methods, both between and within countries, is a goal and a strength of higher education provision. The chapter looks first at changes in the curriculum, then at developments in teaching and assessment and presents an overall view of reforms in the final section.

5.1. THE CURRICULUM

A major reason for change in the structure and content of higher education courses during the period considered was the increase in the number of entrants to higher education. This meant that in most countries studied the highly theoretical, academic courses traditionally offered by universities were no longer appropriate for all students, leading to the need to offer more practice-related, vocationally-oriented options. At the same time, due to the impact of economic factors, government policies in many countries focused on tightening the links between higher education and the needs of the labour market for highly-qualified employees. Higher education was increasingly expected by governments to tailor its course offer towards areas with current or predicted skill shortages and to be flexible in the re-direction of resources. Both of the above influences have led to an increase in the number and size of vocational

¹ Eurybase database.

programmes offered at higher education level and to a concomitant desire to increase the status of vocationally-oriented courses. In most countries, therefore, this has particularly stimulated the expansion of the non-university sector.

The following sections look at the factors underlying change in the higher education course offer and the related policy developments.

5.1.1. FACTORS UNDERLYING CHANGE

The study seems to suggest that there are two separate, and somewhat contradictory trends in relation to the planning of higher education courses. The first is the strong trend towards giving higher education institutions more autonomy over their administrative affairs, including course planning. The second is the intention, mainly promoted by public authorities, to link the course offer more closely to the economic and social environment and in particular the labour market. A closer look however reveals that the trend towards increased links with the world of work is to a certain extent the consequence of greater institutional autonomy. As was shown in Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control, a number of countries link the increased independence of institutions from government to their obligation to include members of the business or student community on their management teams or at least to consult their views. Together with the reforms introduced to institutional funding (formula-based funding, funding by contract, increases in tuition fees) this has meant that institutions depend to a growing extent on the support of their sponsors and students. In many instances, this has led to closer links with the labour market and initiated curricular reforms aimed at increasing the employment value of academic qualifications.

Table 5.1 shows these changes over successive five-year periods, indicating whether they applied to the university or non-university sector or to all of higher education. Whilst the dates given relate to the enactment of legislation or publication of policy documents on which the changes were based, the actual implementation of change was usually a gradual process which may well have begun before this date and/or may often have continued for several years afterwards.

Table 5.1: Factors underlying change in the higher education course offer and the year the relevant legislation was passed or the policy document published

A. Institutions increasingly responsible for course planning within a general national framework					
	<1980	1980-85	1986-90	1991-95	>1995
University sector	D, F, EL, IRL, UK, IS, LI	DK: 1982 & 1985 EL: 1982 E: 1983	I: 1990 P: 1989	B fr: 1994 B nl: 1991 IRL NL: 1993 FIN: 1994 S: 1993	L: 1997 NL: 1996 A: 1997 I: 1997
Non-university sector	DK, EL, IRL, UK	EL: 1982	NL: 1986	B fr: 1995 B nl: 1994 IRL A: 1993 FIN: 1991	NL: 1996 NO: 1996

United Kingdom: Course validation for the non-university sector was undertaken by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) prior to the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Individual institutions were, however, responsible for the planning, teaching and examination of courses.

B. Closer links to the labour market

	<1980	1980-85	1986-90	1991-95	>1995
University sector	D, S, FIN, UK	E: 1983 F: 1984 IRL UK: 1985	I: 1990 IS: 1988 S: 1987 UK: 1987	DK: 1993 FIN: 1993 S: 1992 UK: 1992	A: 1997 I: 1997 P: 1997 S: 1996,1997 IS: 1997
Non-university sector	DK, D, L, UK	EL: 1983 IRL: L: 1984 P: 1979/80 UK: 1985	L: 1990 UK: 1987	B fr: 1995 A: 1993 FIN: 1991 LI: 1992 UK: 1992	I: 1997

Source: Eurydice.

Denmark: The 1973 Administration of Universities Act introduced cooperation with the labour market, but these links became firmly established only by the 1993 Consolidation Act on Universities.

5.1.1.1. Devolution of responsibility for course planning

Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control (Table 2.1) shows that, in 1980, the planning of course structure and content in the university sector was controlled by the national government (in Germany at *Länder* level) in most European countries except Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Such control was often achieved through the issuing of detailed legal regulations, or tables covering all the different courses offered and made the system extremely inflexible. During the period considered, as discussed in Chapter 2, most countries have granted institutions more autonomy over the content, and sometimes the structure of their course offer with a view to increasing flexibility and responsiveness to the labour market. This change often occurred simultaneously with a general reform of the higher education structure, which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, the Government has in all instances retained the right to define a general framework within which such planning must take place together with the right to monitor the quality of the courses offered. It is notable that in all countries with a binary system, universities have been given more and earlier freedom in this respect than non-university institutions.

Denmark, Greece, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands gave institutions more control over course planning as part of major reforms of the higher education system during the early part of the study period. In Denmark, Spain and Italy, this autonomy was given to the university sector only, whereas Greece granted both sectors autonomy in course planning simultaneously. The Netherlands extended equivalent autonomy to the non-university sector four years after it was given to the universities.

In Greece, rigid central control of courses was replaced in 1982 by the autonomy of universities (*AE/s*) and technological education institutions (*TE/s*) to introduce new study programmes, to decide whether a course is optional or compulsory, to establish assessment procedures, to determine the length of courses and to decide on the teaching methods to be used. In Spain, courses leading to recognised national qualifications such as *diplomado* or *licenciado*, have to be constructed within common guidelines and approved by the Council of Universities. However, since 1983, universities have had the freedom to design curricula as well as the combinations of compulsory and optional subjects, course lengths, links with other courses and assessment methods.

In the Netherlands, institutions in the university and the non-university sectors were given more responsibility for course development at separate times as part of the change from government regulation of higher education to steering through development plans. In 1981, the Two-Phase Structure Act restructured university courses and required institutions to draw up their own regulations on teaching and assessment based on a national framework. In 1986, the upgrading of higher professional education from

secondary to higher education level gave similar responsibilities to these institutions. The 1993 *WHW* brought an end to the national curricular guidelines for university education as laid down in the Academic Statute (*Academisch Statut*). In the 1996 Dutch Higher Education and Research Plan (*HOOP*), institutional autonomy was taken further to encourage greater differentiation, and higher education institutions were given greater freedom to vary the length of the courses they offered. However, courses are only eligible for state funding if they are registered in the Central Register of Higher Education Courses (*CROHO*).

Italian universities were required to set up degree course councils to oversee course delivery in 1980, but the national regulative framework remained. In 1990, there was a reform aimed at reducing dropout and increasing the range of courses offered in order to respond to changing labour market needs. As part of this reform, universities were apparently given more responsibility for defining the structure and content of their study programmes, but constraints imposed by the national curriculum tables remained very strong. These tables were suppressed by the 1997 Law on the autonomy of institutions.

In Portugal, in 1980, new higher education courses could only be created via a legal act issued by the Ministry of Education. As part of the process of granting greater autonomy to universities, the 1988 Law on the autonomy of universities stipulated that, from now on, universities only had to register their courses with the Ministry of Education, while other institutions still had to have their programmes approved by it.

Between 1991 and 1995, Denmark, France and Sweden gave universities (and university colleges in Sweden) more autonomy in the planning of courses. In 1993 in Denmark, as part of a move towards increased institutional autonomy, universities were given greater freedom to vary the content of programmes of which the particular intention was to keep up with labour market needs, and to decide on the combination of courses they would offer. Today the Government still lays down the overall structure of the programmes in consultation with the educational institutions. The programmes an institution offers must be approved by the Ministry, which consults the relevant national advisory board about the professional/subject quality and the need for the programme in question.

In France, the so-called *maquettes*, describing in detail the structure and content of each university course leading to national degrees, were revised and simplified in the course of restructuring the first two university cycles in 1992/93. Although decentralisation was not one of the aims of the reform, it provided an opportunity for universities to initiate change by applying for recognition of new courses, often more closely responding to local needs.

Swedish higher education institutions were given responsibility for course planning in 1993, as part of the decentralisation resulting from the Higher Education Act and Ordinance. Under the centrally-controlled planning structure which had existed since 1977, higher education courses had formed part of study programmes with a fixed, government-prescribed content leading to specific degrees (line system). This was replaced by a system where the Higher Education Ordinance only stipulated the objectives for general and professional degrees and the length of study programmes.

The trend towards giving Austrian universities more control over the curriculum began with the requirement that institutions set up curricular committees to oversee the content of courses. In 1997, the Austrian University Studies Act replaced a complex set of higher education study laws by a set of flexible legal instruments aimed at making training more demand-oriented and the programmes more economical and geared towards the labour market. Universities and their curricular committees were given responsibility for drawing up their own course schedules covering courses and options, examinations and teaching programmes.

In Ireland, Finland and the United Kingdom, governments have traditionally had little control over the planning and content of university courses which, since before 1980, have primarily been the responsibility of the institutions themselves. In the non-university sector, courses were accredited and planned by bodies such as the National Council for Education Awards in Ireland and, until 1992, the Council for National Academic Awards in the United Kingdom. However, recent reforms in the United Kingdom have led to some steering of the courses offered by institutions through the funding system.

The remaining countries, which showed relatively little tendency to decentralise control over the planning of higher education courses during the period under review, included Belgium (non-university sector only in the French Community), Germany and Norway, all of which have traditions of central control of higher education, either by the national government in Norway, at *Land* level in Germany, or by the organising authorities (*pouvoir organisateur/inrichtende macht*) in Belgium.

5.1.1.2. Closer links with the labour market

In a study carried out for the European Commission, Green et al. (1997, p. 141) identified a 'more explicit and deliberate articulation of higher education systems with existing economies' as one of the major areas of convergence between European countries. This interaction has been achieved through changes both at national level and, more importantly, at institutional level with the improved targeting of the course offer as an important aim. The increasing importance of institutional links with the local economy is paralleled by the trend, described above, towards institutions to having more autonomy over the planning of their course offer, and the changes often took place as part of the same reform process.

Table 5.1 shows that the highest proportion of changes in this area took place between 1991 and 1995 but also suggests that most changes during the study period affected the university sector.

Such changes have included the setting up of national advisory councils with representatives of industry, commerce and local or regional government to advise the government on the national higher education course offer and the inclusion of external representatives on the governing bodies of institutions. Furthermore, the use of external examiners from industry in the assessment of students and in the quality assessment of courses, the provision of work placements for vocational students, joint research, and the increase in in-service course provision for employees have all contributed to the improvement of links between institutions and their local economy.

Due to their emphasis on vocationally-oriented courses, and the local links which were often an important factor in their establishment, non-university institutions were more open to the influence of the labour market in most countries than the universities, which were sometimes opposed to the establishment of such ties. The motivation for establishing a non-university, vocational/technological sector in a number of countries during the period studied was primarily the expansion of the labour market-related course offer at higher education level. However, since links between the non-university sector and the labour market were often already well-established before the study period, the main focus of reform after 1980, in countries with a binary higher education system, was on the extension of those links to the universities.

Although discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6: Internationalisation, the signing of the Sorbonne Declaration by Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom in May 1998 deserves a mention here, as the four signatories commit themselves to promoting a common higher education framework with improved graduate employability as one of its aims.

In Luxembourg, work placements have proven important in reinforcing links with the labour market. In Portugal, the Government has been the main instigator of linking course development to the labour

market, but it is the institutions that played the major role in implementing the necessary mechanisms. In the 1990s, with the support of EU funds, two consecutive *PRODEP* programmes were established providing training for academic staff and internships for graduates in certain areas, such as engineering, technology, science, economy and business administration. In 1998, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity establishing a national observatory to study the insertion of graduates into the labour market and their further professional development.

In Austria, a mechanism was established in 1997 to ensure that the planning of university courses also took account of the views of the labour market. The University Studies Act required university curricular committees to consult with employers' representatives about any proposed change to courses.

The Finnish economic recession of the early 1990s prompted the Government to issue new decrees on degree and course structures taking into account the needs of a changed labour market. Since 1994, within the framework of these decrees, all higher education institutions have been free to design and develop their courses, degrees and curricula, although polytechnics must still have their degrees and programmes approved by the Ministry of Education. In 1996, the reform was extended with the aim of facilitating the movement of students between universities and/or study programmes and of enhancing the quality of education, including its international comparability.

In Belgium, Ireland and Norway developments bringing the labour market and higher education institutions closer together were focused initially on the non-university sector, though their influence frequently extended to the university sector. In Ireland, the Universities Act 1997 includes among the objects of a university the following - (i) to support and contribute to the realisation of national economic and social development and (ii) to educate, train and retrain higher level professional, technical and managerial personnel. In Ireland, the emphasis on the development of technological higher education courses during the study period has been associated with the recognition that the links between higher education and business need to be strengthened. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the National Board for Science and Technology (NBST) and its successors Eolas and Enterprise Ireland have been active in this area. Both the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium have developed their non-university, vocationally-oriented higher education provision during the study period, but they have also seen trends towards universities offering courses which are more closely related to the labour market.

In Norway, the non-university sector was reorganised in 1994. The resulting state colleges play an important role in regional development and decentralisation of higher education as did their predecessors, the regional and vocational colleges. Those offering courses in engineering, business administration or other relevant subjects are encouraged to cooperate with local business and industry as part of the local or regional 'innovation chain'. The 1995 Universities and Colleges Act brought universities and colleges under the same legal framework and established *Norgesnett* (Network Norway), a national higher education and research network based on cooperation and communication between institutions. The governing principle of the network is that new study programmes should be considered in relation to an overall national plan and, from 1998, the *Norgesnettrådet* (Network Norway Council) is being set up to advise the Minister in this area.

In the remaining countries, the changes during the study period focused primarily on the strengthening of links between the university sector and the labour market, often through changes in institutional governance or consultation requirements (Denmark, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom) or through regionalisation (France and Iceland). In Denmark, the strengthening of the influence of representatives of potential employers of future graduates and of other educational institutions, so-called 'receivers', over the planning and content of courses offered by universities was a deliberate policy during the 1990s. The 1993 Consolidation Act on Universities required that at least two of the external members appointed to the governing bodies of institutions were representing 'receivers' with an expert knowledge of education and research. Furthermore, at least one-third of the external examiners who contribute to

the assessment of students and to the quality assurance of courses, must be potential employers. In addition, representatives of business and industry are members of the National Advisory Boards, which advise the Ministry of Education.

In Spain, the aim of reforms relating to university courses has been two-fold (i) the reorganisation of the study structure into distinct cycles and (ii) the development of a curriculum which takes account of economic and social reality, so that universities can serve the needs of a changing labour market as well as carry out research. The Act on University Reform from 1983 gave universities the academic freedom to define their own curricula and degree structure. Since 1987, in order to receive official, nation-wide recognition, study courses and degrees must however conform to certain general guidelines established by the Council of Universities.

In Sweden, the regional boards, which were set up in 1977 to strengthen links between the university colleges and the region in which they were situated, were again abolished in 1988. The representation of the social partners and the local authorities was transferred to the governing boards of the higher education institutions. The majority of these boards are appointed by the Government and, as they have become increasingly powerful as a result of the devolution of responsibility to institutions, they have been required to include more and more external members. Since 1988, the majority of board members had to be representatives from trade and industry, local and regional authorities, political parties and the social partners and, from 1998, the main professional interest of the person chairing the board must lie outside the institution concerned. The importance of close cooperation between universities and university colleges, and society at large has been stressed. The 1992 amendment to the Higher Education Act stipulates that this cooperation and the duty to inform the public about the institutions' activities is the third task of higher education besides teaching and research.

In the United Kingdom, the 1985 Green Paper, *The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s*, stated that the design and content of higher education courses directly relevant to jobs should be adjusted regularly in the light of advice sought from employers. The subsequent 1987 White Paper called for more collaboration with industry and employers in the provision of courses. Most higher education institutions responded to this advice by taking into consideration not only the needs of employers but also the needs of society. More vocationally-oriented courses were introduced and the curricula of non-vocational courses were adapted to cover key skills such as information and communications technologies. The 1991 White Paper, *Higher Education: a New Framework*, supported an increase in the provision of more two-year full-time diploma courses, particularly those with a vocational emphasis. An increase in the number of students studying science, engineering and technology courses was also encouraged. In Scotland, a developing trend for one- and two-year sub-degree higher education courses to be undertaken in Further Education Colleges was strengthened by the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992.

In France, closer links have gradually developed between universities and regional economies through the expansion of contract-based funding. The decentralisation acts of the mid-1980s stimulated links between the regions and their local universities and have, since 1990, led to a series of agreements between the State and the regions to finance construction programmes at higher education institutions. Since 1994, the regions, in consultation with the universities, have developed regional higher education schemes, which include the provision of courses adapted to the regions' economic needs.

In Iceland, the establishment of the University of Akureyri in 1988 marked a new emphasis on the link between the economy of the regions and the higher education system. The courses offered at the university reflected the emphasis on practice-based courses in nursing, fisheries, business administration and teacher education. Furthermore, the 1997 legislation which increased the autonomy of the higher education institutions also required the appointment of two external members to university governing councils.

Amongst the countries where no changes were discernible in this area were Germany and the Netherlands, which both had a well-established non-university sector with good links to business and the labour market before 1980. Germany has intensified this cooperation by the more systematic incorporation of one or two semesters of practical experience into non-university study courses. The Danish non-university sector also has a long tradition of close links with the labour market.

5.1.2. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO REFORMS OF COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Four main areas of change were identified:

- the establishment of a non-university, vocational higher education sector
- the merging of vocationally-oriented institutions and the upgrading of courses to higher education level
- the introduction of shorter initial university degree courses and
- the introduction or reinforcement of flexible, modular, credit-based courses.

The main common trend in these developments was the apparent convergence between course structures in the university and non-university or vocational sectors in most countries. However, the distinction between countries offering academic and vocational courses in two separate higher education sectors, often reflected by an academic/vocational divide in upper secondary education, and those seeking to unify their entire higher education sector is still valid. As Green et al. (1997) showed, the majority of European countries have maintained a binary divide in higher education, despite the convergence in course structures observed since 1980. In Germany, there is an ongoing, very controversial debate on moving university programmes with a vocational orientation into the *Fachhochschule* sector. In the Flemish Community of Belgium (1995), the Netherlands (1992) and Norway (1995), university and non-university institutions were brought under the same legal framework but the distinctions between the courses offered by the two sectors were on the whole maintained. Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal, Finland and Liechtenstein all established a non-university, vocational higher education sector, thereby instituting a binary divide in higher education during the period under review. In contrast, in Sweden, the higher education sector had already been unified in 1977, before the start of the study period and in the United Kingdom (except Scotland), many non-university higher education institutions gained university status following the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 also made it possible for Higher Education Institutions in Scotland to apply to the Privy Council for powers to award their own degrees. Since 1992, seven institutions have been granted the power to award their own degrees and five have been granted a university title.

Developments shown in Table 5.2 have led to a course structure of equivalent value in both the university and non-university sectors in many countries with a binary divide in higher education. The non-university sector may continue to offer short, lower-level courses and the universities continue to have a monopoly of research-based doctoral courses, but the intermediate levels have moved closer and closer during the study period. This convergence has also encouraged and facilitated the movement of students, primarily from the non-university to the university sector.

Table 5.2: Policy developments related to reforms of course structure and content

		B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
Establishment of non-university, vocational higher education	<1980	●	●	●	70			●	●		79	68					66			●
	1980-85					83								79/80						
	1986-90						90													
	1991-95												93		91				92	
	>1995									97										
Merging of vocationally-oriented institutions and upgrading of courses to higher education	<1980	77	77		70												●			
	1980-85	84	84			82					83	85								81
	1986-90	90					90	89	89		90			88						89/90
	1991-95	95	91, 94				93		92	90		92			91, 95		92		92	91, 94, 95
	>1995									97		96			97			97		96
Introduction of shorter initial university degree courses of 2 or 3 year duration	<1980						70	66, 73									●	●	●	●
	1980-85						83													
	1986-90									90										
	1991-95			93											94	93				
	>1995				98			99					99	97						
Introduction or reinforcement of flexible, modular credit-based courses, including open and distance learning	<1980				74		72									●	●	70s		
	1980-85			82								84		80				85		
	1986-90			90			87			90				88				87, 90		90
	1991-95		95					92/93							94	93	91			
	>1995		97		98	97													97	96

Source: Eurydice.

< Before

> After

● Precise year not reported

- Denmark:** A non-university, vocational higher education sector has existed in Denmark for the past 40 years and was extended during the period of this study.
- Italy:** A tertiary vocational system, newly established in 1997, operates on an experimental basis. The Law of 1990 planned the introduction of a credit-based system, but its implementation only got under way in 1997.
- Iceland:** Although very common before 1980, it was only with the Framework Law on Higher Education of 1997 that all courses were required to be credit-based.
- Liechtenstein:** Since its accession to the EEA in 1995 and the participation in the European action programmes, Liechtenstein has started to modularise its study programmes.
- Norway:** Credit-based courses were not introduced via a legal act, but have been phased in since the 1950s and are in general use throughout the country.

5.1.2.1. Establishment of a non-university, vocational higher education sector

Countries which established specialised institutions for the provision of vocational higher education during the study period were Greece, Spain, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Finland and Liechtenstein. However, most countries made subsequent provision to extend links with business, industry and the local economy to the universities.

In 1990, the *LOGSE* introduced higher grade vocational training (*formacion profesional de grado superior*) to Spain as part of non-university higher education. Courses have a modular structure, which favours close links with the business community and allows for the adaptation of courses to the changing technological, economic and social environment. Greece established the technological education institutions (*TEIs*) in 1983. These were oriented towards the application of technological

knowledge and up-to-date professional practice and, in addition to theoretical knowledge, aimed at providing students with the qualifications necessary to practice a trade. At the same time a Council of Technological Training was set up with representation from scientific, professional and social organisations to advise the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs on the further development of *TEIs* and, in the meantime, 25 new *TEI* departments have been created.

In Luxembourg, most reforms during the study period have been aimed at the creation of a vocationally-oriented, non-university higher education sector. These have consisted primarily of the upgrading or creation of higher education courses for teachers, educational child care staff and in technology. The increased autonomy given to the Higher Institute of Technology in 1996 included the responsibility for the provision of university-level education in preparation for technical executive posts in the production and services sectors and for cementing relations with industry (practical training in companies, applied research). In Italy, a system of higher technical training (*formazione integrale superiore*) was established in 1997 on an experimental basis. The reinforcement of this system is strongly recommended by industry, business and labour organisations.

The Austrian *Fachhochschulen* were established in 1993 to offer science-based, practice-oriented, higher education as an alternative to the more academic university courses. Just at the start of the period under consideration, in 1979/80, the Portuguese Government created polytechnic institutions in an effort to diversify higher education to areas previously not covered by higher education. One of the most significant developments in Finnish higher education was the creation of a new non-university sector in 1991 by upgrading vocational secondary education. The polytechnics were based on existing regional, vocational training colleges and were intended to contribute to regional economic development. Although originally introduced as an experimental project, given their success, polytechnics were soon established on a permanent basis and in the academic year 1997/98, 16 permanent and 21 temporary polytechnics were in operation. Liechtenstein established a *Fachhochschule* in 1992 to provide higher education courses in vocational subjects as well as in-service training. Great importance is attached to cooperation with industry and commerce.

5.1.2.2. Merging of vocationally-oriented institutions and upgrading of courses

Changes relating to the merging of vocationally-oriented institutions and the upgrading of vocational courses have been grouped together since, in many countries, they were closely associated. They arose from the desire to raise the status of vocational higher education, which often had its origins in the secondary school sector, and to create institutions of comparable size to the universities. The process of upgrading tended to begin with the lengthening of individual courses (e.g. teacher training) to bring them up to higher education or university level, and to culminate in the introduction of a qualification structure to all non-university institutions with longer degree courses equivalent to those at universities. This new common structure often also included the right for non-university graduates to transfer to higher level, related courses in the university sector.

In many countries, such changes in the status of vocational courses were part of a wider and often year-long gradual process of convergence between the university and non-university sector which also affected other areas such as the autonomy of institutions.

The different stages in the convergence process can be exemplified by looking at the reforms in Belgium. Here, teacher training for nursery and primary teachers was extended from two to three years in 1984 and the length of other courses in the non-university sector was gradually increased from two to three or four years over the next decade. However, it was not until after the linguistic Communities had taken over responsibility for higher education in 1989 that more extensive reorganisation of the non-university sector took place, separately in the French and Flemish Communities. In 1995, the 106 non-university institutions of the French Community were merged and restructured to form 30 *Hautes écoles* with increased

autonomy. Although planned since 1970, it was only in 1999 that the French Community put in place the necessary mechanisms for transfers between the different types of higher education, thus reinforcing the links between the university and non-university sectors. In the Flemish Community, in 1991, the two-cycle non-university programmes were recognised as being at the same level as university courses. In 1994, all short-type education at non-university institutions was extended from two to three or four years to produce a common course structure which comprised one-cycle, three-year vocational courses and two-cycle four or five-year degree courses equivalent to university degrees. At the same time the course syllabuses were rewritten and 163 institutions were merged to form 29 *hogescholen*.

The upgrading of individual courses, particularly teacher training courses, was observed in many countries, mainly during the 1980s and usually involved the lengthening of courses and the rewriting of curricula. In Greece, pre-school and primary teacher training courses were upgraded to higher education level in 1982. In France, all teacher training courses were upgraded to university level with the setting up of the *IUFM* in 1989. In Italy, all training for nursery and primary teachers was upgraded to university level by Law 341 in 1990, but for teacher training the implementing regulations did not come into effect before 1998. Luxembourg nursery and primary teacher training courses were upgraded and lengthened in 1983 with the establishment of a non-university teacher training institute while the training for educational child care staff (*éducateurs gradués*) followed in 1990. Portugal upgraded a number of courses to higher education by moving them to the newly created polytechnic institutions, such as nursing training in 1988. In Finland, nursery teacher training became university level in 1995.

In other countries, entire institutions or sectors of education were upgraded from non-university to university level or from secondary to higher, non-university education, often by merging several institutions of a similar type. They were frequently given equivalent autonomy and responsibility to that of universities and were often brought under the same legislative framework. In Ireland, the National Institutes of Higher Education were upgraded to university level in 1989 and the non-university regional technical colleges were given a high degree of institutional autonomy in 1992, before being changed to institutes of technology in 1998. In the Netherlands, all non-university education was upgraded from secondary to higher education level in 1986 and more than 350 institutions were merged into 85 much larger institutions. The 1992 Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (*WHW*) brought both the university and non-university sector under the same legal framework, giving equivalent levels of autonomy to institutions and equal status to qualifications from both sectors, though the distinction between them remained. In the United Kingdom, the polytechnics (and their Scottish equivalent) and, subject to satisfying certain criteria, other higher education institutions were permitted to adopt the title of university, following the passing of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Acts. In Iceland, four teacher training institutes were merged and upgraded to form the University College of Education in 1997, while in Liechtenstein, the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* (formerly the *Liechtensteinische Ingenieurschule*) was upgraded to a higher education institution in 1992. In Norway, a series of extensions of the legislation from 1980 onwards led to the gradual upgrading of courses offered by regional and vocational colleges. This began with the extension of the 1970 Act on Examinations and Degrees and the chapter on examinations and degrees of the 1989 University and University Colleges Act to the non-university sector, which entitled these institutions to confer the university-level *cand. mag.* degree. The process included the upgrading of the academic requirements for staff members, the length of study programmes and the content of curricula. It culminated in the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act, which gave non-university colleges equivalent autonomy to universities and brought both sectors together under Network Norway.

In Denmark, Spain, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, short, sub-degree higher education programmes, which had often been derived from secondary-level vocational courses, were expanded and their standards regulated during the 1990s. In Denmark, the short-cycle vocational programmes were reformed and regulated in 1997 to improve their quality. In Spain, the 1990 *LOGSE* legislation established new one-cycle vocational training courses, and regulations governing such courses were issued in 1993. In Luxembourg, two-year vocational training courses leading to the *brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS)* were established in 1990. Finally, in the United Kingdom, an increase in the provision of

two-year, vocational sub-degree courses was proposed in the 1991 White Paper. The 1997 Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) proposed that the provision of such courses should be expanded. Further education colleges can provide courses of higher education, particularly at sub-degree level. In Scotland, Higher National Certificate/Diploma courses (of one or two years) are further education courses which were given higher education recognition in 1992.

As mentioned above, both universities and non-university institutions began to offer higher level vocationally-oriented degrees during the 1990s in the French Community of Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands. These were often created at the initiative of the institutions themselves, were sometimes called Master's degrees and were not always recognised parts of the national qualifications structure.

In the French Community of Belgium, universities have begun establishing new sections and options, particularly specialised vocationally-oriented postgraduate courses (e.g. *DEC - diplôme d'études complémentaires*, *DEA - diplôme d'études approfondies* and *DES - diplôme d'études spécialisées* in the university sector, and *DESS - diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées* for long-type non-university education) or in-service training for employees. Spanish universities have begun to offer professional specialisation courses since 1983 (*LRU*) leading to qualifications which are not nationally recognised such as the Master's degree. In France, universities increased their provision of third cycle (postgraduate) vocational courses. These include the *DESS*, a one-year business course to follow the *maîtrise* degree, which, although already created in 1973, proliferated during the period under consideration, and the *DNTS (diplôme national de technologie spécialisée)* introduced in 1994 and intended for graduates from vocational short cycle studies. In contrast, the *magistère* course, a three-year interdisciplinary course offering similar final qualifications to the *DESS*, was discontinued in the early 1990s. It is also worth noting that the whole structure of higher education programmes in France is currently under review. In Italy, the new *scuole di specializzazione* (schools for the specialisation of *laurea* degree holders) will be set up in 1999 to provide specialist postgraduate courses for secondary school teachers as well as for law and forensic science. In the Netherlands, demand for higher level courses has led some of the non-university *hogescholen* to give their students the opportunity to gain a postgraduate university degree by running joint Master's degree courses with foreign universities since 1996. In Finland, discussion has started about the creation of a post-polytechnic, non-university degree system, at least in some fields of study. In Norway, some of the teacher training colleges were given the right to award higher degrees in the 1970s, limited to school-relevant disciplines without parallel in the university sector. Around 1990, many of the regional colleges also started offering higher degree courses in cooperation with the universities.

No major changes in vocational course status took place in Germany during the period under review because the merging of vocationally-oriented institutions and the upgrading of such courses had taken place in the *Fachhochschulen* before 1980. Sweden already had a unified higher education system in 1980 and made no differentiation between the structure of the academic and vocational courses offered.

5.1.2.3. Introduction of shorter initial university degree courses

Although the non-university sector in most countries continued to offer short sub-degree, vocational courses in line with local needs, during the 1990s, both university and non-university institutions in a number of countries began to offer short, postgraduate-level, vocationally-oriented courses. In some countries they were aimed at attracting foreign students and therefore at stimulating international mobility. In others, they reflected the ambition of the non-university sector to offer higher degrees, at that time the unique preserve of the universities.

The trend of offering a two or three-year initial degree course at university which gives access to the next level of university courses complements the upgrading seen in the vocational sector and has facilitated the establishment of equivalent qualification structures in the two sectors. In 1980, university degree courses in many European countries lasted a minimum of five years and were often highly academic.

The lack of intermediate qualifications meant that students who did not complete a course, or pass their final exams, were left without any recognition of their years of study. The great increase in entry to university courses has led to most countries introducing a system of higher education consisting of successive two or three-year levels or cycles, each ending with a higher education qualification. In many countries, only those who do well enough at the end of the previous cycle may proceed to the next level. In some, the first cycle includes a wide range of vocationally-oriented courses aimed at students who do not necessarily wish to extend their studies beyond this first level. These courses run alongside longer, more general courses in the humanities and sciences for those who aim at higher academic degrees. The highest level usually consists of research-based doctoral courses or highly specialised vocational courses with selective entry. Traditional university courses such as medicine and law are rarely included in the new course structure.

In Denmark, a three-year Bachelor's degree programme was introduced in 1993 with an additional two years' study leading to the *candidatus* degree. In Spain, degree courses were restructured into distinct cycles in 1983. Some study courses offering a vocationally-oriented degree comprise only one cycle, but most courses will comprise two cycles whereby the degree is only awarded after the completion of the second cycle. Students can then continue with a third cycle aimed at scientific, technical or artistic specialisation. The most innovative element in the new course structure was the introduction of second-cycle-only education, which is accessed via complementary training courses or on the basis of first-cycle qualifications.

In Italy, in 1990, the Law on the reorganisation of university teaching introduced a three-level degree structure of (i) first level studies, lasting two or three years and leading to the *diploma universitario*, offering basic university education, particularly in technological and commercial areas (ii) second level *laurea* courses (which are an alternative to the *diploma* courses and not a continuation) lasting four to six years and providing general university education in a specific field of study and (iii) the third level doctorate and *diploma di specializzazione* following the *laurea* and lasting two or more years and focusing on specialist advanced knowledge or skills. This reorganisation responded to a need for courses adapted to different levels of study, and aimed to reduce the dropout rate and to create new professional courses to meet labour market needs. The objective has not been achieved, mainly because the *diploma* proved less attractive than the traditional *laurea*. In order to combat this shortcoming, the 1997 reform places the second level *laurea* no longer in parallel with, but as a progression from, the first level.

In the Netherlands, the 1981 Act introduced a two-tier structure into higher education with an initial four-year stage aimed at a broad range of students and a second, selective stage of postgraduate programmes. The change was intended to make university education more suited to the increased number of students entering and to reduce the dropout rate. Recently, universities have been given the possibility of offering an intermediate qualification, the so-called *kandidaat*, which is situated between the *propedeuse* (preliminary qualification) and the *doctoraal diploma* (final qualification), but so far no university has taken advantage of this possibility.

As of 1999, Austria is planning the introduction of an undergraduate (Bachelor's) degree for university studies and the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* will offer students the possibility to study for a Bachelor's or Master's degree in economics.

In Portugal, the 1997 Education Framework Act gave universities and polytechnic institutions the possibility of awarding the same type of degrees, the *bacharel*, awarded after two to three years of study (but currently only awarded after 3 years) and the *licenciado*, after four to six years. In exceptional circumstances, the *licenciado* course can be shortened by one or two semesters. Only universities can, in addition, award the degrees of *mestre* and *doutor* confirming an advanced level of specialist knowledge.

The Finnish 1994-1997 degree reform required the re-structuring of university degrees to link these more closely to the needs of the labour market. It led to the three year Bachelor's degree being offered in all subjects except medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, technology and architecture. The second or higher academic degree is generally called *maisteri/magister* and corresponds to a Master's degree. Sweden has a unitary higher education system and the Degree Ordinance of 1993 foresees three general exams after a minimum of two, three or four years of undergraduate study (*högskoleexamen*, *kandidatexamen* and *magisterexamen*). It is possible to pass these exams in succession.

Belgium, France, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway did not make changes in this area but they already had university degree structures, which offered initial courses of four years or less at the beginning of the period studied. Germany has maintained its unitary degree structure, but in the last 2 or 3 years universities have had the possibility of introducing courses as mentioned above. Luxembourg and Liechtenstein do not have public higher education institutions which offer full university degrees. Greece and Austria did not make any changes aimed at reducing the length of initial university degrees during the period under study, preferring to retain a single-stage structure.

5.1.2.4. Introduction or reinforcement of flexible modular credit-based courses

During the period considered, many countries have made changes aimed at increasing flexibility and choice in higher education courses and at facilitating mobility between study courses and higher education sectors. These have included splitting course programmes into smaller units on a semester, term or module basis and the introduction of credits. Such sub-division of courses increases student choice and facilitates inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional movement, including mobility between the non-university and university sectors and between different countries. The pioneers of such changes were the open universities, established in many countries during the period reviewed, but more flexible courses have also been introduced into the mainstream higher education system.

Open universities traditionally rely on a modular course structure as they were established primarily to facilitate access to higher education for those who were unable to follow a full-time higher education programme due to their work or home commitments, or who lived too far away from a higher education institution. Their role in improving access to mature-age students is discussed in Chapter 3: Access and Wastage. Their courses had to be structured to allow students maximum flexibility to choose different combinations of subjects and to study these at a variety of speeds. The different structures included moves away from a year-based system towards building degree programmes based on combinations of shorter modular courses of which students have a relatively wide choice. This entailed the organisation of courses on a semester or term basis with assessment at the end of each module. It also required the establishment of a common credit system allocating each course module a certain value or credit and the stipulation of the total number of credits necessary to obtain a degree. Due to the distance-learning opportunities they provide, open universities transcend local and national boundaries and many were set up as a result of institutional or international collaboration.

The setting up of Spain's National Distance Learning University (*UNED*), France's Centre for Distance Learning (*CNED*), the Finnish Open University education system and the United Kingdom Open Universities pre-dated this study, though they have expanded considerably during the period since 1980. The open university has become a significant part of higher education in the United Kingdom and is now the largest higher education institution in terms of student numbers. The Flemish Community of Belgium set up an open university consortium involving several universities in collaboration with the Open University of Heerlen in the Netherlands in 1995. Denmark's first open university programmes were introduced in 1982 on an experimental basis and extended to the entire higher education sector in 1990. Germany's *FernUniversität Hagen* has offered correspondence courses since 1975/76 and the Greek Open University was established in 1997. The Dutch Open University was opened in 1984 and the Portuguese Open University was created in 1988. In Iceland, access to teacher training has been

facilitated for non-traditionally trained adults from remote areas by the use of distance learning techniques since 1993. In Norway, *SOFF*, the central body for higher education distance learning, was established in Tromsø in 1990 to register and coordinate existing and planned distance education course offers by higher education institutions within a national network. In Sweden, higher education institutions organise courses for open or distance learning, which especially in the northern, thinly populated areas are very widespread. This type of decentralised education started before 1980 and, in the academic year 1996/97, nearly every tenth student was enrolled in distance education courses.

The introduction of such changes to the mainstream university system has been motivated primarily by the desire to improve completion rates and the recognition that not all students are necessarily able to complete their courses at the same pace. However, the greater flexibility and breadth of choice required, has had implications for the planning of course structure and content, e.g. the closer adaptation of courses to work and life patterns necessary for the delivery of lifelong learning. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), set up to ease mobility of Erasmus students between European countries, has also had an influence in standardising the credit system attached to degree courses across Europe.

Modular, credit-based courses were introduced primarily into the university system in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Spain, France and the United Kingdom and into both sectors in Germany (from 1998 on a larger scale), Greece (open-choice programmes only), Ireland, the Netherlands, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Although foreseen since 1990, such a system has not yet been fully implemented in Italy. Credit systems have not been introduced into both the university and non-university sectors in all countries. Where they apply to both sectors, they contribute to further convergence. The Netherlands and Finland retained differently-named qualifications in the university and non-university sectors but the use of a common credit system enabled qualifications of a similar value to be obtained in both sectors. There have been no moves towards introducing a credit system or the modularisation of courses into the higher education systems of the French Community of Belgium, Luxembourg or Austria during the period studied.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, a course credit system was introduced into universities in 1997 to allow students to change course more easily. In Greece, the mainstream higher education courses were not changed but, from 1997, flexible, modular, open-choice study programmes based in *AEIs* and *TEIs* were initiated to encourage lifelong learning linked to labour market needs, especially in business studies and information technology. These allow students to combine different courses or to follow one course only, depending on the requirements of the labour market. In Spain, a credit system for university courses was introduced in 1987 as part of the amended regulations on study programmes. In France, the 1992/93 reform of the first university cycle leading to the *DEUG* introduced modular courses as a way of reducing failure and facilitating early course changing by students.

The Irish non-university regional technical colleges introduced modular courses leading to National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) diplomas or certificates in the 1980-85 period. These allow students to choose the combination of courses they would like to study both within or across subject areas and at different institutions. The system is modelled on the ECTS (60 credits representing the workload of one year of study) with the aim of facilitating student mobility within Europe. In the Irish universities, there have been moves to split courses into semesters with end of term examinations for some courses. In Italy, the semesterisation of some courses has, in a few instances, allowed the introduction of integrated courses consisting of coordinated modules taught by different teachers. The systematic creation of curricula based on credits is the main focus of the 1997 reform. In the Netherlands, a credit-based system was introduced to the university sector by the 1981 Two-Phase Structure Act. Courses were subdivided into related course units whose study load is expressed as credits (1 credit for 40 hours of study) and the study load was distributed evenly across the year. The credit system was extended to the non-university sector by the 1992 Higher Education and Scientific Research Act. In Portugal, a 1980 decree-law introduced credit units but these have not become

widespread. The Finnish degree reform, beginning in 1994, required the re-structuring of degrees to link them more closely to the needs of the labour market. It led to the modularisation of university and polytechnic degrees in order to leave room for individual flexibility and academic mobility.

In the United Kingdom, the broadening of the undergraduate curriculum was seen as necessary with the expansion of higher education, leading to more multi-disciplinary and combined subject courses, particularly during the 1990s. Modular systems of study, based on two semesters a year, are becoming increasingly common particularly in the 'new universities' and in Scotland. The 1985 Green Paper and the 1987 and 1991 White Papers gave support to the development of credit accumulation and transfer schemes (CATS) and more flexible patterns of teaching and learning such as modular courses and distance learning provision. CATs allow students to create a personal programme of studies to complete a degree; credits may be given for previous study or work experience. One of the recommendations of the Dearing Report was the creation of a new framework for higher education qualifications which would provide for credit accumulation and transfer between institutions. Scotland introduced the Scottish Credit Framework. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) lies at the heart of a range of initiatives to promote wider access and participation in lifelong learning and to make clear the nature and standards of programmes and qualifications. The implementation of SCQF was one of the main recommendations of the Scottish Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Garrick Committee) and is one of the ten key points in the Government's Action Plan for the development of lifelong learning in Scotland (Opportunity Scotland). The SCQF will bring all Scottish qualifications within one single system. It will build on Scotcat, which is an existing scheme of credit transfer for higher education qualifications. The development of the SCQF has potential implications for all learners and all providers of education and training, including professional bodies and employers.

Iceland introduced a unit credit system to most courses after 1990. In Norway, university and college courses generally carry a certain number of credits with 20 credits equivalent to 1 year of full-time study. Students may combine subjects from different faculties or institutions but one subject must be studied for at least one and a half years and another for at least one year to fulfil the requirements for the *cand.mag.* degree. The credit system combined with the Network Norway framework has also facilitated the movement of students between sectors. It has made it possible to take the first year of an academic degree course at a state college and then to continue with the second year at one of the universities.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

As explained in the introduction, the teaching and assessment of higher education students has been the responsibility of individual institutions and teaching staff in all the participating countries since 1980, and this responsibility has not changed over the period studied. This was one of the reasons why information on the methods employed was not easily available for all the countries involved.

The increased intake for higher education courses has in some countries led to larger teaching groups and the need for new academic posts, challenging traditional teaching methods. The call for increased accountability discussed in Chapter 2: Management, Finance and Control and the importance attached to the evaluation and quality of output of courses has stimulated changes in teaching and assessment in many, but not all, of the participating countries. In contrast to other reforms discussed in this study, most changes introduced in teaching and assessment arose first at the bottom, mainly coming from practitioners in individual institutions. In many cases, it is therefore impossible to identify dates and a clear time-scale for the changes described in this section.

Table 5.3 summarises the main changes in teaching and assessment during the period under consideration. Although the table and text refer to higher education teaching staff, it is recognised that

the responsibilities of academic staff in higher education institutions usually cover a combination of teaching, research and administration.

Table 5.3: Reforms in teaching and assessment since 1980

	B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
Teaching																			
Increased emphasis on the pedagogical competence of teaching staff			•	•			•	•			•		•	•	•	•		•	•
Larger teaching groups			•					•	•				•			•			•
New teaching methods (with a focus on problem-solving in small groups)			•	•		•	•				•			•	•		•		•
Increased use of information and communications technology		•	•	•		•	•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Work experience as a course element	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
Student Assessment																			
Introduction of new assessment methods											•				•	•			•
Increased frequency of assessment due to shorter course units, modules or cycles.	•					•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•	•

Source: Eurydice.

5.2.1. TEACHING

This study identified five areas of reform in relation to teaching:

- increased emphasis on the pedagogical competence of teaching staff
- larger teaching groups
- new teaching methods (with a focus on problem-solving in small groups)
- increased use of information and communications technology
- practical training or work experience as a course element.

5.2.1.1. Increased emphasis on the pedagogical competence of teaching staff

As pointed out above, the increased emphasis on the quality of teaching as part of the quality assessment of higher education courses has led to increased attention being paid to the teaching competence of higher education staff, particularly at universities. In most countries there is a difference between the university and non-university sector in the criteria for recruitment of such staff, the amount of time they are expected to spend teaching, and their training. Staff in the non-university sector are much more likely to have been trained to teach than university staff.

In some countries, where the non-university or vocational sector evolved from the secondary sector, teaching staff were trained as secondary school teachers and were appointed partly on the basis of their teaching competence. In other countries, non-university teaching staff have a background in the relevant profession or trade and are offered training on appointment. Such staff usually spend considerably more time teaching and less on research compared with their university-based colleagues. In many countries, a major priority for training non-university staff is to raise the level of their higher education qualifications to include a research-based higher degree.

In contrast, university academic staff are appointed in most countries on the basis of their research record and rarely have to prove their teaching competence. Their tasks include both carrying out research and teaching, but since research tends to raise their status it is often given higher priority by universities. The need for in-service training for such staff is now widely recognised but, in all countries, it remains the responsibility of the institutions.

Only in Belgium, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, Austria and Iceland, have there been no changes to the recruitment process and training of higher education teachers during the study period nor, with the exception of the French Community of Belgium, any discussion on the need for such reforms.

In Denmark, the main emphasis when appointing university staff has traditionally been on research experience whereas teachers at vocational colleges must take a postgraduate teacher training course within their first two years of employment. However, teaching ability is increasingly being taken into account at universities. Changes in the staffing structure in 1993 introduced a requirement to supervise, guide and evaluate the teaching of new academic staff. The increased emphasis on good teaching is exemplified by the nomination of 'teacher of the year' by some institutions and the recent establishment of the Danish University Pedagogical Network by a group of universities to encourage teaching development.

In Germany, university professors are generally required to have a post-doctoral lecturing qualification (*Habilitation*). Pedagogical aptitude is usually demonstrated in a sample lecture. It is expected that teaching ability will have more importance in the future in the appointment of new university teachers. Professors at *Fachhochschulen* are, as a rule, required to have gained professional experience. In the fields of educational science and subject-related didactics within teacher training only persons with three years' experience of teaching in schools should be appointed as professors.

University teachers in France are appointed through a *concours* (competitive examination) where most importance is attached to their research record. Training of higher education lecturers is not compulsory but a system of supervised on-the-job training was set up in 1989. This allows *moniteurs*, a new category of junior staff, to be recruited from among doctoral research students for a period of up to three years. They do about 2 hours of teaching a week under a lecturer-tutor and receive 10 days of training a year. After completing their thesis, they can be employed as temporary research and teaching assistants while seeking a post as *maître de conférences*, the first echelon of the university career ladder.

In Italy, the responsibility for the selection of teaching staff was transferred in 1998 from the Ministry to the universities while maintaining research results as the sole selection criteria. In Ireland, improvements in the skills of teaching staff are considered necessary by the Government's advisers. The 1994 Report on the National Education Convention pointed out that 'a necessary complement to the process of evaluation of quality is the need for a development programme which will assist third-level staff in improving their teaching skills'. The Universities Act 1997 requires institutions to establish procedures for quality assurance and lists, among the objectives of university, the promotion of quality and the highest standards in teaching and research.

Dutch university lecturers were traditionally appointed because of their quality as researchers but over the past decades, with greater emphasis placed on the performance of the higher education system, particularly in relation to the financing of institutions, attention has gradually focused on the teaching abilities of such staff. Various universities have introduced compulsory teacher training for lecturers.

In Finland, the Ministry of Education stimulated efforts to improve the quality of university education in 1994 with the move towards performance-based funding of institutions and by identifying institutions which are centres of excellence in teaching. The quality assurance process introduced in the early

1990s has focused the attention of institutions on teaching quality. However, discussion of the need to take account of the candidates' pedagogical skills in appointing professors has only recently started and formal teaching qualifications are not yet required for the appointment of university academic staff. In contrast, teaching staff appointed to the polytechnics are required to have formal pedagogical training. A special action programme was established in 1995 to help polytechnic teaching staff upgrade their higher education qualifications.

Pedagogical skills have become more important in the recruitment of teachers and professors at Swedish universities and university colleges while, at the same time, the importance of research as a task of academic staff has been increasingly stressed. To improve teaching skills, institutions offer courses for teachers and organise conferences on pedagogical matters.

In the United Kingdom, universities are increasingly providing training for their newly-appointed teaching staff, who are usually selected on the basis of their research record. In 1992, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) set up an accreditation scheme which aims to ensure a common and appropriate standard of training for higher education lecturers. The 1997 Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) recommended that all higher education institutions should develop or seek access to programmes of teacher training for their staff. It also proposed that an Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT) be established to provide a national system of accreditation for such training programmes. In response, the ILT Planning Group was established in February 1998 to develop the concept further and the Institute for Learning and Teaching was launched in June 1999. Its explicit aims are: accredit programmes and other routes for the professional development of higher education teachers; commission research and development in learning and teaching practices; and stimulate innovation and support good practice.

The upgrading of the *Fachhochschule* in 1992, led Liechtenstein to impose higher standards for its teaching staff. Since 1995, Norwegian academic staff have been required to have training or experience in teaching. Training is the responsibility of the employing institutions, many of which now offer pedagogical training for staff, especially in communication and the dissemination of knowledge. Prior to 1995, however, academic staff teaching vocational study programmes with the exception of engineering were already required to have teaching experience or to attend teacher training.

5.2.1.2. Larger teaching groups

A small number of countries stated that the increased number of students entering higher education led to increases in the size of teaching groups. In most countries, the traditional method of teaching, at least in the first years of study, consists of non-participatory lectures to very large audiences. In general, the number of students per lecturer decreases in more advanced study courses.

At the beginning of the period studied, institutions in Denmark moved from lecturing in large auditoria to teaching in smaller groups, which have however increased in size, during the period considered. At Italian universities, the professor to student ratio has worsened continuously over the past twenty years and there are now very significant differences between departments and institutions. In Portugal, the introduction of formula-based financing using teacher to student ratios has forced institutions to increase the size of classes, cut down on teaching in small groups, reduce the number of lectures and promote self-study among students. Many higher education institutions in the United Kingdom have in recent years been obliged to adapt their teaching methods due to the expansion of higher education. Here too, the number of students in teaching groups has increased, putting pressure on the tradition of teaching in small tutorial groups. Norway too has recently moved away from instruction in classroom-sized groups, particularly on vocational courses in non-university institutions. Larger teaching group sessions are followed up by smaller discussion groups. This allows larger numbers of students to participate while retaining and, in some cases, increasing the opportunities for active student involvement in the learning process.

5.2.1.3. New teaching methods

There was general agreement in those countries which identified changes in this area that novel teaching methods were more likely to have been introduced in 'new' courses (business administration, new technologies) while subjects such as literature and law were least likely to have seen changes. It was also agreed that universities were more likely to continue to use a combination of lectures and seminars while non-university or vocationally-oriented institutions were more likely to teach to smaller groups and to do more practically-based exercises. Changes in teaching methods tended to focus on the involvement of small groups in active, practical problem-solving and were often a response to increases in the number of students and to the drive to improve their success rates. Universities were particularly likely to have introduced such changes.

In German universities, the emphasis is on individual study alongside formal tuition. Innovative instructional methods have, however, been experimented with, including piloting project-oriented learning in small groups. Similarly, in Denmark, the emphasis on project work in the university and non-university sectors has been steadily rising during the study period and this is now an integral part of all study programmes under the Ministry of Education.

In Finnish universities, other teaching methods such as project work, seminars, group work and tutoring are increasingly being used alongside traditional lectures. Finnish polytechnics have paid special attention to bringing teaching closer to the reality of the workplace. In Sweden, innovative teaching methods such as immersion courses or Problem-Based Learning (PBL) have been introduced where students from different programmes solve complex problems together. Norwegian higher education institutions, as mentioned above, have moved towards larger-group teaching followed up by smaller, active seminar groups. The problem-solving method has been introduced into courses in the social sciences and, more recently, into medicine and many courses emphasise 'reflective education' where the students are encouraged to re-interpret problems in terms of their own experience.

5.2.1.4. Increased use of information and communications technology

Information and communications technology (ICT) includes the use of television and radio transmissions for educational purposes as well as computers and the Internet. Open universities, discussed above, pioneered the use of information and communications technologies to develop distance learning techniques but these have increasingly been adopted by mainstream universities for use with on-site students. In addition to allowing the development of skills which are essential to modern working life, they allow more individualised, student-controlled learning at times of increased teacher to student ratios.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, new technologies are increasingly used in teaching and a 1997 decree set up a fund to encourage institutions to use open and distance learning. In Germany there are plans to use ICT in teaching, including the use of intelligent problem-solving or simulation systems, computer-based training applications as well as televised and computer conferencing. In French universities, little new technology is used, but this is developing, especially on technological courses. Irish universities are making more use of computer-based and multi-media training in technical courses, business studies and language-learning. The Finnish Government has invested heavily in the introduction of modern information technology to university teaching through the purchase of new equipment and teaching materials and by launching pilot projects in IT-aided teaching. In Sweden, in recent years, teaching methods using both traditional (video and audio tapes) and new (computer and information networks) educational technologies are becoming more widespread and effective in higher education. Open and distance learning is going to be extended to a growing number of higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions in the United Kingdom increasingly exploit information technology, for example, by using televised lectures and interactive sessions. The use of new technology also means that the distinction between mainstream and open or virtual universities is becoming less clear-cut. The University of the Highlands and Islands project is currently being developed by UHI Ltd. The intention is to bring together, within a single institution, responsibility for the higher education courses currently provided by colleges of further education across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and to expand the range of courses at degree and postgraduate level. Open and distance learning will be used alongside traditional residential courses. The Government has also announced the establishment of the University for Industry (Ufi). The Ufi, which will be launched in the year 2000, will be a new kind of organisation for open and distance learning aimed at individuals and businesses. It will use modern information and communications technologies to broker high quality learning products and services and make them available at home, in the workplace and in a nation-wide network of learning centres. There will be a distinct Scottish University for Industry. The 1997 Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Report) identified the need to support higher education institutions more effectively in their use of information and communications technology-based learning and teaching materials. The Higher Education Funding Councils, the Department for Education Northern Ireland and other departments and organisations associated with the provision of higher education have recently commissioned a study to audit the range of existing activities using ICT for learning and teaching, in both further and higher education in the United Kingdom.

In Iceland and Norway much teaching on newer, more technological programmes involves the use of computers and new technology, and the Internet is increasingly used on all higher education courses.

5.2.1.5. Work experience as course element

In most countries, periods of work experience or on-the-job training have traditionally formed part of most vocationally-oriented training courses, mainly in the non-university sector before 1980. The upgrading of such courses to higher education level, together with the pressure to adapt all programmes more closely to the labour market has meant that, in most countries, practical training has become increasingly widespread as part of higher education programmes. In addition, moves towards life-long learning have also led to higher education courses which alternate periods of work-based training with full-time education. Vocationally-oriented courses, especially in the non-university sector, almost always include compulsory periods of work-experience but also university courses increasingly include shorter periods of work experience for students, often during holiday periods.

In the specialised, vocationally or technologically-oriented institutions established during the period considered in Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal, Finland and Liechtenstein, practical training was made an integral part of some courses. In Luxembourg, work placements have been part of the curriculum at the *IST* since 1979 and were made part of the short-cycle studies introduced in 1984. In Austria, work placements are only compulsory in vocationally-oriented programmes and institutions. In Italy, almost all first-level university degree courses (*diploma*) established in 1990 have work experience as a compulsory element in their curriculum. Some courses (*progetto campus* run by the Rector's Conference) are based on agreements with enterprises and offer promising job opportunities after graduation.

In the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, work placements are important in the non-university sector and increasingly so in universities with more sandwich-type courses (alternating work and study) under development. In Ireland, practical training is an important part of the vocationally-oriented courses at the University of Limerick, the Dublin City University and in the non-university sector. In Sweden, practical training has traditionally formed part of study programmes for the medical professions, nursing and teacher training. Due to the expansion of higher education during the last decade and the increased emphasis placed on the interaction between higher education and society at

large, work placements are gaining in importance. In Iceland, newer programmes in business and mass communication put increasing emphasis on practical training and hands-on experience.

In the United Kingdom, following the recommendations of the Dearing Report, the Government is supporting actions to assist institutions to increase the relevance of higher education to employers. Increasing the employability of higher education graduates is a key priority, and measures to achieve this, such as the promotion of work experience opportunities for all students, are encouraged.

5.2.2. ASSESSMENT

Despite many other changes seen in higher education since 1980, there have been very few changes to the methods for assessing students during the period studied. Both university and non-university institutions still favour summative, formal, usually written examinations at the end of each semester or academic year, though it is the final exams which are most heavily weighted in deciding the quality of the degree awarded. The intermediate exams are mainly to ensure students have reached the appropriate standard to progress to the next year and can usually be re-taken. For higher level degrees in particular, but frequently at all levels, students are also required to write a paper or thesis based on a piece of independent research. Continuous assessment or assessment of practical work more often contributes to the final degree for vocationally-oriented courses. In Sweden, continuous assessment has traditionally been the only method of assessment, but in order to obtain a *kandidatexamen*, a *magisterexamen* and most professional degrees, students could write a paper or carry out project work on a voluntary basis in the major subject studied. Since 1993, this has become compulsory for the *kandidatexamen* and the *magisterexamen*.

5.2.2.1. Introduction of new assessment methods

Minor changes in assessment were mentioned in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom but these mainly related to systems for monitoring students' progress and were designed to supplement, not replace, summative assessment systems. In the Netherlands, the 1992 Higher Education and Scientific Research Act required institutions to draw up teaching and examination regulations defining relevant procedures. They also required institutions to set up a monitoring system, which would allow students' progress to be followed. The system should help to identify having problems with their studies at an early stage any students, so they could be advised to change course or to abandon studying altogether. In the United Kingdom, universities usually keep records of marks obtained by students during their courses in order to monitor progress. The 1997 Dearing Report recommended that institutions introduce a 'progress file' for all students which would be an official record of achievement and would allow students to monitor their own development. In Scotland, there has been a tendency to move towards a combination of assessment methods rather than relying on an end-of-year examination as the only method of assessment.

5.2.2.2. Increased frequency of assessment

Other changes in assessment were a consequence of reforms described earlier, such as shortening the length of degree courses and introducing modules or cycles on which assessment is based. Spain, Italy and Finland all introduced three-year initial degree courses, instead of assessing students after four to six years. Denmark introduced three-year first degree courses, replacing a system which had required students to study for up to six or seven years to obtain a degree. In 1994, it added a first-year exam which all students have to pass before continuing with a particular course. Furthermore, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway all now use modular, credit-based courses or assess students' performance each semester or year, thus moving closer to a model of continuous assessment.

5.3. OVERVIEW OF REFORMS

Reforms of course structure and content took place during the period studied in nearly all countries. Changes in teaching and assessment appeared to be fewer and less widespread, though this apparent difference may be due to relevant information not being available centrally, since such changes were primarily the responsibility of institutions and teachers.

With the expansion and increasing cost of the higher education system after 1980, there was an increased expectation that it should play a part in the preparation of students for the world of work, in close liaison with employers and the local community. This required a degree of flexibility in the planning of courses which was difficult to achieve through a national planning system. Thus, there were the simultaneous moves towards closer links with the labour market and devolution of responsibility for course structure and content to institutions, though the degree to which this took place varied between countries and was much more pronounced in the university sector.

The Nordic countries, except Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom gave institutions the greatest degree of responsibility. In Greece, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria and Portugal, universities (and non-university institutions in the Netherlands) were given responsibility for the content of their courses within a national regulatory framework which determined the course structure and assessment requirements for nationally-recognised qualifications and approved new courses. In Denmark, Ireland, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, universities were given in addition, or have retained, responsibility for planning the range of courses on offer. Nevertheless, governments in some of these countries are to a varying extent steering the national course offer by drawing up agreed development plans with the institutions and by basing part of their funding on outcomes such as the number of graduates in different disciplines. In the French Community (for the *Hautes écoles* only) and Flemish Community of Belgium, the organising authorities (*pouvoir organisateur/inrichtende macht*) kept control over courses, as did the Ministries at *Land* level in Germany and the Government in Norway.

National governments were the main instigators of moves towards developing closer links between the higher education system and the labour market from 1980 onwards in all the participating countries. The effect has been to stimulate the development of vocationally-oriented higher education courses, often to meet local labour market needs. Such implementation took place primarily at national (or organising authority) level in Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Austria, while the institutions, following government policy, had the major role in Denmark, Spain, France, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. While non-university institutions already had good links with the labour market, in many countries the development of close links between industry, commerce and the universities was the focus of policy during the period under consideration.

In many countries with a binary system, changes in the structure of higher education courses appeared to be leading to convergence between initial degree courses in the university and non-university sectors. However, except in the United Kingdom, there was little evidence of any tendency to completely break down the distinction between the two sectors, and a number of countries established a binary system during the period covered by the study. In most countries, there were moves to upgrade vocational courses from secondary school to higher education level, or from non-university to university level by rewriting curricula and lengthening study times. In some countries, the upgrading was focused on vocational institutions which were merged and restructured at the same time as their courses were upgraded. A clear aim was to increase the status of vocational higher education and to open up pathways between the university and non-university sectors. Germany and Sweden were the only countries not restructuring their vocationally-oriented courses or institutions during the period studied.

In some countries, these changes to vocational courses were paralleled by the introduction of (or as in Portugal by the possibility of introducing) shorter initial degree courses to the university sector, as was

the case in Spain, Italy and Finland. For most of these countries, however, the primary aim of this reform was apparently not convergence, but an increase in the number of vocationally-oriented courses offered by universities and a higher completion rate for such courses.

A further potential source of convergence in some countries, was the introduction of modular, credit-based courses into the higher education system during the period studied. These met a need for greater flexibility and choice, which is discussed in Chapter 3: Access and Wastage.

The recognition of the need to offer life-long learning opportunities led to the introduction of modular courses and to the establishment of distance-learning courses in higher education. These were more compatible with the needs of working and family life, but were often restricted to newer, vocationally-oriented courses which were sometimes seen as lower status.

Fewer countries documented changes in teaching and assessment in higher education during the study period studied and a major motivation behind these appeared to be the desire to raise the quality of higher education courses, especially those in universities. This was in part due to the introduction of performance-related funding or quality assessment systems which, in many countries, took into account the quality of teaching. It was also a response to widening access to the higher education system and the entry of students of a much broader range of abilities and backgrounds into universities. The countries which documented most changes were the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which were also the countries where funding in the 1990s was based at least partly on performance and which had well-established quality assessment systems.

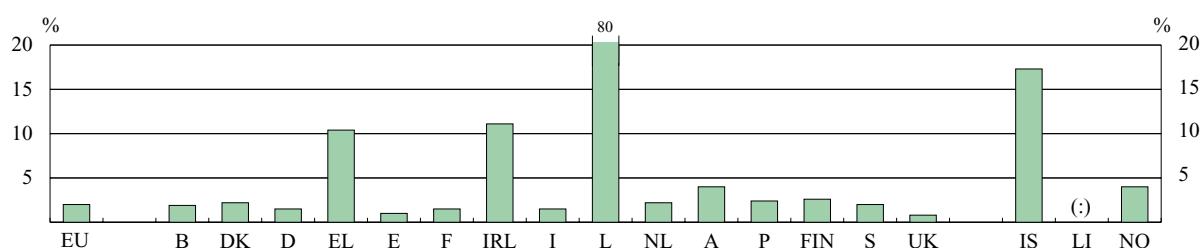
Most countries were aware of the need to ensure that university staff had pedagogical skills either through the appointment process or by offering in-service training, but few had taken action to meet this need, making this the responsibility of the institutions. There was a clear difference between the university and non-university sector, with training in both research and teaching being now much more widely required at appointment, or available once in service in the non-university sector.

There was little evidence of changes in teaching methods, the few changes being concentrated mainly in the area of vocationally-oriented courses at universities, especially those in new technology or business studies. There were moves towards more active, small-group teaching in universities in some countries, greater use of information and communications technology and the introduction of a work-experience element into most vocational courses, as well as into some university courses.

CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONALISATION

This chapter employs a broad concept of internationalisation comprising any activity in higher education extending beyond the national borders of any participating country. It comprises student and staff mobility, curriculum development and all strategies initiated by public authorities and institutions to adapt to, and benefit from, cross-border relations.

Figure 6.1: Percentage of tertiary education students (ISCED 5, 6, 7) studying in another EU Member State or EFTA/EEA country, 1996/97



Source: Eurostat, UOE.

Explanatory note

Countries do not have details of the numbers of their own students studying abroad. For a given nationality, the number of students studying abroad is calculated by summing the numbers provided for this nationality by the receiving countries. This number is then divided by the total number of students of this nationality. The lack of data on the distribution of students by nationality in some countries leads to underestimation of the values.

As shown by Figure 6.1 (European Commission, Eurydice, Eurostat, 2000, p. 110), the proportion of students studying abroad in the late 1990s varied considerably between the countries concerned, with students from Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg and Iceland showing a particularly high propensity to study abroad. Similarly, the number of students received by the different countries, both from within the European Union and from elsewhere, varied widely. These disparities in the proportion of students sent and received were reflected by differences in the internationalisation support structures in place in the participating countries and often also by differences in the amount of collaborative international research undertaken. Those countries which had a relatively high level of internationalisation before 1980 (Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) primarily had links with non-industrialised, developing countries, often ex-colonies, which were associated with development aid programmes. These links consisted mainly of the reception of students from and the secondment of teaching staff to these countries as well as joint research projects. International links with other industrialised countries were primarily focused on collaborative research and exchanges of academic staff.

Since 1980, internationalisation has broadened to cover university and non-university institutions, student mobility, joint course planning and curriculum development, as well as the exchange of higher education staff and joint research. With the establishment of the European Commission's action programmes for research and student mobility in the mid-1980s, links within Europe have grown rapidly both in number and volume. One of the most important changes during the period studied was the development and expansion of European networks, covering both the exchange of students and researchers and the joint planning of courses and curricula, which have stimulated greater internationalisation at institutional level in all the participating countries. Since 1990, the break-up of the Soviet Union has led to the setting up of programmes to include Central and Eastern European countries.

A further important development in the internationalisation process of higher education during the 1990s was the move away from cross-border relations based on networks built up by individual academics within their specialised area, or on movements of individual students. Instead, there has been a move towards the involvement of governments in developing a systematic national strategy and the tendency for institutional management to include international links within their planning processes.

This chapter looks at internationalisation at European, national and institutional levels during the period under consideration, and the strategies employed at these different levels.

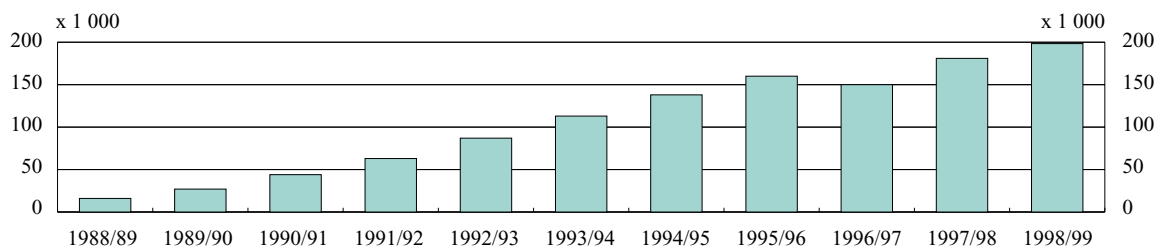
6.1. EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER MULTILATERAL PROGRAMMES

European Union action programmes have been influential in all participating countries, both in encouraging the development of international research networks and in greatly increasing the mobility of students. The first Community action programme in education was adopted in 1976 and laid the foundations for the ever-increasing exchange of information, and cooperation within Europe. Joint study programmes were set up between universities in different Member States in an effort to promote mobility of students and staff. The positive experience gained led to the establishment of the Erasmus programme (European Community action scheme for the mobility of university students) roughly ten years later. A major driving force within the Erasmus programme was and still is the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) originally created for a period of six years (1989-1995) and limited to five subject areas. By guaranteeing full academic recognition of study periods abroad, it added value to the time spent at a host institution in another participating country. In 1995, the scheme was extended to a larger number of subject areas and special emphasis was placed on the use of ECTS within the non-university sector. Since all institutions wishing to take part in ECTS have to prepare an information package containing, among other things, detailed information on the course content, the system has served as a valuable source of curricular information throughout the participating countries in addition to its function as a promoter of study abroad.

Another important step forward on the road to closer European-wide cooperation and mobility within higher education was the creation of NARIC, the network of national academic recognition information centres. Established in 1984 for the Member States of the European Communities, it was gradually extended to comprise 29 countries in 1999. The NARIC centres also provide information on the Council Directives in relation to the recognition of higher education diplomas (Council Directive 89/48/EEC) and the recognition of professional education and training at higher education level (Council Directive 95/51/EEC).

The success of Erasmus is illustrated by the increase in the number of students participating in the programme between 1988/89 and 1998/99 as illustrated by Figure 6.2 (European Commission, Eurydice, Eurostat, 2000, p. 108).

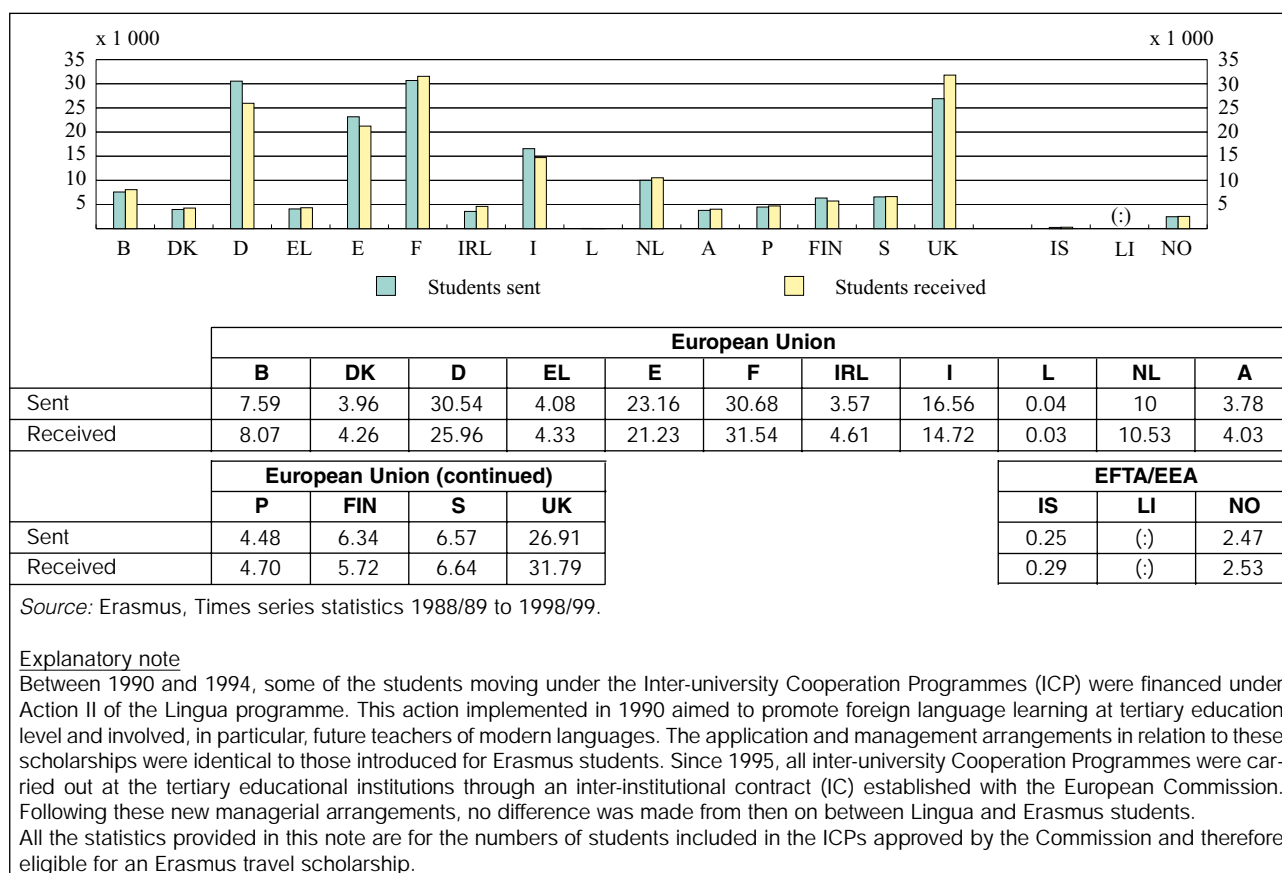
Figure 6.2: Increasing numbers of students selected to take part in an Erasmus exchange programme, in thousands, from 1988/89 to 1998/99



Source: Erasmus, Time series statistics 1988/89 to 1998/99.

In addition, the principle of reciprocity behind the Erasmus programme encouraged countries which sent more students abroad than they received (Germany, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Finland and Liechtenstein) to look for ways of attracting foreign students, while the main receiving countries (France, Ireland, the United Kingdom) were stimulated to encourage more students to study abroad. This flow of students by receiving and sending countries is illustrated by Figure 6.3 (European Commission, Eurydice, Eurostat, 2000, p. 109).

Figure 6.3: Percentage of tertiary level students selected to go abroad and be received within the Erasmus programme, 1997/98



Other influential factors were the successive Community action programmes in education and training for technology (Comett) promoting the cooperation between universities and industry as well as the programme for the promotion of language learning in the European Community (Lingua). Furthermore, the European Community has supported measures to promote and improve open and distance learning since 1987.

The launch of the first European Community action programme for cooperation in the field of education in 1995 (Socrates I) in accordance with Art. 126 of the Treaty on the European Union, led to the merging of Erasmus (with its constituent parts ECTS and NARIC), Lingua and the open and distance learning initiatives (ODL) under one single framework. With the introduction of the so-called institutional contracts, higher education institutions were encouraged to develop their own strategy for European cooperation. Another innovative element of Socrates I was the inclusion of adult education, with a high participation of universities. Its successor Socrates II is planned to cover a time span of seven years (2000-06) and to enjoy a budget increase of 20%.

Since 1995, the Leonardo da Vinci programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy offers universities and their students a range of transnational activities aimed at the improvement of vocational training systems with a particular focus on lifelong learning.

Since 1990, the Community programme to generate links with Central and Eastern European countries (Tempus) has led to the development of further international projects in which higher education institutions are involved.

In addition to these programmes, specific multi-lateral agreements have been established by groups of countries, notably the Nordplus student exchange programme set up in 1988 by Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway. In line with the Memorandum *Pushing Back the Borders*, the Netherlands, the Flemish Community of Belgium and three German *Länder* signed an agreement to establish an open area of higher education.

In May 1998, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom signed the so-called Sorbonne Declaration in which the four signatories commit themselves to encouraging a common frame of reference aimed at improving external recognition of degrees and facilitating student mobility and employability. The Declaration suggests that every student should spend at least one semester studying abroad and comments on the emergence of a pattern that divides higher education into two main cycles. It stresses the importance of the international recognition of first cycle degrees as an appropriate level of qualification and points out that the second cycle could either be the shorter Master's degree or the longer doctoral degree course. The Declaration also recognises the importance of an adequate 'credit' scheme necessary for the transfer of study attainments and for allowing students to study at their own pace and during their entire life-span. Finally, the four signatories call on other European countries and, in particular, other EU Member States to join them in this objective and on all European universities to consolidate Europe's standing in the world.

29 countries (15 EU, 3 EFTA/EEA, 10 associated Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus) followed this appeal when their Ministers of Education met in Bologna in June 1999. There, they signed a Joint Declaration to coordinate their educational policies in order to achieve the following objectives of primary relevance to the establishment of a European area of higher education:

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles
- establishment of a system of credits
- promotion of mobility for students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff
- promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance
- promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regard to curricular development, inter-institutional cooperation, mobility and integrated programmes.

6.2. GOVERNMENT/NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Until the early 1990s, the prime movers of such initiatives in the different countries tended to be mainly individual academics whose enthusiasm and personal commitment sustained and built up the networks. However, during the 1990s, governments became more active in stimulating and supporting internationalisation of higher education, and the prioritisation of international projects in the funding of programmes stimulated the establishment of institutional structures and initiatives within institutions geared towards internationalisation.

The involvement of government can be gauged by the number of legislative actions, policy documents and other initiatives, such as the setting-up of national bodies to support the internationalisation process, the provision of special funding for institutions and financial support for students studying abroad. These are shown in Table 6.1 with the date of introduction included where possible.

Table 6.1: Government initiatives relating to internationalisation and the year they were adopted

	≤1980	1980-1989	1990-1997
Legislation and policy documents	L S	D : 1985 I : 1980 NL : 1988 S : late 1980s	B fr : 1995 B nl : 1991,1994 DK : 1997 D : 1992,1996 EL : 1997 I : 1991, 1997 NL : 1991 A : 1993, 1997 FIN : 1991,1993,1995 S : 1992 NO : 1991
Other initiatives			DK : 1991 D A : 1990 FIN : 1991 S : 1992 IS : 1992
Establishment of national agencies in support of internationalisation			
Special funding for institutions	F	DK : 1987 A : mid-1980s FIN : late 1980s	I : 1990-93 NL : 1997 FIN : 1994
Financial aid or other support for students	DK : 1955, 1970 D L A FIN : 1972 IS LI NO	D DK : 1988 F NL S : 1989 UK	B nl : 1990 E : 1996 I : 1990-93, 1997 NL : 1991,1997 A : 1992,1997 FIN : 1991 UK
Other measures to promote student exchanges		DK : 1987 E : 1989 F : 1992 L NL FIN : 1987	D : 1997 F : 1992 NL : 1997 A : 1997 UK : 1992 IS : 1994

Source: Eurydice.

6.2.1. LEGISLATION AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

As explained in Chapter 1: Legislation for Change, explicit mention of internationalisation was made, in the period after 1980, in the legislation or policy documents in a large number of participating countries.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, the acts concerning universities (1991) and the non-university *hogescholen* (1994) enhanced the opportunities for internationalisation, allowing the use of four languages and the recognition of study periods abroad. From the mid 1980s, the Netherlands developed particularly clear and consistent government-led policies to encourage internationalisation, focusing on links within Europe. These began with the Internationalisation Incentive Programme (*STIR*) from 1988 to 1997 which aimed to promote an international orientation among higher education students, to encourage institutions to give their courses an international dimension, to encourage foreign study and placements and to develop facilities to host foreign students. The life-span of this programme was planned to coincide with the beginning of the European Community's Erasmus programme so as to further encourage the mobility

of students in higher education. This action was supplemented in 1991 by a Government Memorandum *Pushing Back the Borders* which focused on educational cooperation, particularly in higher education, with neighbouring areas: North-Rhine Westphalia; Lower Saxony; Bremen and the Flemish Community of Belgium. The aim was to create an 'open higher education area' between these regions and the Netherlands across which there would be free choice of education. In 1997, a mobility fund was set up for students together with a fund for the development of structural international cooperation frameworks between groups of *hogescholen* (consortia) and institutions of higher education in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. These consortia were intended to work towards developing curricula for joint courses, regulating mutual recognition of course units and facilitating exchanges of lecturers, administrators and students. In addition, a fund to encourage the recruitment of foreign students was established in 1997, with students of Indonesian origin as the main target group during the first two years.

In Germany, Italy, Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway the responsibility of higher education institutions for developing an international orientation was included among the aims of development programmes or legislation. In Germany, the 1985 amendment to the Higher Education Framework Act (*HRG* 1985, § 2, subsection 6) stated: 'The institutions of higher education shall promote international and, in particular, European cooperation in the higher education sector and the exchange of students and staff between German and foreign institutions of higher education; they shall take the specific needs of foreign students into consideration.' The focus was primarily on postgraduate level. The legislation was implemented through the 1996 *Hochschulsonderprogramm HSP III* (Special Higher Education Programme). In addition to European cooperation, the programme prioritised links with industrialised countries, overcoming political differences between the East and the West, and cooperation with developing countries. Study abroad is intended to help enhance relations with industrialised countries, particularly those in Europe. By accommodating foreign students in German higher education, the aim is to address the educational needs of the developing as well as the industrialised countries. In 1992, the *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) recommended the internationalisation of course content to develop the 'virtual mobility' of students.

In Italy, Law 390 of 1991 stated that universities must (i) inform students of study opportunities abroad, especially those available through EU programmes, (ii) promote student exchanges between Italian and foreign higher education institutions and ensure the full recognition of these study periods, and (iii) provide intensive language courses for foreign students. The 1997 Decree implementing the 1991 changes to the Law on the right to higher education called on universities to award grants to supplement the scholarships received by university students whose courses involve international mobility. These principles have been reinforced and extended by Law 127/97, the Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers 25/98 and Ministerial Decree 6.3.98. This latter, indeed, considered internationalisation one of the objectives for the development of the university system 1998-2000.

The 1997 Austrian University Studies Act made international mobility a basic principle for the structure and organisation of courses. It requires the institution-based curricular committees to take account of international developments when designing new study courses. It allows for the use of foreign languages in study courses, i.e. classes and examinations can be held and certificates issued in languages other than German. As part of a course schedule, curricular committees may issue recommendations regarding the accreditation of studies at foreign universities in order to encourage mobility and the transfer of studies abroad. In each course of study, optional subjects to be taken at universities abroad can be freely chosen without any restrictions regarding content.

In Finland, the Ministry of Education first designed a strategy for the internationalisation of higher education in 1987 and this was incorporated into the successive Government Development Plans for Education and University Research (1993, 1995). The aims were to prepare students to operate in an increasingly international environment and to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education in Finland. Clearly defined quantitative targets for international student exchanges were set at the end

of the 1980s: by the end of the 1990s, every post-graduate student and at least 5,000 students per year studying for a Master's degree should spend at least one academic term studying abroad.

In 1977, the Swedish Higher Education Act of that year stipulated as a general aim of higher education the promotion of the understanding of other countries and of international matters. Today, internationalisation is regarded as an important element in maintaining the quality of work of higher education institutions, with international links focused mainly on European and other industrialised countries. A political priority since the late 1980s has been European integration as well as cooperation in the Baltic region. In addition, the incumbent government is stressing the need to refocus on cooperation with developing countries, a concern already expressed in the early 1970s.

In Norway, the 1991 White Paper on higher education included proposals to put a stronger emphasis on the internationalisation of higher education, for instance, through an increase in the number of student exchanges between Norwegian and foreign universities and colleges.

In 1997, the Danish Ministry of Education published the White Paper *Strategies for the Development of the International Dimension in Education*, which discussed among other things the issue of attracting more foreign students to Danish higher education institutions in order to reduce the imbalance in exchanges and the barriers to mobility. In Greece, the 1997 Education 2000 Act aimed to radically revise higher education provision and adjust it to international norms.

6.2.2. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL AGENCIES IN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONALISATION

In this section, discussion of agencies involved solely in the implementation of EU action programmes is not included, as all countries under consideration have established such offices since 1987. Since 1990, in Sweden and Finland, national organisations, and in Germany, the *DAAD - Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service), have been set up by governments, often in collaboration with representatives of the higher education institutions, to plan and promote internationalisation in higher education. In Austria, the *ÖAD - Österreichischer Akademischer Austauschdienst* (Austrian Academic Exchange Service) advises and supports students, scholars or scientists from all over the world wishing to study or pursue research in Austria as well as their Austrian counterparts interested in going abroad. Within the *ÖAD*, various offices deal with different aspects of these exchanges, like the Office of European Educational Cooperation which was established in 1990 and is responsible for the administration of the EU educational and training programmes. In Sweden, the *Verket för högskoleservice* (National Agency for Higher Education) was established in 1992. One of the agency's tasks is the promotion of international exchange and the monitoring of international trends in higher education. The Finnish Ministry of Education set up the Centre for International Mobility in 1991 to promote international cooperation in education. The Centre is responsible for administering, developing and monitoring student and trainee exchange programmes and for providing information both on studies abroad and about Finnish educational provision. In Iceland, the *alþjóðaskrifstofa háskolastigsins*, an international office serving all higher education institutions was established in 1992. Its purpose is to promote internationalisation of higher education by (i) providing information on opportunities for cooperation, grants etc., (ii) assisting in negotiating agreements with foreign institutions and (iii) assisting in hosting foreign students and lecturers.

6.2.3. SPECIAL FUNDING FOR INSTITUTIONS

Following the events of 1968, France was one of the first countries to provide special funding to encourage the internationalisation of higher education (Faure Act). Denmark, Austria and Finland have started introducing special funding programmes to support or encourage institutions in the development of the internationalisation process in the second half of the 1980s. There was considerable discussion

of the need to internationalise study programmes in Denmark during the mid-1990s when it was realised that the content and relevance of programmes had to be seen in an international context. The aim was to increase the extent and quality of the international dimension of programmes mainly through the expansion of staff and student exchanges. The Danish Ministry of Education established a special internationalisation fund in 1987 in support of the internationalisation efforts of institutions and students. During the years 1990-93, the Italian Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research (*MURST*) provided resources for both institutions and Erasmus and Lingua students to promote the participation of universities in the EU mobility programmes. In 1997, the Netherlands introduced a fund for the development of structural international cooperation frameworks between groups of Dutch *hogescholen* (consortia) and institutions of higher education in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Norway, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. In the same year, funds were established to promote cross-border cooperation and the recruitment of foreign students. As a follow-up to the *Pushing Back the Borders* initiative, the Netherlands created a fund to stimulate cross-border institutional cooperation, student/staff mobility and the development of common joint-degree programmes in 1997. In an effort to encourage institutions to increase the intake of non-European students, mainly from Indonesia, an incentive fund was established in 1997. Since 1990, the Austrian Government has provided additional resources for institutions to support the numerous cooperation agreements between Austrian universities, including the Austrian universities for art and music, and their counterparts abroad in the areas of teaching and research. In Finland, performance-based funding, introduced in 1994 for institutions, is based partly on an indicator of the scope of international activities (the number of out-going exchange students and the number of exchanges for researchers). Funding is also available to support the provision of degree courses in foreign languages, mainly English.

6.2.4. FINANCIAL AID OR OTHER SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

In a number of countries, state financial aid has been made available for students studying abroad since 1980, while certain countries (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) already had such provision prior to 1980. Financial support sometimes took the form of a special grants programme or involved the extension of the regular state aid awarded to students in a particular country. In a minority of countries, aid was also made available for overseas students. More detail of these financial support programmes for students can be found in the study of the European Commission, Eurydice European Unit (1999). The special internationalisation fund established by the Danish Ministry in 1987, provides for student scholarships to study abroad, international networking, language courses etc. The possibility of transferring student support abroad, which has existed in Denmark since the 1950s in relation to the Nordic countries, has since been extended to countries world-wide. Since 1988, Danish students can take their grants abroad for recognised studies for a period of up to four years, while first and second cycle students in France benefiting from a grant awarded on social criteria, can take this grant abroad for studies in any EU and EFTA/EEA Member State. The length of time for which Austrian students can take their national financial aid abroad has been extended from two to four semesters in 1994. State aid for Swedish students enrolled at an institution in Sweden has been transferable to courses abroad since 1989. For Spanish students the portability of grants has been, since 1996, limited to studies recognised in Spain and authorised by the Spanish home university. For students of the Flemish Community of Belgium this transfer is possible for studies in the Netherlands. In Italy, the Netherlands, Austria and Finland, additional grants were also made available for students studying abroad. In the Flemish Community of Belgium and in France, financial aid to students in relation to the Erasmus programme is often supplemented by the Community or the local authorities respectively. Till 1999, Austria has been offering incoming students who were not on any of the numerous scholarship programmes, financial aid towards the end of their study period in order to enable them to finish their studies and obtain a degree. Due to budgetary restrictions this form of grant will no longer be available as of the academic year 1999/2000. In Finland, support in the form of housing was extended to some students coming from abroad.

6.2.5. OTHER MEASURES TO PROMOTE STUDENT EXCHANGES

Finally, governments introduced a number of other changes at national level to encourage the movement of students in Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, the United Kingdom and Iceland during the period studied. The majority of these involved changes to course structures, to attract students from abroad or to encourage students to spend short periods abroad. In Germany and Austria, where first degree courses are lengthy, the national governments have recently promoted new, shorter courses aimed at foreign students: Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Germany (1997) and Master of Advanced Studies or Master of Business Administration in Austria (1997). When implementing the 1992/93 degree reforms, many French universities opted for an organisation of the curriculum which facilitates European-wide inter-university exchanges. Study regulations for certain degree courses, for instance, were rewritten to allow for the validation of certain subjects studied abroad. In Iceland, new postgraduate courses have been organised since 1994 where students are expected to spend part of their course abroad, sometimes in the context of the Erasmus programme.

In the United Kingdom, the Government first published an annual guide to higher education opportunities in Europe in 1992, which is distributed to students applying for university through schools, careers offices and libraries.

Although recognising the importance of internationalisation, Portugal has so far not been able to fully develop this aspect, due to capacity restrictions in higher education. There are nevertheless initiatives to promote participation in Erasmus and various research programmes especially in fields which are underrepresented in Portuguese higher education. Special emphasis is also placed on cooperation with African Portuguese-speaking countries. The changes reported by Greece were focused mainly on initiatives to bring Greek higher education up to European levels and to open it up to external influences.

6.3. INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

In Chapter 1: Legislation for Change, it was noted that despite the apparent importance of internationalisation in higher education policy, it was not specifically a subject of legislation or published policy in the majority of participating countries. This is primarily because, in most countries, the policy of internationalisation is determined at institutional level. It is the institutions and their staff who set up and maintain the links and networks necessary for successful international collaboration and who host foreign exchange students. During the 1990s, institutions in many countries have centralised and coordinated such individual links into structured programmes and many have drawn up bilateral agreements with institutions in other countries which cover joint research, exchanges of students and teaching staff and often, joint courses and curriculum planning. Many of these initiatives were supported and stimulated by the government strategies described above, but implementation was the responsibility of the institutions.

Due to their involvement in research work and in postgraduate research training, universities were initially best placed to develop international links. However, in many of the countries with a binary higher education system like the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland and Norway, the non-university institutions have also developed an international focus during the 1990s. In Germany, some *Fachhochschulen* have been very successful in attracting more students by developing an international profile. A major focus of the changes since 1980 has been the expansion of exchange programmes for students, as well as early attempts to internationalise curricula. In the Flemish Community of Belgium all *hogescholen* but one have an approved Socrates/Erasmus institutional contract. The number of outgoing students has doubled in the last four years and there is still potential for further growth.

The main institutional strategies to stimulate internationalisation and adopted since 1980 are shown in Table 6.2. The precise dates when these were introduced were rarely available but most changes took place during the late 1980s and 1990s.

Table 6.2: Institutional initiatives for internationalisation since 1980

	B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO
International offices/administrators		94	87	●			●		●		●	87	●	●	●	●	●		●
Language courses for foreign students and/or those going abroad		●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Courses given in foreign languages		●	●	●	●						●	●		●	●			●	●
Integration and support for foreign students				●					●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Internationalisation of mainstream courses and curricula		●		●	●		●		●		96	97		●	●				

Source: Eurydice.

● Precise year not reported

6.3.1. INTERNATIONAL OFFICES OR ADMINISTRATORS

A visible indicator of an institution's commitment to internationalisation is the establishment of an international office or administrator, although their functions may vary. Some deal mainly with information and support for students, while others have a wider coordinating role for institutional participation in multilateral agreements and EU programmes.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, every university and *hogeschool* has established a *dienst internationale betrekkingen* (service for international relations) to provide administrative support for the development of international contacts and relations. The two biggest Danish universities, the University of Copenhagen and the University of Aarhus centralised their international activities in 1987 and 1990 respectively by establishing an international office to run the university's extensive international network. In Germany, the *Akademische Auslandsämter* (offices for studies abroad) were established at nearly all universities and *Fachhochschulen* to provide advice and information to German and foreign students on degree courses, individual disciplines, admission requirements, funding and organisational matters related to studying abroad. These offices, together with the foreign languages departments of the higher education institutions, also organise foreign language courses for students going abroad. In Italy, every university has established a unit for international relations to support international contacts and participation in EU programmes. By 1990, every Dutch university and most *hogescholen* had established a *Bureau Buitenland* (office for international relations). At the national level, the *Nuffic* (the Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education) provides administrative support and acts as an intermediary for international contacts and relations. Since the mid-1980s, Austrian universities and the universities of art and music have set up *Auslandsbüros* (international relations offices), while in *Fachhochschulen* this function is performed by the director of each course of study. These offices advise students and teaching staff on international exchange programmes and administer applications for grants to study abroad. They are also the coordinators of EU and other exchange programmes. In Sweden and Norway, most higher education institutions have drawn up internationalisation plans and usually have one or more administrators dealing with issues relating to internationalisation. The posts for administrators were created before 1980 and institutions were able to receive special 'internationalisation grants' to meet part of the cost of these activities. With the continued decentralisation of the higher education system in the late 1980s and early 1990s, these earmarked sums were included in the general funding of institutions. However, it was stressed that institutions should ensure continued adequate funding for internationalisation activities. Similarly, since the 1980s, universities in the United Kingdom have

appointed international officers or advisers who coordinate the often extensive network of links for international exchanges and ensure that the needs of international students are addressed. Most institutions now have specialist staff dealing with international student services.

6.3.2. LANGUAGE COURSES AND COURSES DELIVERED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Since the 1980s, intensive language courses for students going to study abroad or for incoming foreign students have been made available, or their provision increased by higher education institutions in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway. As a consequence of the reciprocity principle of the Erasmus programme, a number of countries have begun to offer higher education courses delivered in foreign languages, often English. Countries whose institutions offer such courses include the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway.

6.3.3. INTEGRATION AND SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Other changes were made by institutions in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Iceland to integrate and support foreign students. In Germany, some *Studentenwerke* (student social affairs organisations) have offered 'full service packages' covering accommodation, insurance etc. since 1997. Since 1998, the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs has encouraged the integration of foreign students by offering a sizeable cash award to individuals and institutions in Germany involved in projects and initiatives aimed at improving the daily life of foreign students. In Austria and the Netherlands, many universities and colleges of art offer special orientation programmes or 'welcome days' for foreign students on exchange programmes. In Sweden and Finland, in addition to different kinds of support offered by the institutions, the student unions at many institutions play an important role in the integration and support of foreign students. In the United Kingdom, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) and the British Council/Education Counselling Service have published codes of practice on the recruitment and support of international students in UK higher education. The codes give advice to institutions on the information which should be provided for students, including the academic and non-academic support services students can expect.

6.3.4. INTERNATIONALISATION OF CURRICULA

During the 1990s, the internationalisation process began to have an effect on curricula, influencing both courses specialising in international issues and mainstream courses. Many institutions recognised the value of including an international dimension into their mainstream higher education courses by reviewing the content of the curriculum and by adapting the course structure to allow for international exchanges to be included. Such reform was often stimulated by government policies and supported by special funding.

The establishment of systems for joint international curriculum planning by groups of higher education institutions in several countries may be seen as a counterbalance to the trend towards increased decentralisation of course planning noted in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching. However, such systematic collaboration has been developed in only a few countries including France and the Netherlands. In 1990, the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research decided to create, in the larger cities, *pôles d'excellence* (centres of excellence) or *pôles européens* (European centres) involving several universities. These centres were set up as a tool to develop cooperation among institutions and to pool some of their resources in the field of research and student exchanges. In the Netherlands, a government fund was set up in 1997 to support the development of consortia of *hogescholen* with similar

institutions abroad. These consortia were intended to work towards developing curricula for joint courses as well as regulating the mutual recognition of course units and exchanges of staff and students.

Sweden, rather than including a study period abroad in its higher education programmes, opted for the integration of an international dimension into the curricula. In the 1960s, pilot projects were carried out with the aim of adding an international orientation to degree programmes by including foreign language study and traineeships abroad. Furthermore, international relations courses and Eastern European studies as well as peace and conflict research were actively promoted. When institutions were given greater responsibility for course structure and content in the early 1990s, many started to include or focus on international issues and aspects.

The Flemish Community of Belgium introduced some of the principles of the ECTS into its higher education courses in order to facilitate adaptation to study programmes in other European countries and to ease recognition of study periods abroad. In Germany, it was recognised by the *Wissenschaftsrat* (Science Council) in 1992, that despite the expansion of international exchange programmes the majority of students would not get an opportunity to study abroad. The introduction of an international or European dimension to mainstream courses was seen as a way of producing 'virtual mobility' among students, and institutions were encouraged to develop internationalised curricula in line with OECD guidelines. Supported by the Erasmus programme and the European office of *DAAD*, internationalised curricula were introduced in many universities and *Fachhochschulen* where they met acceptance by students. The course structure reform, promoted in particular by the 1998 amendment to the Higher Education Framework Act, and the introduction of international first and second degree courses have created highly improved conditions for studies abroad. In Greece, university curricula have been modified over the last few years to expand their European dimension, especially in relation to European history and culture, economics and law. Austria's University Studies Act of 1997 gives considerable responsibility to the institution-based curricular committees to include an international element in the curriculum of all study courses and to promote student mobility and the transfer of study attainments abroad.

Other changes aimed at giving a more prominent role to internationalisation in mainstream courses included the restructuring of courses and assessment procedures in order to produce shorter modules assessed according to a credit system. As discussed in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching, the division into shorter modules favours the transfer of study attainments between institutions at home and abroad.

6.4. OVERVIEW OF REFORMS

In all participating countries, higher education has become more international, or, at least, more European, during the period under consideration. This is partly a result of the success of EU action programmes on collaborative research and exchange of students, and partly the desire of governments to improve their economic competitiveness by ensuring more students acquire the linguistic skills and knowledge to operate effectively in an international environment. Similarly, institutions have welcomed the opportunity to raise their status and the quality of their research and teaching by collaborating with institutions in other countries.

The nature and focus of links between the participating countries has changed during the period under review from research collaboration set up by individuals, to the introduction of government and institution-led initiatives for students and staff exchanges, to the review of course structure and content, in order to take account of the growing importance of international issues and aspects. The major development observed in most countries has been a significant increase in the number of students going to study abroad, some as part of EU programmes, but the majority independently. The OECD document on the internationalisation of higher education (1996) argued that internationalisation had moved into the mainstream of the curriculum and administrative systems at many universities and that this trend was expected to continue well into the next century. The evidence of the present study is that

internationalisation has certainly become a component of planning and administration in higher education institutions in all participating countries. However, the process of upgrading non-university institutions in many countries, discussed in Chapter 5: Curriculum and Teaching, has probably also led to a more international orientation on the part of these institutions.

Internationalisation of the curriculum and student exchanges have been more prominent factors in certain study programmes, like foreign languages, business studies, engineering, law, natural and social sciences as well as programmes in international and European studies. The OECD (1996) also observed an increase in the internationalisation of the curricula of economics and technological courses in parallel with the increasing internationalisation of the labour market for graduates of such courses.

The Netherlands and Germany emerged as the countries with the earliest and most comprehensive government-led internationalisation policies, developed in parallel with EU programmes. Since 1980, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have extended their already well-established institutional links outside Europe to the European countries. The Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Norway also had extensive strategies in place both at government and institutional level in 1997. They had set up an open higher education area under the Nordplus agreement during the study period which was the focus of much student mobility. In 1997, at the end of the study period, Austria introduced some fundamental institution-led changes to strongly encourage internationalisation of higher education courses. Luxembourg and Liechtenstein have had long traditions of sending students to study abroad.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The changing role of higher education in post-war Europe is explained by the shift from production-based to knowledge and information-based societies which encourage all citizens with the necessary intellectual capabilities, independent of their social and economic background, to pursue post-secondary and, in particular, higher education at some stage of their life. This policy of promoting wider participation is based on the knowledge that personal fulfilment in educational terms leads to social cohesion and cultural advancement and that a highly skilled workforce is a prerequisite for sustaining competitiveness in a global market. In line with this observation, the OECD (1998, p. 20) comes to the following conclusion: **‘A historic shift is occurring in the second half of the 20th century: tertiary education is replacing secondary education as the focal point of access, selection and entry to rewarding careers for the majority of young people.’**

In the 1980s, recurrent periods of recession brought falling GDPs, high inflation and rising levels of unemployment and many of the countries under review resorted to high interest rates and strict controls on public expenditure. During the 1990s, some countries relied on a further reduction in public spending as a means to meet the Maastricht criteria, the prerequisite for participation in European Monetary Union. The political, economic and social climate began to embrace the notions of self-reliance and competitiveness with the emphasis on quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness. These developments were accompanied by the globalisation of the economy, the deepening of European integration, major advances and the increased use of information and communications technologies and, in some countries, by moves towards decentralisation and regionalisation.

The motivation for reform in higher education during the past 20 years seems almost entirely rooted in an effort by higher education systems to adapt to their new environment shaped by social, economic and demographic factors.

7.1. CATALYSTS FOR REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

7.1.1. INCREASE IN DEMAND

The increased participation in higher education has been the result of the democratisation of access on the one hand and the growing need of the economy for a highly skilled workforce on the other. The increased intake of students has had a marked influence on the diversity of students, now recruited from a variety of social, cultural and educational backgrounds and entering or re-entering higher education at different stages of their lives. In the context of life-long learning, a large proportion of adults can now be expected to participate in higher education at some stage of their life and their motivation might be career advancement, professional reorientation, taking advantage of educational opportunities missed earlier in life or just personal interest in a particular field. The new diversity in student intake has forced and will continue to force institutions to redesign their course offer and learning pathways to suit the varied expectations and life-styles of their student body. The emergence of a vast range of new study options and combinations during the period studied, as well as the rising number of courses of a flexible and modular design with their related credit transfer schemes, are vivid proof of this development.

Although the main surge of higher education expansion in most participating countries pre-dates this study, during the 1980s and 1990s, all have tried to open higher education to previously underrepresented groups such as adults with non-traditional or vocational qualifications. The rise in

higher education participation was particularly pronounced in Spain, Ireland and Portugal during the last two decades, with Greece, the United Kingdom and Iceland showing a big increase during the 1990s. In most countries, these increases are projected to continue into the 21st century, although in the Belgian French Community, Germany and the Netherlands, demand for higher education began to level out during the 1990s.

7.1.2. RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC SPENDING

Since the State was and still is the main provider of educational funding in all participating countries, the cuts in public spending discussed also had repercussions for higher education. In an effort to compromise neither the quality nor the volume of higher education provision, most countries concentrated on improving its efficiency by achieving a higher return on the financial and human capital deployed. It was generally recognised that the best way to increase efficiency was to place institutional administration into the hands of those most affected by its decisions, that is, the members of the academic and student communities. This meant the State withdrawing as much as possible from institutional governance and restricting itself to stating general objectives relating to educational output: number of graduates, standards of academic qualifications and employability of students. This development was described by Neave and Van Vught (1991) as the move away from the 'interventionary' towards the 'facilitatory' state, where the State no longer controls the process but the product of higher education. At the same time, the State generally made institutions more accountable in the use of public funds by comparing their performance against set targets and by intensifying the quality control of educational provision. In some countries, the State has requested or even obliged the business community to contribute its expertise to the running of institutions, the matching of course offers to labour market needs and to monitoring the quality of institutional output.

While making the most efficient use of public funds a priority, institutions have also been encouraged to seek out alternative sources of income. The increase in autonomy allowed institutions to adapt their course offer to student and business needs which, in turn, made it easier for them to approach either community for supplementary funding.

Efficiency is a common reason behind the restructuring of degree courses into distinct cycles and the shortening of the time required to obtain a first degree, witnessed in a number of countries during the period considered. The new structure of two or three successive cycles with their respective qualifications means students can end their studies after the initial degree or continue, possibly at a later point in life, with a more research oriented cycle.

7.1.3. GLOBALISATION OF ECONOMIES

The rapid increase in international economic and cultural relations during the past 20 years has forced countries to strengthen their educational provision in order to maintain or develop their position in a highly competitive environment. The enlargement of the European Union and the establishment of the European Economic Area set the scene for closer cooperation between the countries covered by this study. However the full benefits of a large, competitive market and multi-cultural environment can only be enjoyed if the citizens possess the necessary competence to operate in such an environment. Despite the progress made during the period under review, the internationalisation of the labour market is still lagging behind the globalisation of economies. Various EU action programmes as well as a range of multilateral programmes have tried to correct this situation. By promoting the international dimension of higher education, the participating countries are hoping to create a more flexible and mobile workforce which will strengthen European economic and social cohesion and mutual understanding.

7.1.4. TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Advances in technology, particularly in information and communications technology (ICT), have penetrated all aspects of life over the past decades and have had an impact not only on curricular content but also on teaching methods. The use of ICT in distance learning was pioneered by the open universities in an effort to recruit students from geographically distant areas or those unable to attend lectures due to other commitments. Its use has proved of great advantage to students wishing to study at their own individual pace and with varying intensity at different intervals of their life. Due to its success in distance learning, IT-aided teaching has now also been accepted by a large number of institutions for teaching on-site students.

7.1.5. DECENTRALISATION

The term decentralisation in this study is used to describe both the transfer of responsibility for higher education administration from the political level (central State or regional entities) to the higher education institutions themselves and the devolution of political decision-making from the central State to the regional authorities. Administrative decentralisation and its motivations as experienced by the great majority of countries during the last two decades have been discussed in the previous sections. The process of political decentralisation was, however, limited to two countries.

In Belgium, the devolution of responsibility for education to the linguistic Communities in 1989 seems to have had greater consequences for the Flemish than the French Community because, until then, the entire higher education system had been based on the French model. The Flemish Community has since adopted a new approach based on increasing cooperation with the Dutch higher education system.

The Spanish Constitution of 1978 created 17 Autonomous Communities and determined the distribution of powers between these Communities and the State. The transfer of powers to the Communities has been a gradual process culminating in the adoption of the 1992 Organic Act, which included the devolution of responsibility for higher education to the Autonomous Communities. For the university sector, with the exception of the National Distance Education University, this transfer of powers has been completed, while for other higher education institutions the devolution process has not been finalised for all Communities. In order to preserve a uniform education system, the State has, however, retained the power to regulate the requirements for obtaining, issuing and recognising academic and professional qualifications and to determine certain requirements for access to higher education.

An interesting trend was observed in France between 1983 and 1985 with the passing of a number of *lois de décentralisation* (decentralisation acts) which transferred the responsibility for upper secondary education and vocational training to the regions. Although the State retained the responsibility for higher education, the regions have since managed to make use of their newly-gained power to influence the development of post-secondary education. In addition, since 1989, as part of the new regional planning policy, the State has encouraged the regions, districts and communes to contribute to the cost of establishing new higher education institutions in their area. This offer was met with great enthusiasm by local authorities because they saw it as a way of influencing the choice of courses offered by institutions established in their area and of promoting closer links with the local economy.

7.2. AREAS OF REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This section looks at the main areas in higher education which the participating countries identified as in need of reform and the ways in which they reshaped the system to meet the challenges described above. Did they model their reforms on other countries' experiences; did they find similar solutions or did they move in opposite directions?

Due to the fact that all participating countries experienced similar changes to their political and economic environments over the past two decades, their responses to the challenges facing higher education tended to be of a similar nature even if the timing and mechanisms for implementation differed. Generally speaking, there seems to have been a wide-ranging consensus on the objectives of higher education policies but considerable variations in the legal and policy instruments employed by individual countries to implement the desired change. The signing of the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) and the Declaration of Bologna (1999) can be seen as a move towards concerted action among European countries with regard to higher education objectives. These relate to the creation of a European higher education area to improve the external recognition of qualifications and facilitate student mobility and employability. Over and above these objectives, however, such action also has regard to policy measures (inter-institutional cooperation, the introduction of an adequate credit scheme, the promotion of lifelong learning, spending study time abroad) while still stressing the need to respect national differences.

The following is an attempt to identify convergent and divergent trends observed in the participating countries. In some instances, however, a convergent trend has ultimately led to increased divergence, e.g., the increase in institutional autonomy has meant that institutions chose differing approaches to take advantage of their newly gained freedom. In an effort to show the ambiguous nature of some reforms, the underlying convergent trend is discussed in section 2.1 and attention is drawn to the resulting divergent trend in section 2.2.

7.2.1. CONVERGENCE

In this context, the term 'convergence' is used to indicate moves by the participating countries which resulted in their education systems coming closer together. Table 7.1 summarises the principal areas of convergence. It appears to indicate a real moving together of European higher education systems in which almost all countries have participated to a greater or lesser extent. Although there were particular factors which gave countries different positions at the beginning of the period studied and which influenced their progress in different areas, there seem to be definite similarities in the directions they take and signs that progress will continue in future.

Although Table 7.1 shows a large number of convergent trends in higher education there is no evidence that these developments were the result of a concerted approach between participating countries. The convergent education policies seem more likely to be a by-product of the economic and social policies which, in the context of European integration, underwent a deliberate harmonisation process. This is particularly true for measures linked to mass participation in higher education and public spending restrictions, like the development of the non-university sector, widening of access, the review of the student support structure and the introduction of performance-based funding. Reforms relating to course and degree structures and internationalisation, although still motivated by economic factors, are increasingly based on deliberate cooperation between the countries concerned. Such reforms include the introduction of modular course schemes, the promotion of transferability and comparability of qualifications as well as the encouragement of academic mobility.

Table 7.1: Main areas of convergence across the higher education systems

	European Union																EFTA/EEA			
	B fr	B nl	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	IS	LI	NO	
Structure of higher education (HE)																				
establishment of a vocational non-university sector	*	*	*	*	▲	▲	*	*	▲	*	*	▲	▲	▲				*	▲	*
upgrading of certain post-secondary courses to HE	▲	▲			▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲			▲	▲	*	▲		▲	▲	▲
subdivision of degree courses in 2 to 3 distinct cycles			▲	○		▲		○			○	○	▲	▲	▲	▲		*	○	
establishment of open universities and distance learning		▲	▲	*	▲	*	*	▲			▲		▲	▲	*	*		▲		▲
Management and Control																				
increase in institutional autonomy																				
• internal governance	*	▲	▲	*	▲	▲	▲	*	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	*	*	▲	▲	▲	▲
• budget spending																				
block grants	*	*	▲	○	▲	▲	▲	*	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	*	*	▲	▲	▲	▲
formula-based funding	*	*	*	○	▲	▲	▲	*	▲	▲	*		▲	▲	*	*	▲	▲	▲	▲
funding by teaching contracts					▲	▲	▲	*	○	▲	▲	*	▲	▲		*	▲	▲	▲	▲
tuition/registration fees paid by students	*	*				*	*		*		*		*	*		▲	*	*	*	▲
• course planning	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲		*		▲
increased emphasis on quality control																				
• nationally defined system of quality control		▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
closer links with economic environment																				
• participation on governing/supervisory bodies	▲	▲	▲	○		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
• participation in quality assessment		▲	▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲			▲	▲	▲	▲	▲				
Access and Wastage																				
access for students with vocational qualifications	▲		*	▲		*	▲		*		▲	▲		▲	*	▲				
access to on-site HE for students w/o traditional qualifications	▲		*	▲		*	▲	▲			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	▲	*
information and guidance for new recruits	*	▲	*	*		*	▲	*	▲			▲		*	*	*		▲	▲	
Curriculum and Teaching																				
modular credit-based course structure		▲	▲	○	▲	▲	*	▲	○		▲			▲	*	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
closer links with labour market	▲		▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
increased use of ICT		▲	▲	▲		▲	▲	▲			▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
work experience as course element	▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Internationalisation																				
promotion of student and staff mobility	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
promotion of an international dimension in course planning		▲	▲	▲	▲						▲	▲		▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
financial and other support for studies abroad		▲	▲	*		▲			▲	*	▲	▲	▲	*	▲	▲	*	*	*	*

Source: Eurydice. * Introduced before 1980 and still valid

▲ Introduced between 1980 and 1998

○ Planned introduction or reinforcement after 1998

7.2.1.1. Structure of higher education

The restructuring of higher education was one of the most active areas of reform originally linked to the expansion of higher education in terms of numbers and diversity of student intake. Most countries tried to satisfy the immediate need for places in higher education by building more universities and by expanding or creating a vocationally oriented non-university sector. By 1980, the majority of countries under consideration had recognised the growing need for higher education courses to provide skilled manpower in the technical and commercial field. With the research-centred universities reluctant or unable to offer such courses these countries decided to create a vocational/technological non-university higher education sector. During the period of study, seven more countries followed their example and introduced a binary divide into their higher education systems to better serve the diverse interests and ambitions of their student population as well as the needs of the labour market.

To further stress the importance of vocational programmes, a number of countries decided to upgrade certain courses previously taught at secondary level to form part of the non-university higher education sector. In particular, this was true for teacher training for primary level, physical education, art and music, as well as some paramedical professions. Many of these institutions were granted similar levels of autonomy and put on the same legal footing as universities and/or their qualifications granted the same status.

The upgrading and lengthening of non-university courses on the one hand and the shortening and sub-division of initial degree courses at universities on the other, have led to similar first degree structures in both sectors. Various factors were instrumental in this development. First, there was the universities' wish to better cater for students who considered higher education as a preparation for entry to the job-market rather than the basis of a career in research. In 1980, university degree courses in many European countries still had a notional length of five years full-time study. Valuable resources were being wasted when students - already well into their study programmes - realised they had made the wrong choice and were forced to abandon their studies without appropriate certification of their study attainments. Another factor was the educational establishment's wish to give official recognition to the growing importance of the non-university sector by raising its status, as has been discussed already. Part of this process involved the lengthening of courses and the introduction of qualification structures equivalent to those at universities. Another major influence according to Neave (1996, p.31) was the adoption of the Council Directive 89/48/EEC regarding a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least three years' duration. It confers the right to take up or pursue a regulated profession in any Member State to all holders of diplomas confirming successful completion of a post-secondary course of at least three years' duration or its part-time equivalent at higher education institutions in any of the Member States. The continuing trend of dividing higher education programmes into two or three separate cycles (first or Bachelor's degree, Master's and doctoral degree) is highlighted by the Sorbonne Declaration and the Declaration of Bologna which both support the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles. The first cycle should last a minimum of three years and provide graduates with qualifications relevant to the European labour market.

Another important change on the higher education landscape was the introduction of distance learning and open universities. These played an invaluable role in expanding access to people with non-traditional qualifications and to those unable to attend on-site courses due to lack of time or transport. Thanks to their flexible course structure, they enable a very diverse student body to study a vast range of subject combinations within varying time scales. Courses are split into units or modules and a certain number of credits awarded on completion of each module. The student is free to complete only a single module or to continue and accumulate sufficient credits for the award of a degree. The advantages of this flexible course structure were soon recognised by other institutions wishing to attract students interested in a (multidisciplinary) education obtained at more than one institution by varying curricular pathways and within a time frame set by personal priorities. Since university and non-university institutions both make use of modular credit-based courses, student transfer between the two sectors has been greatly facilitated, encouraging a further rapprochement of the two.

All of the above-mentioned structural reforms are consistent with the desire to promote life-long learning since, in view of rapid technological advancement, economies will only remain competitive if their workforce keeps updating and upgrading its skills.

7.2.1.2. Management, finance and control

The granting of greater autonomy to institutions, particularly in institutional governance, budget spending and course planning was intended to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit and thus promote efficiency, cost-effectiveness, flexibility and quality in educational provision. At the same time, institutions were encouraged to seek additional funding through bids for government contracts and the sale of their research and teaching services or, in certain countries, by attracting fee-paying students. Public authorities, in their role as political decision-makers and the main providers of funds, continued to determine overall priorities and goals through funding programmes and kept a close eye on the results via reinforced control mechanisms. In the majority of countries, they did however no longer interfere with the institutions' choice of instruments to comply with the stated targets.

Although the desirability of increasing institutional autonomy appears to have been accepted by all the participating countries, the resultant change in the culture of universities has been difficult for some. Previously, a loosely-knit guild of individuals had considerable power over teaching and research in their particular discipline. Developments aimed at the creation of centralised, institutional management with strategic planning capacities. Germany, France, Italy and Austria appear to have made least progress in this area and much control remains with public authorities on the one hand, and with individual academics on the other.

In all European countries, the State, represented by central or regional government, is the most important provider and sponsor of higher education. Increasing overall cost of higher education, accompanied by restrictions in public spending, have led governments to reconsider their financial arrangements with individual institutions. In the past, the size of institutional budgets was largely decided by the State and funds were allocated strictly by budget lines (salaries, equipment, maintenance, etc.). In line with the trend towards more institutional autonomy, most countries progressed to the allocation of block grants during the period under review which gave institutions considerable freedom in setting their own spending priorities for the funds allocated by the authorities. Some countries linked funding to input, such as the number of entrants or courses offered, others based it on output, such as the numbers of graduates or the number of exams passed and qualifications obtained.

As mentioned before, the trend towards increased institutional autonomy was accompanied by the establishment of tighter control procedures in order to make institutions more accountable for the use of public funds. By 1997, all countries participating in this study, except the French Community of Belgium, had introduced some form of nationally (in Germany at *Land* level) defined quality assessment system. Evaluations are carried out jointly by the institutions and the academic community. Some countries take into account the views of students and even fewer seek the opinion of the business community. All countries except Liechtenstein, where the size of the higher education sector forbids such a move, have established a central monitoring agency for the coordination, supervision, verification or follow-up of the nation-wide evaluation process.

The increase in institutional autonomy linked to the drive for cost-effectiveness has often strengthened the links between higher education institutions and the business community. In an effort to reinforce their managerial know-how, institutions invited, or were obliged by the public authorities to recruit, members of the business community onto their management teams, or else consulted them. This, together with the institutions' intention to become more responsive to the needs of students and the business community, resulted in a growing number of institutional links with the local economy. This trend was particularly pronounced during the 1990s and was more strongly evidenced within the university sector.

7.2.1.3. Access and wastage

The issue of efficiency recurs as a reason for the selection of suitable students at entry and for the introduction of measures designed to reduce dropout during study. The better students' profiles are matched with the course offer, the faster students will pass through the educational system, making for the efficient use of human resources in terms of student and teaching staff time and the efficient use of financial resources in terms of lower overall costs. The same is true for study programmes tailored to the needs of the labour market as students will leave the higher education system sooner in favour of employment. As a consequence, during the period of study, most countries increased the range of selection criteria for identifying students best suited for particular programmes, introduced measures to reduce dropout and tried to link the course offer more closely to the social and economic environment, particularly the labour market. The trend towards increased selection at entry, present in the majority of countries, translated into divergent trends at institutional level since most countries place the responsibility for setting selection criteria with the institutions.

It is however interesting to note that all countries which introduced a binary divide during the period under review (Greece, Spain, Italy, Austria, Portugal and Finland) opted for high selectivity in the non-university sector. This, with the exception of Austria and Italy, was matched by the same degree of selectivity in the university sector.

Dropout is not necessarily a measure of academic underachievement, but sometimes a deliberate decision taken by students for professional or family reasons. To accommodate this, the introduction of modular course structures and the subdivision of programmes accompanied by new intermediate qualifications must again be considered in relation to increasing completion rates.

The most pronounced trend with respect to access and wastage was to widen access for students with vocational qualifications and mature-age students, in particular those without traditional qualifications such as an upper secondary leaving certificate. This trend together with the fact that the majority of higher education places during the period considered were created in the vocationally oriented non-university sector could be seen as confirmation of the move observed in many countries towards raising the status of vocational education at secondary and higher education level.

7.2.1.4. Financial aid to students

Reforms experienced in this area have shown only one convergent trend: the strictest systems have become more lenient while the most lenient ones have tightened up their regulations. Systems which previously granted students support with few enquiries into family income and academic progress were becoming too costly and stricter criteria for the allocation of grants and subsidised loans were adopted. In contrast, other countries which had applied very stringent controls by making both low family income and academic progress preconditions for the award of financial support realised that the system infringed upon the principle of equal opportunities. While the first group of countries aimed to make students and their families with the necessary financial means more responsible for the payment of their educational expenses, the latter group relieved the pressure on students from poorer backgrounds.

7.2.1.5. Curriculum and teaching

The participating countries, faced with a large student population and a shortage of public funds, sought to raise efficiency by increasing institutional autonomy in course planning, as in other areas of higher education. It was an attempt by the State to give institutions the freedom to design and deliver the curriculum (often within the limits of nationally defined guidelines) in the way they saw fit, but at the same

time to retain control over the final product by reserving the privilege of giving official recognition to academic qualifications or awarding the right to exercise a profession.

Making institutions responsible for defining their own course structure and content induced a process of curricular renewal, a redefinition of learning pathways and a review of student assessment procedures and degree structures. This has led to the emergence of a great diversity in course offers and teaching methods which could be interpreted as the expression of divergence rather than convergence. Nevertheless, there are many common trends to be found in curricular reform across and within countries. Due to pressure from the student community as well as public authorities, institutions in all countries were forced to adapt their course offer to the needs of the labour market. This was particularly true for university courses as the non-university sector already had a tradition of close cooperation with the labour market. Closer links with economic life were also a motivation behind the inclusion of work experience in a growing number of university programmes.

Over the past two decades this interaction between institutions and the surrounding economies has led to a fruitful cross-fertilisation of ideas between the academic and business communities, with industry being represented on institutional governing boards, institutions offering their research and teaching services to industry, increased importance attached to work placements as a course element and better employment prospects for graduates.

As discussed in the section on structural reforms, higher education systems requiring the student's full-time presence at a specific institution for a certain number of years were found to be incompatible with the promotion of life-long learning in the majority of participating countries. During the past few decades, these structures have slowly started to give way to more flexible course design where programmes are divided into modules and study attainments are recognised in the form of credits. These are awarded on completion of each module and can be accumulated over an unlimited period until their number warrants the award of a degree. A very important aspect of these credit schemes is their transferability between study programmes, institutions and/or countries. The accreditation of work experience gained either prior to or during the time of study is further proof of the increased flexibility of higher education systems in terms of access and recognition of learning pathways provided by economic life.

7.2.1.6. Internationalisation

Any reforms in this area of higher education are by definition convergent in nature. Aspects of higher education most affected by internationalisation were course structure and content. Higher education institutions in all participating countries have redesigned some of their courses and given them a modular structure, included lectures in foreign languages, made a study period abroad compulsory and/or introduced credit schemes allowing the transfer of study attainments between institutions at home and abroad. This has been done to enable students to benefit from an education with a truly international dimension, which will equip them for a successful professional career in a multi-lingual, multi-cultural economic area. A number of countries have extended their financial aid schemes to studies abroad or are offering incoming students financial and other support.

Since 1980, the internationalisation of higher education has changed from a process mainly based on collaborative research between individual academics to a systematic network of cooperation orchestrated by institutions, governments and the European institutions. At the same time, this process has been extended to cover a larger number of institutions in the university and non-university sectors.

In 1999, current European-wide cooperation culminated in the signing of the Declaration of Bologna when 29 countries agreed to establish a European area of higher education and agreed on convergent policies aimed at reaching this goal.

7.2.2. DIVERGENCE

Although the main trends in higher education policies as reported by the participating countries seem to point in the direction of convergence, some divergent approaches have been noted. Only the future will show if individual countries' actions going against the present tide will in the long run turn out to be precursors of new convergent tendencies.

7.2.2.1. Structure of higher education

As seen earlier, one of the major common tendencies in higher education was the establishment of two separate sectors, a more research-oriented university sector and a more vocationally-oriented non-university sector. Only three of the countries reviewed have unitary higher education systems: Sweden, United Kingdom and Iceland. Although Iceland maintained its unitary structure throughout the period studied, the lack of special infrastructure for non-university institutions has been felt to be a limiting factor for further diversification of vocational higher education. A process of merging small non-university institutions into larger entities at university level was started in the late 1990s. The intention was to create a higher education system consisting entirely of university level institutions, differing only in their research responsibilities. Sweden had already abolished the distinction between universities and university colleges in 1977, a decision reflecting the view that all higher education is of equal importance for the economy and should prepare students for their working life. The only remaining difference at the time, was that universities continued to receive funds for research and postgraduate education which were denied to the university colleges. Gradually, this distinction was abolished and university colleges were given funds for research and a couple of them now even offer postgraduate courses in specific disciplines. In the United Kingdom, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act allowed non-university institutions, subject to satisfying certain criteria, to adopt the title university. This offer was taken up by a large number of institutions, mainly polytechnics, which are commonly referred to as the 'new' universities. Although all higher education institutions offer a broad range of courses, the 'new' universities generally offer a wider range of courses leading to the professional qualifications recognised by professional bodies.

7.2.2.2. Management, finance and control

The main focus of reform in this area was the increase in the autonomy of institutions. The State, however, tended to retain most influence in the areas of development planning and staffing, and in Austria and Iceland continued to own buildings and equipment used by higher education institutions. The German *Länder* have so far retained their responsibility in relation to budgetary matters, although some of them are giving financial autonomy to their institutions under pilot projects. Despite the fact that the 1998 *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (Higher Education Framework Act) allowed for the introduction of block grants and formula-based funding, these funding methods have not yet been adopted by all the individual *Länder*.

The students' contribution to institutional funding in the form of tuition fees has been the subject of few reforms during the period under consideration, with the general trend pointing towards an increase in fees. The United Kingdom argued that students should bear part of the cost of an education considered beneficial to their personal and professional future and was the only country which introduced tuition fees borne by students during the period under review. The decision by two German *Länder* to introduce enrolment fees must be considered an innovative action in the German higher education landscape, but cannot be interpreted as a reform when applying the definition used by this study. Ireland on the other hand did take a singular action when, in 1995, it began to phase out tuition fees charged to students. The argument in favour of this decision was that the make-up of the student population was still biased in favour of students from privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

The increased financial autonomy of institutions has in all countries been accompanied by stricter externally-determined control procedures. The only region which has not yet introduced such a centrally-determined quality assessment system is the French Community of Belgium.

The inclusion of business representatives on the governing boards of institutions is a trend observed in all participating countries, with the exception of some *Länder* in Germany, and Greece and Italy. This obviously convergent trend supported by the increase in institutional autonomy could however, in the long run, create divergent administrative approaches among institutions. The likelihood of such divergence is even greater considering that, in future, the higher education environment will become more competitive and institutions will have to clearly distinguish themselves from their competitors in an effort to attract students and sponsors.

7.2.2.3. Access and wastage

By 1996/97, all countries had in one way or another limited access to higher education via different selection procedures applied at entry. Belgium is still the only country to grant open access to its non-university sector, while Austria and Luxembourg do not see the need to check the suitability of applicants for particular university programmes as long as they fulfil the basic entry requirements. The argument that the selection procedures might differ more in future is again based on the fact that, in the majority of countries, it is the institutions' responsibility to determine the selection criteria.

As far as the university sector is concerned, Spain was the only country to tighten selection at entry as it had not been able to match the surge in student numbers with higher education places. Denmark and Norway, in contrast, have been able to sufficiently increase the places available on the most popular courses to warrant a diminution of selectivity at entry. Greece is also planning to reduce selectivity at entry from the year 2000 when its higher education expansion programme will have taken full effect.

7.2.2.4. Financial aid to students

Some of the countries which have traditionally relied on grants as a means of support for students have tried to supplement or replace these by loans, but the United Kingdom was the only country where students have taken up this offer in significant numbers. In the United Kingdom, the view that graduates as individuals benefited from public investment in higher education more than did society as a whole was one factor involved in the decision to introduce a loans system. This view was also reflected in the decision to introduce tuition fees, taken in 1998 and the planned abolition of grants in 1999/2000.

The award of grants is still linked to the parents' or spouses' levels of income in most countries with only 4 countries (Denmark, partly in the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden) abolishing this link in the period under consideration. Interestingly, not a single country offering grants has moved in the opposite direction and started linking them to these incomes.

7.2.2.5. Curriculum and teaching

As already discussed, there is no doubt that the main directions of change (closer links with the labour market, introduction of more flexible course structures, increased use of ICT and the inclusion of work placements in a growing number of programmes) in this area of higher education have been convergent. Because curricular matters have been increasingly placed in the hands of institutions and teaching has traditionally been their responsibility, curricular reforms have largely increased the diversity of programmes and qualifications offered. Future development seems likely to be marked by even greater diversity. The recurring themes of efficiency and economic relevance have led to closer links

between institutions and their economic environment which has led, amongst other things, to course offers being tailored to the requirements of the local labour market, further reinforcing differentiation.

7.3. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The plans for future developments communicated by the participating countries suggest the reinforcement of already existing trends rather than any major turn-around in higher education reform. The tendency is one of deliberate convergence in an effort to create a European higher education space.

On careful analysis of the documents published at national and European level concerned with the future development of European higher education, the following major trends emerge:

- promotion of the interaction between higher education and the economy
- promotion of the economic relevance of higher education programmes
- promotion of quality assurance with the help of relevant quality indicators
- promotion of the mobility of students and academic staff
- promotion of life-long learning by making higher education accessible at all stages of life
- division of higher education programmes into distinct cycles whereby
 - the first cycle (Bachelor's degree) is a multidisciplinary, general cycle preparing students for entry to the labour market
 - the second cycle (Master's degree) offers specialised knowledge in a research oriented environment
 - the third cycle (doctoral studies) is purely research oriented
- enhancement of the system of credits for the recognition of study attainments
- increase in the transferability of credits between institutions, higher education sectors and countries
- enhancement of the readability and comparability of higher education qualifications.

Most countries give top priority to the deepening of interaction between higher education, economic life and society as a whole. Institutions are expected to contribute to the development of the local economy, which in turn will be able to offer employment to their graduates. In France and Iceland in particular, regions are keen to attract new institutions into the area in support of social and economic development. It follows that, in future, the economic relevance of the course offer can be expected to be subject to closer scrutiny.

Another important issue, particularly in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Finland, is the further development and restructuring of the non-university sector to respond to the economies' need for highly-trained specialists in technological and commercial fields. The further rapprochement of the university and non-university sectors is a stated aim in Greece and France.

Austria and France are both planning to follow the example of the majority of countries and increase institutional autonomy. This will be linked to a revision of the funding mechanisms in both countries. Austria, for its part, is planning to follow the prevailing trend and introduce performance-based funding. Iceland is the only other country where the introduction of tuition fees is viewed positively.

The autonomy of universities in defining curricula is only just starting to emerge in Italy. Further developments are expected but will depend on the success of the current reform which is being hindered by part of the academic establishment.

With the creation of the new Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Culture, Luxembourg plans to further expand and reform its higher education sector. The promotion of higher education amongst school-leavers and an extended offer of postgraduate studies are high on the agenda.

The wish to create a learning society is high on the agenda in many countries. The Nordic countries and the United Kingdom, in particular, stress the importance of life-long learning in their future development plans. Institutions will not only be expected to widen access to mature-age students and to make continuing education part of their educational tasks, but they will also have to continue their efforts to make their educational structures more flexible by providing for credit transfer and student mobility. In Spain, some issues concerning university entrance examinations are currently under review.

Many countries stress the importance of further strengthening evaluation procedures in educational provision and also the institutions themselves. The general tendency seems to be one of intensifying and centralising the assessment process.

A few countries have identified areas of concern which need to be addressed in the near future. Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom have recognised the weak participation of students from less academic backgrounds or disadvantaged areas and are planning to introduce measures to redress the balance. The proliferation of courses and qualifications offered, the difficulty of assessing their relevance and quality, and the danger that a multiplication of provisions may lead to resource wastage seem to emerge as causes for concern in Denmark and Norway. In France, the rigidity of the system of awarding *diplômes nationaux* (national diplomas) only under study programmes observing very detailed curricular requirements is restricting differentiation in educational provision. This will have to be reviewed in future.

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PART II

National descriptions of higher education reforms between 1980 and 1998

This part is available on CD-ROM

INTRODUCTION

The second part of the study comprises individual descriptions of higher education systems for the fifteen EU Member States and three EFTA/EEA countries. There are two descriptions for both the UK and Belgium, covering the co-existing national systems.

The national descriptions provide an account of the last two decades of developments in higher education in each country, as well as an overview of the current state of play. Compiled by the national EURYDICE units in cooperation with national experts, the descriptions are constructed around the same topics as the comparative analysis in Part I of the study.

The descriptions provide the historical backdrop for reforms, considering country-specific economic, social and political factors. They go on to summarise the most significant changes in each higher education system, examining their motivation, the main policy and legislative instruments employed as well as their effects.

The issues covered include shifts in the approach to institutional governance and funding, changes in student access, the altering of the balance between the university and non-university sectors, internationalisation strategies and future perspectives for the higher education sector in each country.

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TWO DECADES OF REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS

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BELGIUM

INTRODUCTION

The issue of education has been the focus of many reforms and controversies in Belgium since the creation of the unitary State in 1831. The development of higher education, which was for a long time confined to 4 universities (2 state-run institutions in Liege and Ghent and 2 independent institutions in Leuven and Brussels), has followed that of Belgian society with its characteristic 'segmented pluralism', an expression coined at the end of the Second World War by the American political analyst Val Lorwin.

The most important university reforms were introduced by the Laws of 1953, 1965 and 1971. These laws must be seen in connection with the radical reform of non-university higher education that has taken place since 1970.

The Law of 1965 on university expansion favoured the creation of new university institutions and the transformation of existing tertiary institutions. This expansion was linked to the linguistic scission of the universities of Leuven and Brussels. Under this new legislation, 17 university institutions, including 6 full universities, have been set up across the entire territory since then, within the context of national funding and with increasingly delicate linguistic and regional balances, in particular due to the budgetary constraints resulting from the long economic crisis.

The Law of 7 July 1970 on the general structure of higher education established the structure of non-university higher education, by dividing education into long-type and short-type education, and standardised the creation and functioning of many institutions which had been characterised by different structures and levels. This law and the subsequent legal and regulatory provisions provided a means of defining common funding rules for institutions operating under different public authorities (State, provinces and communes) or private denominational and non-denominational authorities (*libre confessionnel, libre non confessionnel*).

To some extent, the patchwork of organising authorities (*pouvoir organisateur/inrichtende macht*), regions and zones and the sheer number of university institutions (17 for the country as a whole) and higher education institutions (407 for the 3 Communities) reflected the pluralism of Belgian society with its multifarious components: linguistic, regional and provincial, religious and philosophical, political, trade unionist and social.

The unitary State set up in 1831 was transformed over time into a Federal State through many successive reforms. Of particular importance were the following constitutional reviews: in 1970, the cultural Communities and the Regions were created and responsibility was transferred for certain educational matters not included in the agreement on schools (the so-called *Pacte scolaire*); in 1980, the Communities and Regions were assigned cultural responsibilities and the so-called *matières personnalisables* (matters relating to persons rather than territorial issues); and on 8 August 1988, all educational matters became the exclusive responsibility of the Communities.

The Special Law of 16 January 1989 on the funding of the Communities and Regions lays down the financial and budgetary resources for a 10-year period, in particular for teaching, education and scientific research. Thus, for the last 10 years, the 3 Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) have been autonomous in these areas.

Moreover, article 24 (formerly article 17) of the Constitution, guarantees the freedom of education. Several education networks coexist within each of the Communities: subsidised official/public education

(*l'enseignement officiel subventionné*) offered in 10 provinces since January 1995 and in several of the 589 communes; subsidised free or non-state education (*l'enseignement libre subventionné*) of which c. 92% is Catholic, c. 6% non-denominational and c. 2% Protestant, Jewish and Islamic, and education under the auspices of the three linguistic Communities formerly organised and funded by the State.

Generally speaking, higher education has not been unaffected by forms of pluralism in Belgium. The 3 main traditional political leanings, liberal, socialist, social democrat, sharing power or otherwise, have formed the basis for every compromise that has been reached in terms of the structure, funding, planning and recognition of education. They effectively dominate Belgian society (including the trade unions, mutualities, hospital networks, cultural and charitable associations, the press, federations of all kinds, etc.).

Territorial and administrative decentralisation, with strong tendencies towards the type of autonomy enjoyed by the towns and communes of the Middle Ages, has consolidated these 3 major political trends.

The linguistic division between the Flemish and French Communities, based on the *ius soli* has led to the partitioning of political parties and, by the same token, highlighted the need for party coalitions to form the various executive bodies. This has in effect made the objectives set with regard to teaching and education all the more vague.

The Law of 29 May 1959 (which is based on the agreement on schools signed on 20 November 1958) marked the end of the hostilities between the different systems offering pre-school, primary, secondary, special, artistic and non-university higher education. This balance was for a long time maintained thanks to the budget allocations made possible by Belgium's economic growth. It had in effect always been possible to reach a compromise, by increasing the budgetary resources of the country's different networks of schools.

Since 1960, the education budgets have enjoyed considerable growth. This has been based on constitutional or legal principles (concerning freedom of education and freedom of choice of school by the head of the family, the State's obligation to allocate funds and subsidies to all the systems and all recognised schools, and the obligation to provide, under certain conditions, concurrent education at the request of a certain number of parents).

To have a complete picture of the evolution of higher education in the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium, it is useful to bear in mind certain constant features of Belgian society relating to the education sector.

- Notwithstanding Belgium's complex socio-political system - with no other sources of wealth than the labour of its citizens, their ingenuity with respect to adding value to products and services for export, and social stability - its main objective is to maintain a high standard of education. In effect, to remain one of the world's top 15 trading nations (while the population accounts for only 0.19% of the world's population) and maintain a favourable trade balance and stable growth, the political and economic powers must invest in education, research and training.
- It is not enough simply to stipulate that education is compulsory up to 18 years of age (Law of 29 June 1983) in order to guarantee a balance between the supply and demand of employment. Indeed, adequate training must be provided at the right time and in the appropriate measure to meet the economic needs and aspirations of individual citizens. In addition, the State must take advantage of the fact that pupils spend longer at school to train them.

One of the main objectives in the field of education undoubtedly remains the need to operate a system that offers everyone the conditions most conducive to their personal development, both as individuals and as citizens participating in economic strategies.

- Equal opportunities for men and women and between social classes and the fight against social exclusion have been the main concepts underpinning education reforms since 1970.
- The democratisation of education allowed great progress to be made after 1950, but there is still a long way to go to bring the different structures, resources and methods into line with the set objectives. With the problem of pupils having to repeat years, already seen in primary schools, and dropout rates of approximately 30% in secondary education and over 50% in higher education, it is feared that more time will be needed to achieve the above objectives.
- According to the Law of 29 June 1983, all young persons, whether Belgians or foreign nationals, must follow compulsory education for a period of 12 years starting from the school year during which they reach the age of 6 and ending in the school year during which they reach 18. However, full-time compulsory education cannot be imposed beyond 16 years of age. On 1 May 1990, the Parliament set majority at 18 years of age, which coincides with the end of compulsory education.

Approximately 65% of pupils leave school with a general, technical or vocational education certificate. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, almost one child in three (34%) left compulsory education without any qualifications at 18 years of age. Almost 20% of those who enrolled in university courses and then switched to non-university higher education following repeated failures found themselves without any qualifications in the end despite having spent some considerable time in higher education. Out of 100 young people leaving secondary education, 67 enter higher education and 52 obtain a higher education qualification, in most cases 2 to 4 years later than the standard time required.

Since 1989 (constitutional reform of 1988), each Community has had full autonomy in organising its education system, except for the following matters which remain the responsibility of the State: 1) the duration of compulsory education, 2) the minimum conditions for the award of diplomas, 3) pensions, unemployment and sickness-invalidity insurance for teachers.

The Flemish Community has its Ministry of Education (*Ministerie van Onderwijs*), the French Community has a General Administration (*Administration générale*) for education and scientific research within the Ministry of the French Community, and, for its part, the German-speaking Community has also implemented its own administrative structure. These administrations exercise authority over and supervise the institutions within the 3 main educational networks, including higher education.

The decrees on basic rules and budgets are passed by the Community Council (Parliament) of each Community. The implementing orders are issued by the Government of each Community.

Under the terms of the Special Law of 16 January 1989 on the funding of the Regions and Communities, each Community organises, funds and controls its education system according to its own objectives, priorities and resources. Major disparities between the Communities have thus emerged over the last 10 years. Although university and non-university higher education retain many convergent aspects across the Communities, they must be presented in a distinct manner. A simple overview of the past and of the mechanisms in place today does not give an insight into the extremely complex nature of higher education in the Flemish and the French Communities.

In the following sections, information on higher education is therefore presented separately for the French and Flemish Communities.

FRENCH COMMUNITY

Structures

The French Community has 3 full universities (*Université catholique de Louvain, Université libre de Bruxelles, Université libre de Liège*), one university limited to 5 faculties (*Université de Mons-Hainaut*) and 5 university institutions. Of these institutions, 2 are specialised (*Faculté polytechnique de Mons* and *Faculté universitaire des Sciences agronomiques de Gembloux*), 2 offer first-cycle university education (*Facultés universitaires catholiques de Mons* and *Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis* in Brussels) and one offers first- and second-cycle education (*Facultés universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix* in Namur).

In the university institutions of the French Community, all diplomas now awarded are 'academic degrees' (the distinction between 'legal degrees' and 'scientific degrees' having been dropped), and the third cycle is based on the titles *DES, diplôme d'études spécialisées* (diploma of specialised studies), *DEA, diplôme d'études approfondies* (diploma of advanced studies), doctoral studies with thesis and *agrégation* (teaching qualification).

Studies extend over the following periods: 2 years (3 years for medicine and veterinary medicine) for the 1st cycle leading to the diploma of *candidat(e)*; 2, 3 or 4 years for the 2nd cycle leading to the following degrees or titles *licencié(e), maître, ingénieur* (engineer), *docteur en médecine* (doctor in medicine), *docteur en médecine vétérinaire* (veterinary surgeon) and *pharmacien* (pharmacist), according to the discipline chosen.

The duration of 3rd-cycle studies (except for doctoral studies with a thesis) and qualifications in the form of academic degrees awarded for additional studies, specialised studies and advanced studies are determined by each university institution, subject to a maximum imposed by the Decree of 5 July 1994.

At the *Hautes écoles*, short-type education consists of one single 3-year cycle (4 years for some sections) leading to one of the following diplomas: midwife, *agrégé(e) de l'enseignement secondaire inférieur, AESI* (teacher of lower secondary education), *assistant(e) d'ingénieurs* (engineer's assistant), *assistant(e) de laboratoire clinique* (medical laboratory technician), *assistant(e) en psychologie* (psychologist's assistant), *assistant(e) social(e)* (social worker), *auxiliaire social(e)* (social assistant), *bibliothécaire documentaliste gradué(e)* (graduate documental librarian), *conseiller(ère) social(e)* (social advisor), *conseiller(ère) social(e) et fiscal(e)* (social and fiscal advisor), *éducateur(trice) gradué(e)* (graduate educational childcare worker), *éducateur(trice) spécialisé(e) gradué(e)* (specialised educational childcare worker), *infirmier(ère) gradué(e)* (graduate nurse), *institutrice(trice) maternel(le)* (nursery school teacher), *instituteur(trice) primaire* (primary school teacher).

Holders of diplomas conferred by short-type higher education can go on to obtain a *DS, diplôme de spécialisation* (diploma of specialisation), which involves a maximum of one year's additional studies.

Long-type education is university level, with courses divided into 2 cycles. The 1st cycle, which covers 2 years, leads to the diploma of *candidat(e)*. The 2nd cycle, which consists of 2 or 3 years, leads to the degree or title of: *licencié(é), architecte* (architect), *ingénieur industriel* (industrial engineer) or *ingénieur commercial* (commercial engineer). The degrees and titles for the 1st and 2nd cycles of long-type higher education are the same level as the corresponding academic degrees awarded by the universities.

Graduates of the long-type 2nd cycle can further obtain a *DESS, diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées* (3rd cycle diploma of advanced specialised studies) by studying for a maximum of 2 extra years.

Trends

Since 1974, public expenditure on education has decreased in relation to Belgium's overall state budget and GDP. However, this reduction must be seen in the context of a considerable increase in the overall state budget which is due to the heavy financial burden of public debt and unemployment. At current francs, the education budget/expenditure has increased 36-fold in 35 years (from BEF 9 billion in 1955 to BEF 323 billion in 1990), i.e. a growth in real terms of some 200% at constant francs for the same period. Democratisation is thus a reality. The ratio of education expenditure to GDP was 3.2% in 1960, 4.5% in 1970, 6.1% in 1975, 6.6% in 1980, 6.2% in 1985 and 5.1% in 1990.

The overall education budget may decrease further until 2005 due to the drop in the birth rate and the mechanisms that the authorities employ to generate financial resources outside this budget (tuition and registration fees, family contribution, calls for sponsors, participation of private enterprise, etc.). This non-budgetary expenditure cannot be quantified as the institutions are not obliged to account for it because of the administrative autonomy they enjoy.

This financial and budgetary trend, contingent on likely demographic issues, is having a considerable influence on the reforms (based on decrees and regulations) of these: the structure of higher education, the duration and the programmes of study, the objectives and the general direction of higher education, access of students to studies and their higher education career as they move between disciplines and types of education (university, long-type and/or short-type), and academic and scientific staff. As well as this, the number of students increased at a high annual growth rate over 10 years, then stabilised and started to fall in 1995. Given the need for a budget rise to cope with the increase in the number of students on the one hand, and the need for the French Community to make budgetary cuts on the other, the public authorities, those responsible for higher education institutions, the trade unions and the Federation of French-Speaking Students have had to explore new avenues for dialogue and regrouping.

In 10 years, from 1984 to 1995, the increase in the number of fundable and non-fundable students was 40.91% overall, with wide variations: universities, + 20.86%; long-type education, + 40.72%; short-type education, + 75.92%.

There has thus been considerable growth in the university and non-university sector, but this growth has moved progressively in favour of long- and short-type education. This trend was particularly pronounced for short-type education (3 years) of a more vocational nature, helped along by the long economic crisis. Student numbers have now levelled off and even dropped.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Under the terms of the Decree of 5 September 1994, university education was the subject of a major reform relating to courses, structures and academic degrees on the basis of 3 sectors and 22 fields of study:

- Human and social sciences sector: theology, philosophy, history, languages and humanities, arts and archaeology, law, criminology, psychology, educational sciences, economic sciences, political sciences, social sciences;
- Science sector: sciences, applied sciences, agronomy and biological engineering;
- Health science sector: medical sciences, dental science, veterinary sciences, public health sciences, pharmaceutical sciences, physical education, physiotherapy.

The reform of university education's funding system (still based on the Law of 27 July 1971) was partially implemented in the summer of 1998.

In addition, the French Community has 30 *Hautes écoles* which, under the terms of the Decree of 5 August 1995, group together 106 long-type and short-type higher education institutions into 8 categories: agriculture, arts, economy, paramedics, pedagogy, social science, technical studies, translation and interpretation.

Universities have experienced 2 periods of tight budgetary restrictions, due, on the one hand, to the 7-year restructuring plan implemented between 1983 and 1989 and, on the other, to a reduction of 2.5% annually in 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998 (this reduction exceeding the average index-linked increase of 2%). After enjoying an annual budgetary increase of around 4 to 6% between 1990 and 1996, the *Hautes écoles* in turn faced a budgetary reduction plan under the Decree of 9 September 1996 on the funding of *Hautes écoles* organised or subsidised by the French Community.

The reforms implemented since 1989 in the French Community were designed to encourage the academic authorities of the university institutions and the organising authorities of other higher education institutions to undertake inter-institutional (and intra-institutional) dialogue and cooperation when defining new course options and/or sections in order to reduce salaries and operating costs. The same applied where the disciplines concerned (for example, geology or speech therapy) required considerable staffing, and sometimes equipment, for a small number of students. This desire was expressed within the context of interim framework decrees aimed at the entire education sector up to 1994 and then by organic decrees through which the Government and the Council (Parliament) of the French Community, with the full agreement of the academic authorities and the local authorities, defined the new structures, planning standards and funding mechanisms. Students have regularly expressed their opposition, sometimes vehemently, to any attempt to restrict access to higher education, to the forms of budgetary restrictions, to increases in tuition and registration fees and to the way in which enrolment of a student is considered a kind of contract.

Having analysed the gradual introduction of new regulations, some academic, trade union and administrative authorities have expressed their perplexity with regard to their medium-term effects in terms of the reduction in teaching and research staff, the changes in operating resources, the assessment of the quality of higher education and the safeguarding of the principle of free access for students and their mobility. Some feel that the decrees of 1994, 1995 and 1996 (with regard to structures, course planning and funding) should all be amended.

Reforms of the higher education level artistic education and architecture are underway. A detailed description of these reforms, of the new structures of higher university and non-university education and their location is available on the Internet (<http://www.cfwb.be/infosup>). Many different links are provided to access information on the combinations of different programmes and curricula offered by the various institutions.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Universities enjoy full autonomy with regard to recruiting and managing teaching staff, researchers, administrative staff and technicians, albeit within limits defined in terms of full-time equivalent units (*unités équivalent temps plein - UETP*) laid down by law, decree or order under special legal powers. They also have full autonomy with respect to use of operating and research funds and to course planning. Under the terms of the Decree of December 1991, universities were granted full ownership of their buildings. Funding by public authorities is based on an annual table of fixed costs compiled by government order under the terms of the Law of 27 July 1971 in 6 subject areas (4 until 1998). However, each institution uses the overall operating budget allocated to it as it deems fit, no longer taking account of the factors that were used to determine the budget.

The universities must, however, submit their annual budget for approval to the Minister of the French Community responsible for higher education and transmit their annual accounts to the Court of Auditors. Control of the number of regular students eligible for funding and of the use of public funds is organised within each institution by a government commissioner or delegate. The budgets and accounts are audited by an officially accredited inspector of finance within each institution. The government commissioner or delegate (a total of 4 for the 9 universities) and the inspector of finance have the right of appeal to the Minister responsible for higher education on any decision which appears to contravene any laws, decrees or regulations. The Minister is given a short period of time in which to accept or reject the appeal.

The *Hautes écoles* became autonomous under the terms of the Decrees of 5 August 1995 and 9 September 1996. However, their autonomy is not as extensive as the universities', since funding is strictly determined by decrees and regulations. In addition, staffing regulations are very specific and restrictive, students numbers are checked individually, and property and management of the buildings are excluded from institutional management responsibilities. A government commissioner (4 in total for the 30 *Hautes écoles*) checks the regularity and funding of students and as a first priority examines management of budgetary matters. The autonomy of the *Hautes écoles* as regards course planning is for the moment limited because the organisational structure (based on long- and short-type education, 8 categories and sections and options) has been strictly defined by decree and by a classification order. In addition, course timetables are submitted for approval.

On the other hand, both universities and the *Hautes écoles* are administered by boards of management and/or management committees which include representatives of professors, administrative and technical staff, students, companies and trade union organisations.

Decentralisation has proved increasingly effective, in particular through faculty or departmental councils, social councils and external consultative councils, such as the *Conseil des recteurs francophones* (Council of French-Speaking Rectors), the *Conseil Inter-Universitaire Francophone* (French-Speaking Inter-University Council), the *Conseil Général des Hautes écoles* (General Council of *Hautes écoles*), the *Commission Communautaire Pédagogique* (Community Pedagogical Commission), and the *Cellule de Prospective Pédagogique* (Pedagogical Forward Planning Unit), etc.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

University and non-university higher education is financed mainly by the allocation of funds and grants earmarked annually in the general budget of the French Community.

A. In each of the 9 universities, the annual budget - excluding property - is funded from various sources:

- an operating grant provided by the Ministry (c. 65% of the budget),
- research funds provided by the National Fund for Scientific Research (*Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique - FNRS*) and related funds (c. 17% of the budget),
- operating and research funds from contracts with the European Community, public services and private companies (c. 16% of the budget),
- tuition and registration fees and revenue from own funds (c. 2% of the budget).

These are of course rough averages, and the actual amounts vary from institution to institution. The figures show how absolutely essential it is for institutions to be on a constant look-out for external sources of supplementary funding for their recurrent operating expenditure. This forces certain faculties, departments and laboratories to devote considerable time to administrative tasks and services to the detriment of their education and research activities. This situation is in fact getting worse due to the

reduction in the number of regular students eligible for funding. Stabilising the financial and budgetary resources of these institutions will be a priority for the next decade.

Without entering into the details of the rather complex funding system that forms the basis for the allocation of funds and grants, the following points should be remembered for the reference period of the study (as of 1999 the system becomes even more complex without however changing the underlying principle):

- only regular students eligible for funding are taken into account,
- the table of fixed costs per student is drawn up every year by government order,
- small institutions are allowed to use a system based on 'fictitious' students, while the system used for full universities sets a ceiling on the funding for the first portion of students and gives reduced funding for the second portion above this ceiling,
- students who repeat a year are financed up to a level of 80% or 90%,
- the Government Agency for Development Cooperation (*Agence gouvernementale de coopération au développement - AGCD*) contributes towards the funding of foreign students from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

B. In each of the 30 *Hautes écoles*, the annual budget - excluding property - is funded from various sources:

- an operating grant provided by the Ministry (c. 95% of the budget),
- operating funds from contracts with the European Community, public services and private companies based on contracts (c. 2% of the budget),
- tuition and registration fees and revenue from own funds (c. 3% of the budget).

These are of course rough averages, and the actual amounts vary from institution to institution. They indicate the delicate position of the *Hautes écoles* with regard to their activities, dependent as they are on the Ministry for virtually all their funding.

A very complex funding system based on the distribution of an overall mass across various budget headings and among the 30 *Hautes écoles* was set in place by the Decree of September 1996. The main mechanisms of this system are:

- anchoring the 'historical' share in 1997 (= 100%);
- a progressively changing mixed mechanism, partly 'historical' and partly 'variable', starting from the calendar year 1998 (variable part 20%), then 1999 (variable part 40%), 2000 (variable part 60%), 2001 (variable part 80%) and 2002 (variable part 95%). The variable part is based on the average number of students in the 3 years prior to the financial year;
- the division of the 8 categories into 7 groups for the setting of the relative weighting coefficients applied to students: A=1, B=1.1, C=1.15, D=1.2, E=1.45, F=1.5, G=1.65;
- the establishment of an additional lump sum part, i.e.: BEF 5 million per *Haute école*, BEF 2 million per category, BEF 10 million if the *Haute école* is 'multi-type' and BEF 30 million if the *Haute école* is the only one in its area and in its network;
- the creation of a guarantee (or compensation) fund of BEF 50 million per network per year.

This system is designed to guarantee a certain stability of funding and to distribute budgetary resources among the 30 *Hautes écoles* according to a process that takes into account any medium-term changes in the number of students (average of the last 3 years), any changes in the courses chosen by students, as well as changes in the geographical location of the *Hautes écoles* and their categories and sections.

The General Administration of education is responsible for administering and monitoring the implementation of the system, since in addition strict staffing regulations apply and the payroll is calculated using a 'weighted average gross cost' method.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The Decree of 5 August 1995 stipulates that, based on a procedure defined by a government order, the *Hautes écoles* must implement a quality control system for their educational activities and projects. The relevant order is currently being drafted. The authorities of each *Haute école* must draw up a quality control report, submit it for approval to the Community Education Board and comply with the decisions of the Government based on the conclusions of the quality control procedure. The quality control groups or teams will include external experts.

Up to now, universities have been free to organise the quality control procedure and/or have their management system, structures, operation and study programmes examined by external organisations and may take the results of the evaluation into account, publish them or keep them from public view.

Evaluation raises some weighty - and perhaps costly - questions including:

- how often (every 3, 4 or 5 years) an evaluation report should be drawn up,
- how internal evaluation and external evaluation might be combined,
- who will select the external experts,
- who will foot the bill for the evaluation procedure,
- what should be evaluated: the institution as a whole or a part of the institution, course programmes, teaching activities, staff, strong and weak points, or the ratio between revenue and costs,
- whether a budgetary penalty mechanism or a fixed system of recommendations should be envisaged.

The French Community greatly benefited from the pilot scheme implemented by the European Community in this area in 1994/95. The conclusion was that the procedure should first and foremost concern the teachers and directors of the institutions within their own environment in order to raise awareness about the importance of quality control and of evaluation, both for the benefit of staff and, subsequently, for their institution. It should essentially be an action that is carried out actively and willingly and should be considered as absolutely essential from the point of view of competition. The fear is that, if quality control and evaluation are perceived as constraints entailing risks in terms of the budget and/or staffing, some serious obstacles may impede the implementation of the process.

It is expected that the initial results will be released in the year 2000.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Since the academic year 1992/93, all higher education has been accessible to anyone with a certificate of upper secondary education (*certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur - CESS*) obtained through full-time education or through adult education classes, to holders of a short-type higher education diploma, to foreign nationals who have their diplomas or certificates of studies recognised as equivalent, to students who pass an entrance examination (if such an examination is organised), and to students with the same level of qualifications from the Flemish or German-speaking Communities.

These provisions are applicable *mutatis mutandis* to university admission arrangements.

With the exception of entrance examinations organised for applied sciences, there are no selection tests. No *numerus clausus* is applied, even though some authors believe that the high failure rates in the 1st year of candidature at universities and/or the 1st year at the *Hautes écoles* (on average over 50% across all institutions) are in fact a means of selection by default. These authors forget that almost 3/4 of students who start higher education studies eventually obtain a higher education diploma (according to an ongoing study by the General Administration responsible for higher education and scientific research with the help of the *UCL* and *ULB* universities). This is thanks to the possibility of repeating one or more years or by switching to another level of education and/or another field or subject area. The award of a qualification is of course delayed for a year or two as a result, but it is less traumatic for students to have several chances than to lose out due to a *numerus clausus*, which is seen by many as a procedure that is out of step with prevailing social trends in French-speaking Belgium.

However, a quota has been set for the number of graduates in medicine and dentistry (since the academic year 1997/98) and in physiotherapy (since 1998/99) by the Federal Government, as it has defined a ceiling for registration within the social security system for each of these 3 disciplines, with a 60%/40% distribution between the 2 Communities. The academic authorities have therefore come up with a system of selection based on marks to be awarded to students during the first cycle of the candidature in order to keep the number of students within the set quota for the second *doctorat* cycle. Students who have successfully completed the *candidature* but who are not included in the quota of those who can go on to complete a *doctorat* in medicine can seek alternative courses of study.

This mechanism will not be applied for physiotherapy courses. The Government of the French Community has instead decided that giving the *Hautes écoles* the incentive to close down the sections concerned by awarding them additional financial resources if they do so would reduce the number of graduates within the set time-span.

The full effect of the measure implemented for medicine and dentistry will be seen in 2002 for dentists and physiotherapists and in 2004 for doctors.

A test of proficiency in the French language was introduced at the start of the academic year in September 1998, but this is not an elimination test.

Adults may be admitted to higher education as regular students even if they do not have a qualification required by the decrees, provided they have professional experience in the field or category of studies and provided they are accepted, after an assessment, by the authorities of the higher education institutions. In practice, this is not very widespread.

From 1970, legislation established a system of automatic paths between the different levels of higher education. Following 30 years of failed attempts, 2 decrees passed in March 1999 have finally settled this issue by guaranteeing students minimum rights. In a certain number of listed cases and under certain conditions which the institutions can impose within very specific limits, the right to transfer from one type of education to another, from university or non-university or vice-versa, during studies or on their completion, is granted to the student upon application.

A pilot project, now abandoned, addressed the question of the implementation of a system of transferable credits (ECTS) or modules in higher education, particularly for medicine and history, within the framework of the Socrates programme of the European Community. In order to meet student demands, institutional initiatives are generally being developed to organise examinations in January and June for the first examination session with no deliberations on the results until June. Nonetheless, this approach leads to serious organisational and secretarial problems, and leaves many professors dissatisfied. It raises the important question of splitting the public funding of higher education institutions

into 2 semesters (instead of annual funding) based on the number of students enrolled on 1 February of the previous academic year.

Certain procedures, which are taken into account in the decrees or which result from institutional initiatives, are designed to cushion the effects of students failing. For example, there is the monitoring of first-level students by students in their second-cycle (*licence*) or remedial work on core subjects (for students with insufficient knowledge to gain a pass mark). This help is provided by teachers and assistants during the first 3 months of the academic year. Alternatively, the first year of the first cycle can be spread over 2 years at the express request of the student.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Students pay tuition and registration fees for each year of study. In 1997/98 the maximum fees at universities amounted to BEF 26,500. There are, however, various reductions based on the income of the student or their family, their grant status and whether or not their parent or guardian works full-time for the institution. Foreign students coming under the ACP country tables are also granted reductions.

For the *Hautes écoles*, the fee level for tuition and registration is set every year by government order. In 1997/98, the fees were BEF 5,630 for short-type education and BEF 7,319 for the final year. For long-type education, the fees were BEF 11,261 for the 1st year of each cycle and BEF 14,639 for the final year of each cycle. The *Hautes écoles* can charge additional tuition and registration fees. Grant-aided students pay only BEF 1,126 for short-type education and BEF 1,689 for long-type.

For universities and *Hautes écoles*, the social services can contribute towards the costs of students through social grants paid to each institution (a total of over BEF 500 million was allocated in the 1998 budget). These grants are used under the supervision of the social councils and also cover the management of student residences, restaurants and secretariats connected with student services.

A grant or loan is awarded to all students from 17 to 35 years of age provided their income or their family's income does not exceed an amount set by the Government of the French Community. The student's grant is withdrawn if they repeat a year, but reinstated the following year if they pass. Eligibility for a grant is lost permanently where the student fails 3 times in a row.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. PLANNING OF COURSES, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The course programmes offered by universities and *Hautes écoles* reflect the sluggishness of the academic authorities and the organising authorities in introducing periods of practical and vocational training which are oriented towards socio-economic requirements into general and theoretical education. New sections and/or options are being created, in particular to cover a wide range of specialisations being offered to graduates immediately after they receive their diploma (*diplôme d'études complémentaires* - *DEC*, (diploma of complementary studies) *DES*, *DEA*, *DESS*, etc.) or once they have begun their professional career. Most institutions organise their own extra-curricular further training courses directly, or take part in training schemes initiated by other institutions. However, this proliferation of course offers is likely to lead to most vocational training courses being taken out of institutions, so that there will be no means of controlling quality or of assessing the teachers, the subjects taught or the career opportunities promised in the advertising.

The universities and *Hautes écoles* are now also authorised to provide continuing and vocational training. They will have to undertake this task to enable graduates to maintain the high level of qualification conferred by the diploma by regularly updating their knowledge base, in particular, with respect to sectors involving the use of new technologies and languages, and by helping graduates adjust to changes in the job market.

5.2. TEACHING METHODS AND EVALUATION

Teaching methods are often a matter of some controversy. Apart from the specific and limited training programme for the *agrégation de l'enseignement secondaire* (qualification for teaching at lower secondary level) at university during the final year of university studies, no follow-up is provided to give future teachers pedagogical training for secondary education. In addition, teaching skills are not an important criterion in the selection of the academic staff of universities. Priority is given to the applicant's scientific work, their scientific publications and their reputation regarding research quality, while relatively little attention is paid to their teaching activities and skills.

The inadequate financial resources allocated to educational research and teacher training received criticised from certain quarters. The International Education Association and the International Association of University Pedagogy, both of which are well established in the French Community, hope to be able to make changes to future courses to guarantee that all prospective teachers receive training in teaching methods.

In the *Hautes écoles*, only courses in teaching methodology include systematic training in pedagogical methods. However, the persons responsible for other courses wish to be able to use the trainers from the teaching methodology courses to provide all other teachers in turn with the required pedagogical training. The lack of pedagogical training for teachers in technical, agricultural, economic, paramedical and social courses, for example, is well recognised. In fact, in future, it is possible that a specific course on teaching methodology may appear as part of the range of new courses offered at *Hautes écoles*. Some institutions are already offering courses and seminars outside the official timetable to help meet this need. Less commonly used methods are work placements, distance-learning courses (introduced in 1959, confirmed by the Law of 5 March 1965, and radically amended by the Decree of 18 December 1984), sandwich courses and teacher training oriented towards technical innovations. Moreover, the use of such methods will grow in support of reforms aimed at secondary education implemented in 1998. Short-type vocational adult education classes are provided to help students gain basic education (vertical promotion) or more advanced education (horizontal promotion).

The following topics are addressed in pedagogical research: the teaching of specific subjects, educating techniques and IT, learning mechanisms, the study of academic failure, education flows and costs, health education, equal opportunities, academic careers and the relationship between education and jobs.

6. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Higher education and the funding of higher education will be the major challenge facing the French Community in the next decade. The drop in the birth rate, the ageing of the population, the high average age of teachers and researchers, the expansion of new fields of knowledge, continuing training and the upgrading of course programmes and methods in line with scientific innovations and economic objectives within a wider European framework are sensitive issues that are having a tremendous influence on the development of higher education. With respect to the age of academic staff, for example, universities have begun, and must continue until 2005, the difficult process of replacing most of the academic staff recruited *en masse* between 1965 and 1975.

The unemployment rate among young graduates is limited to a few percent and the length of unemployment to a few months. Most graduates in highly specialised technical fields (for example, doctors, veterinary surgeons, dentists and engineers) or in fields which are in great demand (for example, IT specialists, accountants and economists) do not spend any time out of work. However, some of these graduates have a job that is quite unrelated to the education they have received. The idea of severing the link in future between higher education and a specific job is steadily gaining acceptance. It is more important for graduates to have undertaken higher education than to have obtained a certificate that opens the door to a specific job. Unarguably, studies in medicine are for future doctors, a law degree is required to become a barrister or judge, and a degree in engineering is required for construction design. However, the diversity of trades and professions now and to come mean that many graduates are looking outside their initial field of studies. There is therefore a need to constantly revise not only basic general education courses but also practical training courses which offer a wide range of openings to professional activities. This is one of the reasons why higher education institutions have been given as much autonomy as possible. However, at the same time, a minimum of consistency across the higher education system must be preserved for the purposes of achieving uniform recognition of qualifications to facilitate European mobility.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

DEA *Diplôme d'études approfondies* (3rd cycle diploma of advanced studies)

DES *Diplôme d'études spécialisées* (3rd cycle diploma of specialised studies)

DESS *Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées* (3rd diploma of advanced specialised studies)

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FLEMISH COMMUNITY

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

After 1989, there was rapid change in the higher education system of the Flemish Community of Belgium. According to Rochette (1994), most of the recent Belgian legislation regulating education in Flanders was replaced by new Flemish decrees. Some of the most important developments affected the non-university sector.

Cooperation between the Flemish and Dutch bodies responsible for coordinating universities, i.e. the Flemish Inter-University Council (*Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad - VLIR*) and the Association of Universities (*Vereniging van Universiteiten - VSNU*), had already been established in 1988 as an independent initiative in anticipation of the regulations that the Flemish Government intended to introduce (Neave, 1994).

On 30 October 1990, the action programme for cooperation within the European Dutch language area (*Gehele Europese Nederlandse Taalgebied - GENT*) was signed in Delft which, among other measures, allows Flemish people living and/or studying in the Netherlands and entitled to family allowances or study grants at home to retain entitlement to these (Keuleers, 1994).

The non-university sector was already quantitatively more important in Flanders than in Wallonia and the growth in the number of enrolments has been very marked in recent years, especially for the one-cycle programmes of higher professional education, which now admit more than twice as many students as the two-cycle academic programmes.

According to the Decree of 23 October 1991 and following the official declarations of the Flemish Minister of Education, it is clear that education policy takes studies at non-university higher education institutions (*hogescholen*) as a valid alternative to university studies. Indeed two-cycle programmes at *hogescholen* are recognised as being on the same academic level as those offered by universities. This is also reflected by the similarities in terminology for the qualifications: *kandidaat* after completing the first cycle, *licentiaat* at the end of the second. After these basic diplomas, students can enrol for postgraduate programmes, offered by universities as well as *hogescholen*. Doctoral degrees are reserved to universities, demonstrating the privileged relationship with scientific research which universities retain (Keuleers, 1994).

As a result of the Parliament of Flanders Decree on *hogescholen* in the Flemish Community of 13 July 1994, new regulations were introduced from the academic year 1995/96 which made the status of *hogescholen* and other non-university institutions more similar to that of universities. Short-type and long-type curricula were replaced by first-cycle and second-cycle degree courses respectively. This did not only entail a change of name but also the rewriting of curricula to encourage progression and the gaining of higher qualifications. At the same time, 163 higher education institutions offering short- and long-type courses were merged into 29 new *hogescholen*.

The autonomy granted to institutions entailed a more drastic change for the non-university sector than for universities, which historically already enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy. Also, the university sector was not subjected to merging operations, while in non-university higher education, 29 institutions resulted from mergers of the previous 163.

Other changes included the restructuring of teacher training programmes under the Parliament of Flanders Decree on teacher initial and in-service training of 1996.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Following the Parliament of Flanders Decrees on universities (1991) and on *hogescholen* (1994) in the Flemish Community, the institutions obtained autonomy in institutional governance and a new financing system.

After the Parliament of Flanders Decree on universities, the differences in autonomy between the universities under private law (like the *K.U. Leuven*) and those under public law became almost insignificant.

No radically new measures for steering higher education have been introduced within the Flemish Community. The trend towards decentralising control in relation to universities had already begun before the federalisation of the country and there is now little direct government intervention in their running (Sanyal, 1995).

Indeed, with respect to institutional governance and the new funding system (block grants), all universities and *hogescholen* have obtained autonomy, although they can still be held responsible by the Government for the outcome of their financial management and quality control after self-evaluation of their own study programmes.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Public funding covers about 80% of the costs of universities. Universities receive public funds to cover four types of expenditure:

- their running costs: the amount is based on past experience and on the number of students, graduate degrees and doctoral degrees. Unit costs depend on the type of educational programme, whether human and social sciences, natural sciences, medical sciences or technical sciences,
- investment costs,
- the cost of social facilities for students (housing, restaurants, cultural activities, counselling, etc.),
- the cost of academic research: the amount is based on recurrent funding and on the number of graduate degrees and doctoral degrees.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

According to the Decree on universities in the Flemish Community of 1991, cooperation between the Flemish and Dutch coordinating bodies for higher education institutions has already produced innovations in the Flemish system deriving from the application of the Dutch model of quality assurance and control. This cooperation is in itself seen as a good source of quality control by peer evaluation; according to Neave (1994), working together gives access to a greater pool from which to select members of external review committees. Nevertheless, the Flemish control system includes stricter measures than the Dutch system. Under the terms of the Decree of June 1991, regional government requires each university governing board to undertake a quality review of departments and personnel once every 8 years under conditions set out by the central authorities. This decree includes the possibility of financial penalties for recalcitrant establishments, though these measures have not yet been implemented.

According to Neave (1994), the quality assessment system for the Dutch-speaking parts of Belgium is interesting in several respects. In the first place, the initiative stems from university rather than government leadership and, secondly, the preparatory phase in this development was undertaken with

the Dutch Association for Cooperating Universities. The quality assessment process has already started and reviews were carried out in 1994/95 in Flemish universities within some disciplinary fields including pharmaceutical sciences, psychology, economics and history (Sanyal, 1995). So far, quality assessment has not been linked to the financing of universities but, according to Neave (1994), this is a possible next step.

The management of quality and quality control for non-university higher education institutions is very similar to that for universities, although particular attention is paid to vocational skills and the quality of the teaching staff. Since a new employment policy was adopted by many institutions, non-tenured staff can be assessed more easily and are usually more motivated to obtain a positive assessment than tenured staff.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

In 1997, for the first time, the Flemish Community organised a competitive entry examination for university medicine and dentistry studies.

The two Parliament of Flanders Decrees on universities (1991) and *hogescholen* (1994) hold the institutions responsible for the quality of their education, which includes measures for the assistance of first-year students.

According to the most recent data, *hogescholen* students make up around 60% of the total Flemish student population in higher education. As the participation rate in higher education as a whole is still growing, the university student population is also increasing.

Completed secondary education gives access to the first year of any programme of higher education, except for applied sciences, medicine, dentistry, nautical science, fine arts and music, where entrance examinations or aptitude tests are held.

Due to the open admissions policy currently in effect in Belgian higher education, an increasing number of Dutch students enrol at Flemish university and non-university institutions. This policy is considered as contributing to some extent towards the relatively large dropout rate for students (between 40% and 50%) (Keuleers, 1994).

Flemish students can enrol at the Open University of the Netherlands. On completion of courses of study, they receive a Dutch degree. In most cases, these degrees are recognised as being equivalent to Flemish degrees.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Since federalisation, nothing has changed in relation to student registration and tuition fees or financial aid for students in the Flemish Community of Belgium. This is partly because consequent differences between the different Belgian Communities in relation to students' rights could become a matter of constitutional conflict and partly because it would not be opportune for the Flemish Government to consider adopting the more expensive Dutch model at a time when the latter is planning budget cuts in relation to student financial support.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

There are 8 recognised universities in the Flemish Community, offering academic programmes. The non-university higher education sector consists of 29 *hogescholen* (non-university higher education institutions) that can offer two types of programmes: (1) one-cycle, i.e. 3-year programmes at higher professional level; and (2) two-cycle, i.e. 4- to 5-year programmes at university level. Universities as well as *hogescholen* can organise postgraduate programmes, while doctoral degrees are issued by universities only.

Since federalisation of the country, the most important change in Flemish higher education curricula has related to the replacement, described above, of short-type and long-type courses by first-cycle and second-cycle degree courses from October 1994. This innovation, adopted by the *hogescholen*, is a step towards the 'isomorphism' (Maassen, Goedegebuure and Westerheijden, 1993) of the two different sectors of higher education, since it makes the curricula of the non-university sector formally more similar to those of the university sector.

Although *hogescholen* education is more practically oriented than the more theoretically oriented university education, the differences are tending to become less distinct, as university programmes are being continuously adapted to the needs of the rapidly changing society and job market and the *hogescholen* programmes updated in line with new scientific trends.

Furthermore, the Government recognises two-cycle programmes as being equivalent to university level, regardless of whether they are offered by universities or by *hogescholen*. One-cycle *hogescholen* programmes, however, tend to have a more vocational bias.

There has been a certain amount of innovation in Flemish higher education in relation to open and distance learning. In 1997, a new Government of Flanders Decision on financial support for innovative projects in higher education was passed, offering funding opportunities to higher education institutions that wish to carry out projects in this field.

Methodological innovation is essential in open and distance learning. Flemish open higher education courses are the source of innovative experience for all those involved in the preparation of related learning materials, which could also affect ordinary courses at higher education institutions. Major universities in Flanders are already creating links and making agreements with the Open University consortium, and some are involved in the tutoring network which is provided throughout the country.

In 1996, teaching training programmes were restructured under the Parliament of Flanders Decree on teacher initial and in-service training.

In the Flemish Community, the educational advantages of work placements are widely recognised as long as they are organised under the guidance of both the institution and the host company or organisation. Placements function not only as an additional learning resource but also as an instrument for influencing more traditional teaching methods through the preparation, discussion and evaluation phases which are linked to their organisation.

Flemish universities have developed their use of multimedia in education as a tool for innovating, redesigning curricula and enhancing the learning process.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Universities and *hogescholen* are involved in European programmes such as Erasmus and Tempus. The Flemish Community provides supplementary funding to promote international mobility, especially of students from lower income groups. In the university sector, the mobility rate is about 5%. The Flemish Community also provides extra funds to promote inter-university collaboration with universities in a limited number of developing countries and in Eastern and Central Europe. The aim is to build higher education capacity in these countries through the exchange of experts. The Department of Education deals with many bilateral cultural agreements.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The Flemish higher education system is moving towards the provision of a variety of educational options within a system tending towards greater uniformity. Everywhere, traditional university institutions and vocational training colleges have to adapt to the needs created by cultural, social, economic and technological changes. The solutions envisaged frequently involve formulating equivalent directives, criteria and standards for quality control for all types of institutions.

The Flemish Community is evolving in the direction of the Dutch model and this has meant block grant financing and the merging of institutions.

Flanders will continue actively participating in European mobility programmes, bilateral educational agreements with the Netherlands, cooperation between the border regions of Flanders, the Netherlands and some German *Länder* (Niedersachsen, Bremen and Nordrhein/Westfalen) and bilateral exchange programmes with countries inside and outside Europe.

The Flemish Community Government is aware of the fact that most of the challenges that have to be faced cannot be solved in isolation. Common problems which all EU Member States and European regions experience, must be dealt with in a coordinated multilateral policy which takes into account the common interest of those in the European Union.

The main issues for the future include the relationship between the number of students seeking access to the medical studies and the number granted access and the lack of students in engineering and information technology.

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Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

DENMARK

National description

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DENMARK

INTRODUCTION

Until the 19th century, there were only two higher education institutions in Denmark: the University of Copenhagen (established in 1479) and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (established in 1754). However, Danish higher education expanded enormously in the 19th and 20th centuries, and now the Danish higher education system has a wide variety of educational institutions. Universities and colleges offer a variety of levels of degrees and diplomas obtainable through short-, medium- and long-cycle programmes. This variety was a characteristic of the system long before other countries began to diversify their educational offer, and the choice has been further increased in the last 20 years by the significant development of non-academic higher education in the field of vocational (technical and commercial) education.

This diversity of provision is partly a result of a particularly high GDP per capita (the second highest in the EU in 1995 after Luxembourg) and partly of the cultural and political tradition of facilitating a high level of educational attainment.

There are five universities and 7 more specialised, university level institutions, which are concentrated in the larger towns. In addition to this, there are a number of university level institutions offering artistic programmes, such as music, architecture, design, and so on. Shorter occupationally oriented programmes are offered by a great number of rather small, usually specialised colleges distributed all over the country.

The growth in the Danish higher education sector can also be partly attributed to the development of higher level adult education. In 1982, the first open university, the Open University of Jutland (*Jysk Åbent Universitet*), was founded on an experimental basis by a consortium of three universities: Aarhus University, Aalborg University and Esbjerg University Centre.

The demands and challenges facing higher education institutions have been growing rapidly in recent years. Compared to the past, when their task was limited to delivering education to a relatively limited target group, the developments in society have meant that institutions must now diversify into a number of new fields. This means, among other things, intensified cooperation with employers and institutions receiving graduates and a strengthening of continuing training activities and internationalisation. At the same time, students, politicians, industry and taxpayers are justifiably expecting more of institutions with regard to quality development, interdisciplinary approach, efficiency and flexibility. To this should be added the increasing demand for people with higher education qualifications. The reforms which have been implemented over the past 15-20 years reflect this.

Higher education in Denmark is normally divided into the following three categories according to level and admission requirements: short-cycle, medium-cycle and long-cycle higher education programmes.

The short-cycle higher education programmes (or *korte videregående uddannelser*, *KVU*, programmes), which are generally of 1-3 years' duration, are normally directed at a specific occupational area. These programmes are offered by the vocational (business and technical) colleges.

There is a very varied range of medium-cycle higher education programmes, of 3-4 years' duration, which provide qualifications for a given profession (e.g. *folkeskole* teacher, educator (*pædagog*) teaching in pre-school, on leisure-time schemes or in socio-educational contexts, occupational therapist, nurse, and so on). These programmes are offered at specialised educational institutions.

The long-cycle higher education programmes are research-based and are offered at universities and other higher education institutions in the university sector. Virtually all university programmes today have a 3+2+3-structure, i.e. they are divided into a 3-year Bachelor's programme + a 2-year *candidatus* programme + a 3-year doctoral programme.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

The period since 1980 has been characterised by a number of important reforms which have led to quite fundamental changes in the higher education sector in terms of financing, staffing and the structure of programmes.

1984 saw the presentation of the New Blood Recruitment Plan which introduced a new staff structure and requirements for the employment of academic staff at the higher education institutions in the university sector.

With 1990 came the Open Education Act, which allowed universities and colleges to offer their full-time programmes on a part-time basis to adults outside working hours.

The beginning of the 1990s saw the introduction of a 'taximeter' grant system (grants based on the number of students per year) first at vocational colleges and later on at universities.

In 1993, two important pieces of legislation were passed, namely the Consolidation Act on Universities and the Ministerial Order on course structure at universities and other institutions of higher education under the Ministry of Education. Among other things, the former aimed to provide clear decision-making powers to university management. A novel element was the introduction of two external members in the two highest collegiate bodies. Another element of importance was that institutions were given autonomy to decide on number of admissions, and this led to the present system of free intake to most higher education programmes and broke with the general system of restricted admission which had been the rule since the end of the 1970s. The latter constituted the basis for the new 3+2+3-structure of university studies, which made it possible for students to obtain a first degree after only 3 years instead of 6, as had been the case before the reform.

Finally, there was a reform of short-cycle higher education programmes in 1997 with a view to extending the range of programmes and facilitating continuation of studies in other areas of higher education.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

2.1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAIN ACTORS

Short-cycle higher education

Under the 'taximeter' system, the institutions are fully responsible (within the legal framework applying to them) for their own finances, buildings and equipment, once the state grant has been allocated.

National targets have been established for programmes in ministerial orders, but the institutions themselves are responsible for the drawing up of detailed curricula. In relative terms, the short-cycle higher technical programmes are more centrally controlled; the market economist and the computer specialist programmes are subject to national targets laid down in ministerial orders and business academies have locally planned curricula.

The boards at vocational colleges are elected with representation of employers and employees in equal proportions. The principal/director is appointed by the board. At all levels, close consultation with relevant bodies, social partners and other representatives of economic life at national level (educational councils) or at local level (school boards) is essential. The social partners are equally represented on the boards of business and technical colleges. There are no collegiate bodies at vocational colleges and the boards have full decision-making powers. No regional authorities are involved.

Medium- and long-cycle higher (university-sector) education

The Consolidation Act on Universities (University Act) applies to universities and other institutions of higher education under the Ministry of Education, i.e. the 12 research-based educational institutions. It is the task of these higher education institutions to conduct research and provide education to the highest academic level within its particular fields.

The main intention of the University Act was to provide academic and financial autonomy, the point of departure being that the Ministry should not interfere with the universities' decisions.

The University Act, which came into force on 1 January 1993, replaced the 1973 Administration of Higher Education Act, which was also based on the universities' long tradition of independence and self-governance. Although many of the basic principles in the 1973 Act had been maintained and developed in important areas, the University Act of 1993 represented a break with the past to reflect the changed role and conditions of universities in society today. Thus, among other things, the University Act gave university management bodies clear decision-making powers which they lacked under the previous act.

The Minister is still responsible for establishing the framework for compulsory admission requirements and the general content of programmes, and the Ministry can close down or limit intake to programmes which have proven to be of poor quality. However, the specific content of individual programmes is drawn up by the institution itself, in the form of curricula. The individual university makes its own decisions as to, for instance, which programmes it wants to offer, how many applicants meeting admission requirements it wants to admit to each of its programmes and how it will spend funding within the institution.

A novel element of the University Act is the presence of two external members in the two highest collegiate bodies, the Senate and the Faculty Council. One of these external members is appointed by the Danish Council for Research and the other by the chairmen of the National Advisory Boards on Higher Education. These two members represent employers and have expert knowledge on questions of education and research.

The University Act may be said to rest on two pillars: leadership/management competence and the competence of the collegiate bodies.

With respect to leadership/management competence, the University Act retains the principle that leaders are elected (rector, dean, head of department and director of studies). The law establishes clear leadership competence while simultaneously making it possible to identify who is responsible for the activities of the institution.

In the terms of the act, it is the **rector** (formally) who takes decisions in all cases, unless such powers have been vested in a specific collegiate body.

At institutions with several faculties, a **dean** (manager) is elected for a four-year period by the academic staff of each faculty and approved by the rector. The dean is in charge of the day-to-day running of the faculty.

Each department in a faculty elects a **head of department** as its day-to-day manager.

A **director of studies** is elected for each study programme. They are responsible for the practical organisation of the programme and decide on the allocation of teaching resources.

The **senate** is the institution's supreme collegiate body. The senate takes care of the educational and research interests of the institution and lays down guidelines for its long-term activities and development. The senate consists of the chairman (rector) and 14 members; two of these members are external representatives, and the remainder represent management, staff and students.

If the institution is divided into faculties, a **faculty council** is elected for each of these to decide on the activities of the faculty. The dean is the chairman and the council may have a maximum of 14 members who, apart from the two external representatives, come from different staff groups and students.

Education and research activities normally take place at department level. A **department committee** is elected for each department and lays down the general framework for the activities and development of the department. The head of the department is chairman, and the committee consists of the chairman and a further three members who represent the staff.

A **staff-student study committee** is elected for each study programme. It approves educational plans and makes proposals concerning the curriculum. The director of studies is the chairman of this committee, which further consists of an equal number of teachers and students, to a maximum of 10.

Each university draws up its own statutes within the framework of the University Act which describe the governance of the institution. The statutes must be approved by the Ministry of Education.

The University Act of 1993 maintained the system of collegiate bodies and elected leaders already in place. There are no non-elected management bodies at university institutions in Denmark. However, the elected leader (the rector) was given more power under the 1993 Act: the management of the universities is based on the principle of a strong leader plus an advisory system. Students lost some of their power with the 1993 Act, as they no longer have members on the executive committees of the departments, but in return they were given more influence over their own education through the staff-student study committees and the director of studies.

2.2. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

The financing of Danish higher education is based on two considerations and is analogous to the taximeter system which takes account of the number of kilometres travelled and a rate per kilometre. In higher education, the system is based on the number of students completing the programme and a rate per student. The rate per student per year is decided at a political level in connection with the annual adoption of the Government's Finance Bill by Parliament. There are different rates depending on the nature of the programme.

With vocational education and training reform in 1991, the 'taximeter' system was introduced at vocational colleges, which offer short-cycle higher education programmes amongst others. The State

allocates a grant to the institutions to cover expenditure directly related to teaching. The grant is dependent on the number of students enrolled at the institution. In addition to the taximeter grant, vocational colleges also receive other general grants and grants dependent on the number of students: a general basic grant, reimbursement of rent expenditure and grants for the administration of the college and operation of the buildings. The total grant for a vocational college is allocated in the form of a block grant. Before 1991, funds were allocated in the form of earmarked grants divided into many different expenditure categories. In addition to the introduction of the 'taximeter' system at vocational colleges, the reform also entailed decentralisation of some tasks to the institutional level. It is the Ministry's task to set the overall targets and framework for the content of programmes and financial matters, but the individual vocational college is both entitled and obliged to organise both economic and educational matters itself. The board of the college as well as the principal were given more extensive powers, and the advisory bodies at all levels were also given more influence.

In the summer of 1992, 7 of Parliament's 8 parties entered into a Multi-Annual Agreement on higher education. The Multi-Annual Agreement laid down the intake and budget for the higher education sector for 1993 to 1996. At the same time, it contained several decisions affecting access to higher education and quality control and assurance. As far as is possible, it advocates a uniform educational structure across faculties.

The 'taximeter' principle was introduced to university institutions by the University Act of 1993. Student full-time equivalents are the basis for the allocation of grants for teaching, and a count is made of actual examination activity over the year.

In 1994, a reform of the financial management of medium-cycle and long-cycle higher education was implemented. The background for this reform was that political initiatives had been taken with a view to decentralising the management of institutions and creating greater coherence between grants for teaching and examinations actually passed. The most important initiatives prior to this budget reform were the new University Act of 1993 and the Multi-Annual Agreement of 1992. The reform fixed the grant for expenditure on teaching according to the 'taximeter' principle. The average rate was based on accepted productivity requirements. The reform makes it possible to regulate rates that have become either too high or too low.

Important new elements in the financial management system were greater freedom to manage own grants and the counting of examinations passed in 'real time' to be used in the calculation of the yearly grant. Under the former system, grants were fixed on the basis of activity forecasts. Student full-time equivalents were the point of departure for the allocation of grants for teaching. Prior to the new financial management system, grants for teaching were calculated and allocated on the basis of a forecast of examinations and tests passed, converted into full-time equivalents. The reform introduced a 'real-time' counting of student full-time equivalents, i.e. the actual examination activity of the year. As part of the decentralisation efforts, institutions now receive their appropriations as block grants, with no strings attached from the Ministry.

The fact that grants are linked to the number of examinations and tests passed has led to some criticism that this might tempt institutions to lower their quality requirements in order to make more money. Institutions with fewer applicants or a large dropout rate might have an incentive to lower quality in order to get more students through programmes. The Ministry did not find that there was anything to support this criticism. The expert opinion of the Evaluation Centre commissioned as a result of the 1995 debate thus concluded that there was no evidence that the 'taximeter' system in itself leads to a depreciation in the quality of programmes. Completion rates were generally unchanged, teachers' pride in their work high and neither the corps of external examiners' reports nor rotational evaluations pointed in the direction of such a depreciation.

2.3. QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND CONTROL

Short-cycle higher education

The decentralisation of the 1990s has been accompanied by a growing interest in quality control. It is the policy of the Ministry to promote self-evaluation and the development of methods for quality management in the institutions themselves rather than imposing a top-down approach. A substantial sum was set aside in 1998 to support institutions in this process.

In 1997, vocational colleges implemented measures based on a concept for assessment of results and for quality development, the so-called 'Q-concept for vocational colleges'. This concept builds on self-evaluation in accordance with the 'Q-strategy for the vocational college sector' established by the Minister of Education. Self-evaluation is carried out under the common framework as interpreted by the college. The main principles are that the schools must decide on a strategic 'Q-plan', which consists of a programme for carrying out quality work and a so-called 'Q-question framework', which lays down the objectives and quality indicators to be borne in mind. The college subsequently documents the results of its activities and compares them with the criteria for good quality which are determined in the 'Q-question framework'.

Short-cycle higher education was also evaluated by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education in 1995. As a result of this report, this area was subject to reform in 1997. The aim was to develop the field of short-cycle higher education programmes so that they would become more attractive to young people as well as to trade and industry (future employers), and also to facilitate continuation of studies in other areas of higher education through credit transfer.

Medium- and long-cycle higher education

Parallel to the decentralisation resulting partly from the University Act of 1993, a reorganisation and strengthening of the external examiner institution was undertaken at central level as part of the quality assurance efforts and the development of programmes. Furthermore, a Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education (the Evaluation Centre) was established to take care of quality evaluation. There have been no evaluations of the management/efficiency of higher education institutions as such, since the focus has been mainly on programme evaluation, but such evaluations may form part of the general ones carried out by the Centre.

External examiner institution

External examiners play an important role in the evaluation of individual courses of study. Besides forming a link between educational institutions and future employers of graduates, they also have a watchdog function with regard to standards within the individual institution. Reports from external examiners (who also comment on quality in education) form part of the global evaluation of the Evaluation Centre.

The principle behind the external examiner institution is that an independent joint corps of external examiners is established for each programme, cutting across educational institutions. External examiners are appointed by the Ministry of Education in such a way that all subject areas in a given programme are covered and so that at least 1/3 of the corps of external examiners are representatives of potential employment areas.

One of the new tasks vested in the national corps of external examiners is to give advice on the quality and adequacy of programmes in relation to labour market needs and in relation to further courses of education. This task is performed through continuous feedback to the institutions. The corps of external examiners thus constitutes an element of the quality assurance of programmes. In short-cycle higher education, external examiners are appointed by the Ministry of Education on the basis of nominations made by vocational colleges. Colleges are informed of the external examiners appointed in the so-called catalogues of external examiners.

The Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education (the Evaluation Centre)

The Evaluation Centre was established under the annual Finance Act (*Finanslov*) in 1992. It was established as a counterbalance to the decentralisation brought about under the new University Act. Increased institutional freedom was to be balanced by a strengthening of central quality assessment. Its creation was also motivated by the results of a number of *ad hoc* evaluations of higher education study programmes. The Evaluation Centre was set up in 1992 on an experimental basis, originally for a 5-year period which was subsequently prolonged till the end of 1999. The presidency of the five national boards in the field of the humanities, social sciences, medicine, natural sciences and technology makes up the governing board of the Evaluation Centre.

The Evaluation Centre appeared for the first time in an independent order, the Order on Evaluation of Certain Higher Education Programmes under the Ministry of Education of July 1997. The Evaluation Centre was responsible for undertaking the evaluation of higher education programmes and for guiding and inspiring educational institutions with regard to development of their quality. Its remit was also to gather information on national and international experience in evaluation. In December 1997, the Government decided to make the evaluation system in higher education permanent, and at the same time it decided to establish a national evaluation system for the *folkeskole* and for youth education (upper secondary education, general as well as vocational). (NB: On 1 July 1999, a new Evaluation Institute was established to carry out evaluations for the entire education system.)

The Danish model of education evaluation is characterised by internal evaluation by staff and departments and assessment by students, graduates and/or employers/institutions receiving graduates. These assessments are the main basis for the evaluation report, which is drawn up by a subject steering group. An evaluation also includes a visit to the educational institution. Another principal element in the evaluation of programmes is feedback from the corps of external examiners (the external examiners' reports). The evaluation reports produced by the Evaluation Centre are published. The Evaluation Centre has until now carried out approximately 40 evaluations of a wide range of higher education programmes.

The evaluations cover a very broad selection of programmes. Assessment of programmes is regarded as an excellent point of departure for changing and adapting programmes and indeed, in many cases, this has given rise to major or minor alterations.

From a ministerial point of view, there is no connection between the results of an evaluation of a higher education programme and the allocation of finance to it. Educational institutions receive block grants and are therefore free to decide on internal reallocations.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Short-cycle higher education

The short-cycle higher education programmes are aimed at young people who have completed either a vocational education and training programme or a general upper secondary programme. These programmes are covered by the coordinated enrolment system (the so-called *Den Koordinerede Tilmelding* or *KOT-system*), but there is no *numerus clausus*. The individual institution is responsible for admission.

In 1989, the Open Education Act was passed giving a financial framework for institutions to offer existing modular programmes or single subjects from existing 'package' programmes, mainly in higher education, to a primarily adult target group. Participants pay roughly 20% of the estimated standard costs of these.

Completion, dropout and time of study varies from one area to the next and between one programme and another. In short-cycle higher education, the completion rate is 72%.

Medium- and long-cycle higher education

There are two elements to higher education admission requirements in Denmark: 1) the general (compulsory) admission requirements and 2) a set of selection criteria, used if there are more qualified applicants for a programme than it is possible to admit. Admission requirements are laid down by the Ministry of Education, whereas selection criteria are decided by the institutions themselves. The admission requirements specify to which levels subjects must have been taken in general upper secondary education and sometimes minimum marks/examination averages.

Applicants are thus accepted on the basis of a set of basic admission requirements and the average marks obtained in the final upper secondary examination. In addition to this, skills and experience that are deemed likely to enable applicants to complete the course for which they have applied can be taken into account. Furthermore, some programmes use interviews, and a few use admission tests. The admission system thus basically leaves it to educational institutions to find the best-qualified students, and allows for applicants improving their qualifications (and chances of admission) individually. The number of applicants accepted on the basis of factors other than those described above is decided by the institution.

Most higher education programmes are connected to the coordinated enrolment system (the *KOT-system*). Although admission to higher education is always decided by the institution concerned, as decisions on admission have been decentralised to the institutions, technical management of the process has been the responsibility of the *KOT* agency (since 1977). The idea of the system is that students can apply for more than one programme at the same time, in order of priority, but they can only be admitted to one of them.

The number of available study places is determined by the individual institution and is, as a rule, divided into two quotas:

Quota 1: Study places are allocated to applicants according to the results obtained in their qualifying examination.

Quota 2: Study places are allocated to the following groups of applicants:

- applicants who are formally qualified but can improve their formal qualifications in other ways such as labour market experience, stays abroad, informal education etc.,

- applicants without a qualifying examination but who, in the view of the institution, possess knowledge and experience which makes it probable that they will be able to complete the programme applied for,
- applicants with a foreign qualification equivalent to a Danish qualifying examination at general upper secondary level.

The institutions may screen Quota 2 applicants by means of interviews or entrance tests.

The basis for this decentralised decision-making process for selection is partly legislation (e.g. the University Act), and partly a political decision, embodied in the Multi-Annual Agreement on higher education.

In accordance with the goals established in the Multi-Annual Agreement, the number of applicants accepted is therefore no longer decided by the Government. Most institutions decide on numbers, criteria and procedures for admission. However, in certain fields of study (e.g. medicine and education), capacity is still decided by central authorities due to limited access to practical training.

The Ministry of Education and the institutions have made a significant redistribution of study places in recent years taking account of applicants' demand for particular programmes. At the same time, it has been endeavouring to use the existing number of study places as optimally as possible both within individual areas of education and geographically. The objective has been to fully utilise available capacity and to reduce the number of applicants rejected.

During the 1990s, the number of applicants to higher education programmes (under the *KOT*-system) has been generally stable, at approximately 60,000. This is a significant increase compared with the 1980s, corresponding to a doubling of the number of applicants over the past 10-15 years. Apart from the fact that more higher education programmes are now registered under the *KOT*, the increase can mainly be attributed to the fact that the number of young people who have done an examination qualifying them for higher education admission has increased steadily over the years. This increase has taken place despite a fall in the size of the relevant age group. The effects of this phenomenon have also been neutralised by the fact that 'mature' applicants now make up a greater proportion of applicants than before. The average age for starting higher education is thus relatively high in Denmark.

One of the main elements in the 1992 Multi-Annual Agreement was that a total annual intake of 41,000 study places for the period 1993-96 was to be established for higher education programmes under the Ministry of Education. With the fixing of this intake capacity, it was assumed that it would be possible to introduce open intake to most areas of education in the course of the period of the agreement. With open intake, it is the responsibility of educational institutions to admit all applicants who are considered qualified to successfully undertake the programme applied for on condition that the institution can provide the necessary teaching staff and facilities.

The number of higher education applicants rejected was 16,000 in 1997. Among these, 2,000 applicants did not meet the compulsory admission requirements. Not since the end of the 1980s have so few applicants been turned down and, at that time, there were 10,000-15,000 fewer applicants than there are today.

In 1997, there was, however, plenty of available capacity on a wide range of programmes. In some programmes, the applicants rejected are still too numerous, i.e. primarily for the health education programmes, the educator (*pædagog*) training programme and certain humanities and social sciences programmes. A future objective is to reduce the number of applicants refused admission by continuing capacity adjustment in line with the numbers seeking access.

Parallel to this effort, and in recognition of the fact that guidance and information for future students are decisive factors in avoiding resource-demanding course switching, the evaluation and adjustment of the guidance effort has been undertaken at all levels in the education system in recent years.

Completion, dropout and length of study vary from one area of study to the next and from one programme to the next. In medium-cycle higher education, the completion rate is 68% and, in the long-cycle higher education programmes, it is 62% (Source: *'Danmark som foregangsland' (Denmark as a Pioneering Country, p. 52).*

The completion rate generally drops in relation to the duration of the programme, but there are also great differences between programmes within individual branches of education. Relatively low completion rates also reflect frequent changes of study programmes. Many of the students who are registered as dropouts from one higher education programme, subsequently complete another one.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

In Denmark, state financial support for students dates back to 1952. The aim was to give all qualified and willing students the chance to study regardless of financial circumstances. Support consisted of grants and state loans which were interest-free during studies. There have been many reforms of the support system over the years.

In 1975, state loans were replaced by state-guaranteed bank loans, which carried interest at the market rate during the entire loan period. The lending rates were, however, very high in those years and many students incurred large debts. This made many students turn to employment while studying in order to avoid taking on very large loans and this in turn resulted in long actual study periods.

Due to growing problems of student debt related to the high interest rate and growing unemployment among new higher education graduates, legislation was passed in 1982 to reintroduce state loans at reduced interest rates. All grant recipients were given access to state loans at reduced interest rates for an amount equal to 50% of their eligible grant amount. At the same time, a debt rescheduling facility was introduced to help the most disadvantaged of those who had obtained significant state-guaranteed bank loans. Bank loans were, however, still available.

In the summer of 1984, the Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder, set up an expert committee, known as the 'Knud Larsen Committee', which was given the task of drawing up an action programme to achieve a better balance in the labour market for higher education graduates. The Committee considered, among other things, the long periods of study and high age of graduates and their detrimental effect on both students' financial and social circumstances and their employment possibilities in the private sector. It identified a reform of the student support scheme as one of the factors which could contribute to reducing the actual time for completion of study.

According to the Committee, the existing student support scheme contributed to inefficient study. It was noted that grants were not high enough to cover students' living costs. This applied particularly to the many students who could only receive small grant amounts in the first few years, because the grant allocation depended on parental income. Students who wished to avoid devoting too much time to paid employment were thus forced to take out study loans right at the beginning of the study programme, which in the case of the long-cycle programmes, resulted in the accruing of very considerable student debt. According to the Committee, this was the reason why many students chose paid employment rather than loans, with the result that they could not complete their study programme within the prescribed time.

The Government introduced a reform bill in the spring of 1986. It was to be the first stage in a reform which took as its point of departure the recommendations submitted by the 'Knud Larsen Committee'. The most important implications of this first stage were that the age limit for parental income dependency was reduced from 22 to 20. The bill was unanimously adopted.

In August 1986, the Social-Liberal Party published a draft for a reform of the student support scheme, which included proposals for some very significant improvements in students' financial situation. The Social-Liberals' basis for the proposal was three (by now) classic, political objectives relating to student support. These were, firstly, to enable students to live on the support alone, i.e. without engaging in paid employment; secondly, to reduce the average length of studies; and thirdly, to create the conditions for avoiding excessive debt levels. According to the proposal, total student support was to be increased so that it corresponded to a 'normal student budget'. The total student support for students living on their own was to be DKK 50,000 per year, of which DKK 36,000 (compared with the previous maximum of DKK 27,000) was to be awarded in the form of grants. The remaining DKK 14,000 was to be awarded as low-interest state loans. (According to the proposal, state-guaranteed bank loans were to be abolished). The loan component, which at the time constituted approximately 1/3 of the support, would thenceforth be reduced. Student support was to be granted for a period corresponding to the officially stipulated duration of study. The possibilities for supplementing support with occupational income were to be drastically limited. Finally, the age limit for parental income dependency was to be further reduced to 19 years.

The Government then proposed a special 'voucher system' to be introduced in higher education. The voucher system was divided into 48 grant months and aimed to give students the possibility of choosing the months in which they wished the support to be paid out. If a student was not eligible for support during a certain period, due to too high an income for instance, they could accumulate vouchers and have them paid out at a later date. In addition, the Government wanted a fixed loan ceiling of 100,000 DKK to avoid excessive student debts. Furthermore, it proposed a low interest level for state-guaranteed loans.

In November 1986, the Social-Liberal Party presented a resolution to Parliament, according to which the Government was to be ordered to introduce a bill for long-term reform of student support on the basis of guidelines presented in the earlier Social-Liberal draft reform of August the same year, described above. A month later, the Government proposed its own alternative bill to Parliament.

The Minister of Education was against the proposals of the Social-Liberal Party's draft reform, regarding them as a reflection of the irresponsible financial policy of always offering more than opponents. Although, the Social-Liberals incorporated the Government's plan of a voucher system into their proposal and finally agreed to increase the amount which students were allowed to earn in addition to support, the government parties voted against the resolution. The bill which was finally adopted by a majority of parties not in government was based on the Social-Liberal Party's proposals.

During the remainder of the period under review, only minor adjustments have been made to student support policy. In December 1991, there was a large majority behind an amendment to the 1988 Consolidation Act on state education, grants and loans which, among other things, introduced 6 special circumstances vouchers in the case of childbirth and reduced the parental income dependency for 18-year-olds. In July 1992, the rules on financial support for studies abroad were liberalised so that it was possible to obtain support for three years of studies abroad (later extended to 4 years). This had previously only been possible within the Nordic countries.

The voucher system reform was by now more or less complete, and the changes made in student support during the remaining period are comparatively marginal and of limited financial significance.

They comprise minor changes to the voucher system, an extension of the scheme for researcher education level and improved support possibilities for certain groups of students. This period saw the introduction of end loans to facilitate the completion of studies when other support possibilities had been exhausted, better support possibilities in connection with childbirth and adoption, support for researcher education and, most recently, a transport discount for students. Financial support for students thus encompasses almost the entire educational spectrum from youth education to researcher education, and students have gradually acquired almost wage earner status under existing student support conditions.

The only controversial change was the introduction of the transport discount for students enrolled in higher education. It was adopted in 1996 after pressure from the students despite opposition in Parliament from the non-Socialists. The aim of the scheme was to reduce transport costs for students who live far away from their place of study and, at the same time, to make it less necessary for young people to move away from their parents.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. CURRICULUM

It is a characteristic of short-cycle programmes that they are more directly oriented towards the labour market, and that colleges do not carry out research, but work in close cooperation with the local labour market.

Among the universities, i.e. the 12 institutions which carry out both teaching and research to the highest academic level, there are institutions which are divided into main subject areas and offer a wide range of programmes as well as those which offer one or a few programmes (mono-institutions). The medium-cycle higher education programmes are mainly offered at specialised and small educational institutions.

The content and relevance of the programmes

The Ministry of Education lays down provisions about the structure and general content of programmes. These provisions are agreed on through dialogue with educational institutions. An educational institution's range of programmes must be approved by the Ministry, which, in its assessment, consults educational councils and other bodies about the professional/subject quality and the need for the programme in question.

The educational institutions themselves decide on the details of the content of programmes within the framework laid down by the Ministry. How specific provisions are varies somewhat from one subject area to another dependent on tradition and on whether the provisions are common to programmes across a main area. This is the case, for instance, with the humanities and natural sciences programmes at universities. It also depends on whether the provision is dealing only with one programme, which will often be the case for the other medium- and long-cycle higher education programmes. Programmes leading to a profession/authorisation to practise are regulated in more detail than other programmes.

The development in the area of ministerial orders since the mid-1980s has been towards providing target and framework management conditions. It gives institutions free rein to update and adapt the content of programmes according to the changing demands of the labour market. The result can be great differences between educational institutions in the subject areas chosen as core ones in the same programme. For instance, the evaluation of nursing programmes has resulted in the conclusion that they differ too much in terms of the professional qualifications they provide and the constituents of the

programmes. The right balance has to be struck between giving freedom to institutions to organise programmes and setting control mechanisms in place to ensure quality and relevance. This is also reflected in the new act on teacher training (for the *folkeskole*), which contains greater central control than before.

Employers' and institutions' influence on programmes

Contacts between education and trade and industry are essential for increasing mutual understanding and exchange.

Contact between educational institutions and the potential 'receivers' of graduates (employers and institutions) varies across different fields of education. It exists for all programmes via the external examiner institution, since 1/3 of the corps of external examiners must be made up of the potential 'receivers', and at least one member of the external examiner chairmanship must be a 'receiver' external examiner. The external examiners must be consulted in connection with significant changes in programmes, and they are responsible for maintaining contacts with educational institutions and for advising on the quality of programmes in relation to both further education and the labour market.

The influence of potential 'receivers' on programmes and their content does vary however. The 'receivers' are typically well-represented at educational institutions with governing boards, and they thus have a direct influence on programmes. At institutions covered by the University Act, there are two external experts within research and education, one represented in the Senate and the other in the Faculty Council of the universities. There is no systematic evaluation of this arrangement, but it must be considered to be a step in the right direction towards a better interface between education and trade and industry.

At central level, the views of the 'receivers' are heard via committee work, conferences held for interested parties, and so on. Educational councils, which function as advisers to the Ministry in educational policy questions, are constituted in such a way as to bring in the views of the 'receivers'.

The Minister's objective is to reform all parts of the Danish education system so that trade and industry can benefit from the best possible workforce and thus improve competitiveness. Thus, a committee report submitted on 'National Competence Development: Industrial Development Through Qualification Development' highlighted a number of different possibilities for closer cooperation between educational institutions and businesses. Within higher education and research, this includes recommendations for joint research projects, business practitioners working as teachers along with their better representation on the managing bodies of institutions, more students in practical training, and teaching which is more 'business-oriented'.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teachers

The qualifications of teachers constitute an important factor in the quality of programmes.

In recent years, considerable resources have been set aside from central funds for the subject-specific and pedagogical upgrading of the teaching body (e.g. for the engineering programmes, the quality development fund etc.).

The formal teacher qualification requirements vary.

As far as the teachers in short-cycle higher education are concerned, the qualification requirements are laid down at central level in the individual education orders issued by the Ministry. Teachers teaching in short-cycle higher education must generally have a *candidatus* (Master's or second level) degree from a university as well as relevant occupational experience, or have acquired a similar level by other means.

Affiliation to trade and industry is given priority when selecting teachers for short-cycle higher education. Teachers are thus appointed more on the basis of relevant educational background and occupational experience and less on the basis of pedagogical experience. Teachers at vocational colleges are not required to have completed a postgraduate teacher training course prior to employment, but must take such a course within the two first years of employment.

In medium-cycle higher education, teachers will often have a *candidatus* degree or similar, as well as practical experience within their area of teaching. For health education programmes, however, it has been pointed out that the current teachers' qualifications are inadequate. The establishment of interdisciplinary *candidatus* programmes which universities now offer to graduates with a medium-cycle higher education qualification in health education, will give the teaching body in medium-cycle health education programmes the long-desired possibility of professional upgrading.

As a general rule, there are no provisions in the education orders about explicit requirements with regard to teachers' qualifications. For teachers at the colleges of education, home economics teacher training colleges and the engineering colleges however, a condition for permanent employment is a positive appraisal.

At the institutions under the University Act, full-time academic staff must as a minimum have completed a doctoral degree or hold equivalent academic qualifications. The staff at these institutions must both teach and carry out research.

In the selection of university teaching staff, which is made on the basis of recommendations of expert committees, most emphasis has traditionally been placed on the research qualifications of applicants and less on their teaching qualifications. Although the research qualifications still carry weight, there is an increasing tendency to take teaching qualifications into account.

In connection with a change in 1993 in the career structure of scientific staff at higher education institutions, new provisions were adopted to the effect that newly employed teachers were to be given systematic supervision and guidance in relation to their teaching tasks. This supervision is completed with a written assessment of teaching competence. This requirement only applies to new teachers, but several higher education institutions have initiated pedagogical training activities which go beyond this and which may apply to the entire teaching staff.

The nomination of the 'the teacher of the year' at some institutions also indicates the increased emphasis put on good teaching. A number of universities have recently established the 'Danish University Pedagogical Network' with a view to strengthening university teaching.

Universities have typically employed a wide range of part-time teachers. For this, the requirement is a completed *candidatus* programme and university teachers are not required to undertake pedagogical training as described above. But they will, instead, often be able to draw on comprehensive practical experience from work outside the education sector.

The Ministerial Order on the employment of teachers and scientific staff at higher education institutions under the Ministry of Education has been criticised from different quarters. This criticism relates to several issues, including that university management itself has not been given a sufficient degree of freedom to select from qualified applicants. The actual effort and time involved in the recruitment process has also been mentioned as a reason for altering the order.

In a university context, research-based teaching is often emphasised as a decisive quality prerequisite for university programmes, central to their compliance with the requirements laid down in the University Act for teaching and research at the highest scientific level. This does not necessarily mean that a researcher's research and teaching field have to be the same. What is important is that the teacher is able to pass on the latest results of research within the area. The distribution of the university researchers' time between teaching and research varies over time as well as in relation to how research-intensive the programmes are. It may be the case that the ideal that the research activities of the individual feed directly into their teaching duties is far from the daily reality.

The distribution of those scientific staff working on a full-time basis and those working part-time (*videnskabeligt personale - VIP*, and *deltidsansat videnskabeligt personale, D-VIP*, respectively) in higher education institutions varies greatly from one discipline to the next. The University of Copenhagen has the lowest *VIP* coverage, just under 50% in the social sciences, whereas the Technical University of Denmark has the highest *VIP* coverage (80%).

Two reasons for the difference in the proportion of full-time and part-time scientific staff employed are that there are different traditions within the different disciplines and there are difficulties in recruiting sufficient permanent staff.

At the moment, there are no figures at central level on the extent to which permanent teachers carry out the teaching. A reporting system has been established so that, in future, the number of lessons taught by permanent teachers can be calculated (i.e., the time devoted to lessons, guidance, examinations, and so on).

Assessment

In the medium- and long-cycle higher education areas, external examinations must be held for a minimum of 1/3 of each programme, in its most essential areas. The rest of the programme is assessed internally, i.e. by the teacher(s) and examiner(s) who are appointed by the rector of the educational institution. 'Pass/fail' can be used in up to 1/3 of the examinations. Otherwise, the 13-point marking scale is used.

In practice, institutions use external examinations to a much greater extent than prescribed. A random sample study made by the Ministry of Education in 1996 showed that the use of the marking scale and of external examiners is most frequently used and that they are used in combination. The study furthermore showed a tendency for the marking scale and external examination to be used more frequently at *candidatus* level than at Bachelor's level. The assessment of 'pass/fail' is primarily used in connection with internal examinations. According to the study, the 13-point marking scale is used in 80% and 'pass/fail' is used in 20% of examinations.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Whereas international research cooperation has long and strong traditions, the internationalisation of programmes has been given a new dimension in the course of the past ten years as aspects such as the international quality and competitiveness of programmes and the mobility of the workforce have begun to play an important role.

In the mid-1980s, with assistance from the Erasmus Programme, most institutions started to orientate their internationalisation efforts towards the exchange of students. The reciprocity principle of the Erasmus Programme and bilateral agreements also meant that it was necessary to organise some programmes or courses in foreign languages (mainly English) in order to be able to receive foreign students. Another reason for organising teaching in foreign languages for some institutions was also the wish to give students in specific international programmes, such as international trade and economics, language qualifications.

At most institutions, the general political will to participate in international cooperation in education did exist, but when it came to initiating student mobility under different programmes, actual decisions were taken mainly at grassroots level by individual, enthusiastic teachers. International activities during the period from the mid-1980s to the beginning of the 1990s were carried out primarily as a result of personal commitment, where people at lower levels participated in specific initiatives without seeing them in a greater developmental/strategic context.

Actual strategies for internationalisation were not formulated till the beginning of the 1990s, when the need for such strategies grew in step with the increase in international activities, and when there were demands for ever greater financial and resource-related commitments.

The first internationalisation strategies at the beginning of the 1990s were largely the result of a rationalisation of the development that had taken already place, which was partly reflected in the fact that these strategies focused particularly on student mobility.

Since the mid-1990s, there has been a tremendous quantitative and qualitative development in the strategy debate on the internationalisation of programmes both at national and global level.

It was realised that the content and relevance of programmes had to be seen in an international context, and that internationalisation was becoming increasingly important for all higher education programmes. The aim has thus been to increase the extent and the quality of internationalisation of programmes, one way being through a significant increase in the number of student and teacher exchanges between Danish and foreign universities. Students are very interested in mobility. Approximately 4,000 students a year participate in exchanges, and slightly fewer choose to take their entire higher education abroad, where they can bring their Danish student support with them for a total of 4 years of studies. The number of foreign exchange students in Denmark is somewhat lower than the number of Danish students going abroad.

In order to increase student mobility for both Danish and foreign students, the Ministry of Education established an internationalisation grant in 1987 for students in medium-cycle and long-cycle higher education. The grant is allocated to cover institutions' expenditure on student mobility. The grant is awarded for each full-time study visit of a minimum of 3 months' duration which forms part of the student's study programme. The total grant amounts to DKK 30 million per year.

Mobility is only one aspect of internationalisation. Of importance to internationalisation is also professional cooperation between educational institutions on the content of study programmes. As a

follow-up to the debate in the Danish Parliament in 1996 and the Ministry's report to Parliament in March 1997, the Ministry and the Danish Rectors' Conference have together set up two committees, whose mission it is to promote the internationalisation of higher education through mobility and through internationalisation of educational content.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

In 1998, the Minister issued a discussion paper on educational institutions of the 21st century. This discussion paper contained analyses ranging from assessments of the size and location of institutions to their structure and functions. These analyses showed very clearly that there was a great need for far-reaching reform and drew attention to the need to merge the approximately 200 higher education institutions currently in existence. This is a prerequisite for being able to maintain programmes at a high quality level, particularly in remote areas and thus prevent the movement of large numbers of young students out of rural areas to the big cities, mainly to the larger educational cities of Aarhus and Copenhagen.

The demands and the challenges for higher education institutions are increasing rapidly at the present time. Compared to the past when institutions' tasks were restricted to delivering education to a relatively limited target group, the general developments in society have meant that they will now have to cover a number of new fields. This includes intensified cooperation with the institutions/organisations and employers receiving graduates, a strengthening of continuing training, an increase in further education activities, as well as internationalisation. At the same time, students, politicians, industry and taxpayers rightly demand more and more of institutions with regard to quality development, interdisciplinary approach, efficiency and flexibility. To this should be added the increasing demand for people with a higher education qualification.

In recognition of this, the Government has worked systematically with a view to strengthening the sector through a wide range of far-reaching reforms in the higher education. With the 'taximeter' system, a performance-based financing mechanism has been introduced; a quality-promoting evaluation system has been introduced; a quality-based research budgeting model has been implemented; and a great number of educational reforms have been carried out, (e.g. of the doctoral programme, teacher training and the engineering programmes) and a new University Act has been adopted. There has been a reform of the Bachelor's programme and, finally, there has been the recent revision of short-cycle higher education.

There is, however, one central area which still remains, namely the question of the institutional structure in Denmark. Institutions are the cornerstone of the education system and, at the same time, together they form the framework within which educational policy objectives are to be implemented. Whereas the above reforms have typically been aimed at strengthening programmes, institutional reform will be aimed at strengthening the framework within which programmes are conducted. In a discussion of the education system of the future, this will be a central issue.

This is the very theme of the above-mentioned discussion paper issued by the Ministry on educational institutions of the 21st century. This paper examines the existing institutional structure in the face of the demands and challenges of the future. In those fields where the institutions are not prepared to meet these, new and alternative ways of organising the education system will be proposed. The discussion paper does not pretend to have patented solutions to all problems but endeavours to present possible models and proposals for a public debate. Institutional structure is defined broadly in this context and comprises both a discussion of the size and location of educational institutions and the consequences of these aspects, as well as the organisation and functions of institutions.

The main question is how it will be possible to create an institutional structure which ensures high quality at all levels of education, in all branches of education and at all educational institutions while, at the same time, ensuring an adequate geographical distribution of higher education provision.

The aim is not that some institutions should be good within just a few of their fields, but that all institutions should offer optimal quality across the range of their educational offers.

The first question for which an answer will be sought is the question of whether the number of higher education institutions in Denmark is satisfactory. Today, there are 195 institutions under the Ministry of Education offering higher education. Seen from an international perspective, this is a lot (typically 5-10 times more institutions for the number of inhabitants than in neighbouring countries). The question is whether these many small institutions, of which half have a yearly intake of under 100 students, will be able to meet the numerous and increasing demands of the future with regard to, for instance, international quality level, continuing training, integration of information technology, internationalisation, interdisciplinary approach and cooperation with industry.

This discussion will be followed by a thorough examination of the organisation of the institutions. Whether they have the structure, organisation and functions which will enable them to carry education and research successfully into the 21st century will be the main question. Today, higher education is offered at three main types of educational institutions: the University Act institutions (of which there are 12), the medium-cycle institutions (60 teacher training colleges, 22 schools of nursing and 32 other institutions, e.g. design schools, engineering colleges, occupational and physiotherapy schools, schools of social work, business school departments etc.), as well as 69 vocational colleges offering short-cycle higher education.

These three types of educational institutions differ in many ways. For instance, teaching at universities is based on the research carried out there, whereas the other institutions do not have internal mechanisms which automatically ensure this same development in teaching. The question is whether it is appropriate to maintain a situation where 95% of higher education institutions do not participate in the systematic development of knowledge through research in a time of transition towards a society of knowledge. At the same time, it would be relevant to discuss whether it is appropriate that a large proportion of institutions only offer single subject areas in a time where interdisciplinary approach, flexibility and cooperation are becoming evermore important.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

KOT-system *Den Koordinerede Tilmelding* (Coordinated Enrolment System)



Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

GERMANY

National description

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GERMANY

INTRODUCTION

Historical overview of developments and reforms in higher education ¹

Higher education reforms in West Germany between 1945 and 1980

The restructuring of the higher education system in West Germany in many respects followed on from the situation existing prior to 1933. In accordance with the principle of cultural federalism, the *Länder* were initially solely responsible for higher education matters. Inter-*Länder* coordination then ensued in 1948 through the setting up of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - KMK*) as well as the West German Rectors' Conference (*Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz - WRK*) for higher education institutions. An important role relating to advisory matters in the area of higher education and scientific policy was adopted by the Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) formed in 1957.

A restructuring and consolidation period from 1945 until 1960 was followed by a phase of active higher education development and reform policy. From around 1960 onwards, West German higher education institutions were placed under considerable pressure to change and modernise, which, in turn, initiated a phase of fundamental reform in the higher education sector. This began in the first half of the 1960s, reaching its climax in the mid-1970s with the passing of the Higher Education Framework Act (*Hochschulrahmengesetz - HRG*) in 1976 and ended in the late 1970s.

The most influential factor in determining higher education development in West Germany between 1960 and 1980 (and beyond this period) was the continuous expansion of demand for study places which is still felt today.

The following is a summary of the most important developments in higher education policy reforms in the period from 1960 to 1980.

- **Development of cooperation between the Federation (*Bund*) and the *Länder*:** The responsibilities of the Federation relating to the funding and organisation of the higher education system and scientific research have been extended since the end of the 1950s. Already in 1956, the Federation had started to participate in higher education funding particularly in the areas of the expansion of higher education institutions and the promotion of research and financial support for students. This cooperation between the Federation and the *Länder* was put on a new constitutional footing at the end of the 1960s (Amendment to the German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz - GG*) of 1969).

On the basis of these provisions the following federal laws were enacted:

- the 1969 *Hochschulbauförderungsgesetz (HBFüG)* regulating the planning and funding of the expansion and construction of higher education institutions;
- the 1971 *Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz (BAföG)* regulating financial support for students; and
- the 1976 *Hochschulrahmengesetz (HRG)* regulating the structure and organisation of the higher education system.

¹ The national description on Higher Education Reforms since 1980 was written by Dr. Klaus Schnitzer (*HIS GmbH* Hanover) and Prof. Andrae Wolter (*Technische Universität* Dresden) in consultation with the German Eurydice Units of the *Länder* and the Federation. The description deals with the developments and reforms of institutions of the higher education sector comprising *Universitäten*, *Kunst- und Musikhochschulen* and *Fachhochschulen* (cf. ISCED97 level 5 A and 6).

- **Structural reforms in higher education:** Between 1965 and 1980, the structure of the higher education system changed considerably, partly through the introduction of new types of higher education institutions and partly through the merging of existing ones. With the introduction of a second type of higher education institution, the so-called *Fachhochschulen*, the main part of the higher education sector, i.e. the universities and technical colleges, moved towards a 'dual-type structure' of higher education system. At the same time, most of the technical colleges had increased their range of courses to such an extent that the majority of them were transformed into technical universities.
- **Expansion of existing and construction of new higher education institutions:** The strong growth in the numbers of students has also led to the expansion of existing higher education institutions since 1960 (personnel, premises, course offer) as well as the founding of a large number of new higher education institutions, partly through expanding former specialised higher education institutions (e.g. economic and agricultural colleges, teacher training colleges) into universities. Around 30 new universities were established between 1960 and 1980, plus approximately 95 general *Fachhochschulen*, not including the specialised *Fachhochschulen* for public administration.
- **Admission restrictions and 'overload':** The rapid growth in the numbers of first-year students and students as a whole since the second half of the 1960s in certain subject areas, especially medicine, has led to serious bottlenecks and capacity problems. Despite the increased expansion of higher education institutions, admission restrictions (the so-called *numerus clausus*) have been introduced for a range of study courses that are in particular demand. In 1972, following a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court which set narrow constitutional limitations regarding the introduction of admission restrictions, the *Länder* signed a treaty regulating selection and admission procedures and set up a central body for the allocation of study places (ZVS) in Dortmund, which is responsible for the administrative organisation of the selection procedure for a limited range of study courses.

The introduction of admission restrictions represented - in historical terms - a profound break with German higher education tradition, as the higher education institutions in Germany had always had a comparatively open system of access and admission to higher education.

- **Institutionalisation of higher education planning:** As in other areas of public administration, planning concepts and procedures have gradually become part of the higher education development process in the Federal Republic of Germany since 1965. However, only during the heyday of higher education reform policy was the concept of systematically steering the future development of higher education by means of longer-term programmes ('plans') pursued. These plans contained the relevant objectives, the measures planned for reaching such objectives and the corresponding implementation stages. State higher education planning changed fundamentally as early as the second half of the 1970s, when longer-term target-oriented overall planning was replaced by an administrative approach seeking a solution to acute capacity shortages.
- **From the professors' university to the group university:** Still in the 1960s, the group having the status of full professors (*ordentliche Professoren*) together with the associate professors (*außerordentliche Professoren*), possessed essential decision-making powers within the universities at both the centralised level (senate, council) as well as the decentralised level of the faculties.

In the second half of the 1960s, this traditional structure of academic self-administration attracted increasingly severe criticism.

From the end of the 1960s, the various university members groups were invited to participate in academic self-administration to varying proportions ('parities') in various *Länder*. A ruling by the

Federal Constitutional Court in 1973 subsequently established the legal framework of codetermination in academic matters.

- **Study reform and reform within higher education institutions:** Numerous concepts for reforming studies were also put forward from the 1960s onwards. Besides the duration of studies, which was felt to be too long, and excessive fluctuation (discontinuation of studies, switching subjects), the main problems in this regard were the 'tidying-up' or rationalisation of courses of study, the lack of differentiation in the structure of studies as well as the low level of professional and practical orientation. In the 1970s, particularly after the passing of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (1976), extensive supraregional and local activities were initiated in the area of study reform which led to new examination and study regulations being drawn up for almost all courses of study. The responsibility for these activities lay with a network of study reform commissions at Federal, *Länder* and institutional level. Besides the modernisation of existing courses of study, a large number of new ones were introduced for new subject areas, for specialised technical or professional activities. In general, study reform aimed at making courses of study more practice oriented and at taking account of new higher education teaching and learning methods (e.g. project-based studies).

Most of the changes were 'passively endured rather than actively shaped' by the higher education institutions (U. Teichler).

- **Expansion of state steering of the higher education system:** There has been a marked change in the role played by the State in higher education since the end of the 1950s. The State no longer confines itself to its traditional role concentrating primarily on guaranteeing the legal and financial framework for the continuance of otherwise largely independent ('free') research and teaching activities.

The reasons for the increasing influence of the State lie, on the one hand, in the State's growing financial and planning involvement in the higher education sector as well as, on the other hand, in the widespread impression that the higher education institutions themselves did not have the strength to initiate the required reforms all by themselves.

Fundamentally, a distinction can be drawn between three types of state steering in the higher education system.

Firstly: Statutory standardisation in the *Länder* and at federal level, culminating in the passing of the Higher Education Framework Act (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*).

Secondly: Intensification of state steering through decrees and administrative regulations below the statutory level.

Thirdly: A growing number of judicial rulings (by the constitutional, administrative and labour courts) has led to extensive regulation and bureaucratisation of not only the internal situation.

Social, economic and political conditions relating to current developments in the higher education system

Besides the ongoing process of European unification, the most important political event during the period under review (1980-1998) was the unification of the two German states which became effective on 3 October 1990.

As a result of the unification of the two German states, higher education policy and development at the beginning of the 1990s had the central task of shaping a common higher education and scientific landscape from two higher education systems that had developed in different directions after 1945. This was essentially carried out by way of reforming the GDR system of higher education and science and aligning it largely with the higher education structures that had grown historically in the (old) Federal Republic of Germany. This has led to a critical debate on the issue of what reform opportunities were missed with the assumption of another higher education system.

There are three factors that are of great significance for economic development. Besides general economic development, these are, in particular, the structural change taking place in the Federal Republic of Germany from an industrial to a service-oriented society with new demands being made on the education system in general, and on higher education in particular, as well as the development of the labour market, which is also fundamentally changing the professional and employment prospects of higher education graduates.

Role and structure of the higher education sector

In Germany, higher education institutions are distinguished from other institutions in the tertiary sector in a relatively clear manner through the criterion of their scientific nature. In contrast to other forms of vocational training such as in the workplace or at upper secondary level, two classic functions form the core of the responsibilities assigned to higher education institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany by way of historical tradition and statutory provisions. These functions are scientific research and teaching (and scientifically oriented study) in close association with the promotion of up-and-coming academics. This basically applies to all types of higher education institutions in the same way, even though, in the process of executing these tasks, the degree of importance attached to them will vary.

There are currently around 335 higher education institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany. There are three different types of institutions, which can only be partially differentiated from each other in distinct terms.

- Universities and equivalent higher education institutions: These have the right to confer doctorates and post-doctoral lecturing qualifications (*Habilitation*). In addition to research and teaching, they are responsible, in particular, for the training and promotion of up-and-coming academics. There are a total of 90 institutions in this category (1996).

The seven *Gesamthochschulen* (comprehensive higher education institutions) established in the 1970s are located exclusively in the *Länder* of Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia. The reorganisation of the higher education sector through the setting up of *Gesamthochschulen* (as a long-term goal) was one of the major reform projects of the 1970s. In the 1980s, the *Gesamthochschulen* then moved closer to the universities and now bear the name *Gesamthochschule-Universität*.

Besides the theological faculties at universities, there are also 16 *Theologische Hochschulen* (theological colleges), which are run by the Church (i.e. privately).

The majority of the previously very large number of *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (teacher training colleges) were either integrated into existing universities or expanded to form their own universities back in the 1970s, with a small number undergoing this change in the first half of the 1990s.

- *Fachhochschulen*: The provision and organisation of teaching and study at *Fachhochschulen* is more application and practice oriented. The same is true for their research and development activities. For years now, most courses of study in the *Fachhochschule* sector have been subject to a virtually comprehensive local *numerus clausus*, with the attractiveness of studying at a *Fachhochschule* far exceeding the capacities available. The size of the *Fachhochschulen* varies between more than 15,000 and less than 100 students.
- *Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*: There are 46 colleges of art and music.

The percentage breakdown of the total of 1,838,500 students registered at German higher education institutions in 1996 by type of institution distinguished here is as follows:

- Universities	65.2%
- <i>Fachhochschulen</i>	24.0%
- <i>Gesamthochschulen</i>	7.9%
- Colleges of Art and Music	1.6%
- Teacher Training Colleges	1.1%
- Theological Colleges	0.2%

The German higher education system thus differentiates in a relatively clear manner between universities as the core of the higher education system and the *Fachhochschule*, while all other forms of higher education institutions are of relatively lesser importance.

An important development objective in higher education policy since the end of the 1960s has been the establishment across the Federal Republic of a regionally balanced network of study locations around the students' place of residence.

The introduction and extension of the *Fachhochschulen* have, not least of all, contributed considerably towards the regional expansion of the higher education network in Germany.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

A distinction can be drawn between three characteristic trends in reform policy during the period after 1980. Firstly, parts of the reforms initiated previously have either been readjusted or withdrawn; secondly, certain changes have been continued; and thirdly, there has also been evidence of new approaches. In view of the federal system, the development trends in higher education policy within the statutory framework of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* are certainly not always of a uniform nature across the *Länder*, but often differ to a considerable extent.

1.1. AMENDMENT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION FRAMEWORK ACT (HOCHSCHULRAHMENGESETZ) IN 1985

The *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (HRG) created, for the first time, at a federal level a uniform statutory framework for the higher education system which the *Länder* had to implement and replenish within a fixed period by amending their higher education laws or - where individual *Länder* did not have such a law- through the passing of such legislation. The HRG is the result of a political compromise that was reached after many years but which in no way signalled the end of the controversial higher education policy debate on the future of the German higher education system. The change in federal government

that occurred in 1982 and the federal parliamentary elections of the *Bundestag* in 1983 brought about a turn-around in higher education policy which, in turn, led to a renewed debate on the *HRG*. As a consequence substantial sections of the *HRG* were amended in 1985 by way of three laws.

- The so-called Second Law to amend the *HRG* (*Zweites Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes*) dated 28 March 1985 (*Bundesgesetzblatt I*, p. 605) set out new provisions concerning the procedure for awarding study places.
- The Law on fixed-term Contracts of Employment with Academic Staff (*Gesetz über befristete Arbeitsverträge mit wissenschaftlichem Personal*) dated 14 June 1985 (*Bundesgesetzblatt I*, p. 1065) - the so-called *Zeitvertragsgesetz* - set out provisions concerning the possibilities and procedures for drawing up fixed-term contracts of employment for scientific staff.
- The Third Law to amend the *HRG* (*Drittes Gesetz zur Änderung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes*) dated 14 November 1985 introduced the most extensive changes in the federal legal framework relating to the higher education system.

These principles include, in particular, the new model of an institutionally differentiated higher education system more strongly oriented towards competition and with organisational structures which promote and support individual initiatives and activities on the part of the higher education institutions (e.g. in the areas of study reform and research funding).

The following central points of the reform and three amendments of the *HRG* referred to above can be identified:

- **Structure of the higher education system:** Strengthening of the model of an institutionally diversified higher education system.
- **Study reform:** An agreement between the *Länder* in 1988 regarding coordination of the regulations governing studies and examinations.
- **Admission to higher education:** New provisions regarding the selection and admission procedure for courses of study that fall under the special selection procedure have been introduced and the procedure changed to a multi-strand process².
- **Higher education management and planning:** Choice between a rectorship and a presidential constitution.
- **Personnel structure:** Change in the prerequisites for employment as professor and in the status of scientific staff under public employment law. Post-doctoral lecturing qualification (*Habilitation*) as a standard requirement for appointment or employment as professor.

1.2. AMENDMENT OF THE *HOCHSCHULRAHMENGESETZ* IN THE PERIOD FROM 1997 TO 1998

At the end of the 1980s, there was a widespread impression in Germany that the higher education system was in a growing crisis and that there was a growing need for reform in this area.

Within the framework of the debate on higher education reform policy, the Federal Minister for Education, Science, Research and Technology set out the most important objectives and motives of higher education reform in a policy paper entitled '*Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert*' (*Higher Education Institutions for the 21st Century*) (BMBF 1997). According to this policy paper, the position of higher education institutions in Germany, and of study and teaching especially, is characterised by a range of development problems (e.g. with regard to the average duration of studies and the percentage of

² See Chapter 3 of the comparative analysis for details concerning the criteria and procedures for admission to higher education, especially in relation to courses of study with restricted admission.

students discontinuing their studies) and structural deficiencies (e.g. the lack of internationally comparable study structures, of modern management structures and of performance-related resource allocation). These not only threaten the national effectiveness of German higher education institutions but also impair their competitiveness and attractiveness at international level. 'The objective of the reform of the German higher education system is, through deregulation, performance orientation and the creation of performance incentives, to facilitate competition and differentiation as well as to safeguard the competitiveness of German higher education institutions for the 21st century' (BMBF 1997, p. 10). During the legislative term commencing 1994, the Federation prepared a new extensive amendment to the *HRG* within the context of the ongoing reform debate.

The new *HRG* provides, in particular, for the following reform measures:

- Introduction of performance-oriented higher education funding (§ 5).
- Introduction of evaluation of research and teaching, involvement of students in the evaluation of teaching (§ 6).
- New definition and regulation of the standard period of study (§ 11).

In future, the standard period of study at *Fachhochschulen* leading to the *Diplom* degree shall be a maximum of four years, with a standard period of 4½ years for other programmes leading to the award of a *Diplom* or a *Magister* degree.

- Intensifying the obligation of higher education institutions to provide guidance on courses of study (§14).
- Introduction of an intermediate examination for all courses of study with a standard course duration of at least four years which, on principle, has to be passed as a prerequisite for proceeding to the advanced stage of the study programme (§ 15, Par. 1).
- 'Free attempt' on all suitable courses of study (§ 15, Par. 2).

Requirements to be determined for certain courses whereby the result of an examination, failed but taken within the standard study time, will be discounted. *Länder* law can provide for the possibility of resitting an examination passed within the context of a 'free attempt' for the purpose of improving grades.

- Introduction of a performance points system for the accumulation and transfer of study performance and examination results (§ 15 Par. 3).

Besides the possibility of conferring Bachelor's and Master's degrees, as is customary at international level (cf. § 19), the development of a performance points system is of central importance for the mobility of students both within Germany and internationally.

- Possibility of conferring Bachelor's and Master's degrees (§ 19).
- Introduction of a performance-related quota within the allocation procedure for study places (*Verteilungsverfahren*) (§ 31, Par. 2).
- Incorporation of a selection procedure at institutional level into the general selection procedure for a proportion of the study places awarded on courses subject to nation-wide admission restrictions (§ 32, Par. 3, Clause 2 b).
- Pedagogical ability as an unconditional requirement for the recruitment of professors (§ 44, Par. 1, Clause 2).
- Post-doctoral lecturing qualification (*Habilitation*) and equivalent academic achievement as concurrent requirements for the appointment of professors (§ 44, Par. 2).
- Obligation of higher education institutions to enforce gender equality.

The new *HRG* lays the foundation for greater autonomy and competition in the higher education sector.

The amendment of the *HRG* comes in a development phase of higher education policy in which there is, in contrast to the first half of the 1970s, clear evidence that rights in relation to organisation and initiative for reform in higher education are transferred back from the federal to the *Land* level.

In contrast to the areas of reform of study as well as institutional reform in matters of organisation and administration, the debate concerning the reform of public service law for higher education personnel is, overall, still in its infancy.

1.3. HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS IN THE *LÄNDER*

Higher education developments over the past few years show that the *Länder*, compared to the Federation have become distinctly more self-confident with regard to higher education policy and have intensified their role in the reform process quite perceptibly.

Specific legislative projects reveal, in overall terms, more differences than common ground between the *Länder*.

The reforms already implemented or currently being planned by the majority or a large number of the *Länder* are set out below. Despite certain features specific to the individual *Länder*, they foresee amongst other things:

- Strengthening of higher education management at central level and/or at the level of the faculties or departments as well as other measures for reforming the organisation of higher education institutions.
- Introduction of block grants (partly as pilot projects) and other measures for deregulating decision-making responsibilities or implementing a 'functional reform' of higher education institutions (e.g. making budgeting more flexible, performance-related resource allocation between and within the higher education institutions, devolution of responsibilities in personnel management).
- Reviewing course offers at the higher education institutions, dropping or merging courses of study or closing down departments/faculties.
- Incorporating provisions for piloting and experimentation activities in order to increase higher education institutions' room for manoeuvre.
- Reorganisation of university medical courses and university clinics.
- Measures for improving the quality of teaching (e.g. greater emphasis placed on pedagogical ability for the award of the post-doctoral lecturing qualification and for the appointment as professor) and for the assessment of teaching performance (e.g. introduction of teaching evaluation and teaching reports).
- Measures for reforming study structures in order to make it 'feasible' to complete programmes within the standard period of study, and for reforming postgraduate studies.
- Strengthening and expanding the *Fachhochschule* sector (new locations or courses of study) and enhancing the attractiveness of studying at a *Fachhochschule*.
- Measures for promoting particular target groups, e.g. extending support for women and facilitating access to higher education for applicants without traditional entry qualifications.

1.4. TRANSFORMATION OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE EAST GERMAN *LÄNDER*

The unification of the two German states gave rise to the historically unique task of uniting two higher education systems.

A fundamental review of the higher education system was carried out in less than one year, the period between the opening of the borders on 9 November 1989 and the accession of the GDR to the Federal Republic of Germany on the basis of the 'Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on Establishing German Unity' (the so-called Unification Treaty - *Einigungsvertrag*) signed on 31 August 1990.

The Unification Treaty contained a number of essential provisions regarding higher education renewal in the East German *Länder*.

- **Political-administrative management:** Competence for the higher education system became part of the cultural sovereignty of the newly established *Länder*. At the same time, the East German *Länder* were integrated into the established system of cultural federalism with its supraregional coordination and planning bodies (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, Joint Commission of the Federation and the *Länder* for Educational Planning and Promotion of Research, Joint Planning Committee for the Construction of Higher Education Institutions) as well as into the existing academic/scientific organisations (Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in Germany - *HRK*, German Research Association - *DFG*, Science Council - *Wissenschaftsrat* etc.).
- **Higher education legislation:** In a first stage, the so-called Higher Education Renewal Laws served as a tool for standardising the fundamental principles of higher education organisation for an interim phase. In a second stage, the location and structure of the higher education institutions (e.g. the establishment of *Fachhochschulen*) was regulated in the individual *Länder* by means of so-called Higher Education Structure Laws. The concluding third stage then entailed the finalisation of higher education laws within the specified period³.
- **Winding up:** This mainly concerned institutions particularly tainted by political ideology and involved the closure of individual higher education institutions or specific departments (e.g. for Marxism-Leninism).
- **Assessment:** As requested by Article 38 of the Unification Treaty, reorganisation was preceded by an assessment (evaluation) conducted by the Science Council with the objective of submitting restructuring proposals. The Science Council's function as an evaluation body was, however, confined to the area of non-university research.

The East German *Länder* established their own planning and advisory bodies for the restructuring of the higher education system, with so-called higher education structure commissions set up at *Land* level.

This went hand in hand with substantial personnel reductions, amounting to around 30% to 40% of original staff numbers. Grounds for dismissals were a lack of personal integrity, lack of professional or technical skills or a lack of demand.

The high degree of specialisation in the higher education system of the former GDR was revised in favour of strengthening universities, on the one hand, and the newly established *Fachhochschulen* as a second type of higher education institution, on the other.

This is particularly true for the renewal and expansion of the humanities, economics, social science and law, and for the reform of teacher training.

The renewal of the higher education institutions in the East German *Länder* in terms of structure, course offer and personnel is now largely complete, although infrastructural renovation and modernisation will still take some time. The financial investment required for higher education renewal was provided through the so-called 'Higher Education Renewal Programme' (*HEP*) agreed between the Federation and the *Länder* which ran up to 1996 with a budget of approximately DM 3 billion.

³ In Berlin, the (West-) Berlin higher education law was also enforced in the eastern part of the city and merely extended by way of amendment legislation to include specific provisions for the higher education institutions in East Berlin. In Brandenburg, a *Land* higher education law was adopted immediately in 1991 without any interim stages.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

According to the Higher Education Framework Act (*HRG*, 1987), higher education institutions are considered public corporations and as a rule also *Land* institutions. The administration and supervision of German higher education institutions are determined by this 'dualistic concept' (cf. *Handbuch des Wissenschaftsrechts*).

Higher education institutions as part of the state structure

State responsibility for the higher education system in Germany is determined by the federal structure of the State. According to the German Basic Law (*GG*, 1949), the *Länder* shall perform the State's functions unless specified otherwise by the Basic Law. The extent of the Federation's competence is specified in the German Basic Law. With regard to administration and supervision, it covers the following areas:

- Framework competence for the general principles of the higher education system.
- Legislative competence for the salaries and other payments to civil servants (e.g. higher education teaching staff).
- Framework competence for all legal relations within the public service.
- Cooperation with the *Länder* in the joint task of the 'building and extension of higher education institutions, including university clinics' (Article 91 a).
- Cooperation between the Federation and *Länder* on the basis of agreements relating to educational planning and the promotion of research institutions and projects of supraregional importance (Article 91 b).

The framework competence of the Federation for the general principles of the higher education system is laid down by the *HRG*. It sets out the general objectives of higher education institutions as well as the general principles governing the higher education system, study, teaching and research, admission, membership and participation, staff, plus - up to 1998 - the organisation and administration of the higher education institutions.

Based on the general principles set out in the *HRG*, the *Länder* issue their own higher education laws to regulate in detail the organisation and administration of the higher education institutions under their jurisdiction. The supervisory power in legal and, to a certain extent, also study-related matters, the authority for the establishment and organisation of institutions, plus the sovereign power in financial and personnel matters lie with the relevant *Land* government.

Higher education institutions as public corporations

Despite the far-ranging competence of the Federation and, in particular, of the *Länder* for higher education institutions, the latter have the right of extensive self-administration under the relevant laws. This is founded on academic freedom as well as cooperation between the self-governing bodies of higher education institutions and the relevant *Land* ministry in academic matters and in state tasks according to the principle of unified administration.

Academic freedom, which is stipulated in the German Basic Law (Article 5, Par. 3), presupposes an autonomous area of academic self-administration. Within the framework of their competence for all academic matters of research and teaching, higher education institutions draw up their own basic constitutions as well as other important regulations, such as those relating to examinations and studies. However, such basic constitutions and other regulations have to be approved by the relevant *Land* ministry or be notified to the ministries concerned.

Reforms

In view of the changing demands of society, there have been repeated attempts to change the relationship between higher education autonomy and state supervision, as well as the arrangements for cooperation between the higher education sector and the State.

The study reform movement of the early 1990s concentrated its efforts primarily on changing structural conditions. A determining factor in the study reform debate was the so-called *Benchmark Paper* (*Eckwertepapier*) drawn up by a Federation-*Länder* working party in 1993, in preparation for top-level debate on educational policy. The vast majority of measures relate to structural elements such as specifying the standard period of study, barring improper switching between courses of study, rendering teaching obligations more flexible, introducing tutorials and a free attempt for examinations. The measures drawn up through the endeavours of the Federation, *Länder* and higher education institutions are aimed predominantly at enhancing the efficiency of higher education institutions by directly changing structural components. Strategic deliberations on competition and the responsibility of institutions themselves appear in the 'Benchmark Paper' only under 'Further measures for enhancing the efficiency of higher education institutions.'

The impetus towards greater institutional autonomy and responsibility is supported by the Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*) in its *Ten Theses for Higher Education Policy*. The momentum for reform in principle also meets with the approval of higher education institutions. In a joint position paper drawn up by the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in July 1993, the Association recommended:

- Deregulation of higher education law.
- Increased flexibility of higher education budgets and introduction of block grants.
- Introduction of financial controlling.
- Increased freedom of decision-making.
- Medium-term professionalisation of management structures (*KMK, HRK, 1993*).

Based on the finding that dirigiste models of state influence are more likely to prevent higher education institutions from reaching performance objectives, the *KMK* focused its fundamental deliberations on the strategic dimension of administrative action in its 1997 policy paper entitled *Higher Education Institutions and Higher Education Policy Facing New Challenges* (*KMK, 1997*).

In connection with proposals for reform of higher education organisation, which in the meantime have found general acceptance, the paper opens the debate to broader issues for the first time. The section 'Higher education institutions as public institutions or as legally autonomous organisations?' discusses among other things the endowing of higher education institutions with the role of employer as well as the establishing of genuine supervisory boards, and thereby the possibility of higher education institutions taking over substantial parts of the supervisory function previously performed by the State (*KMK, 1997*).

Under the 4th Law to amend the Higher Education Framework Act of 20 August 1998 (*HRG, 1998*), the administrative reform objectives for the German higher education system, such as deregulation, performance orientation, creation of performance incentives, competition and differentiation, are supported by expressly waiving the previous provisions of the 1985 Higher Education Framework Act on the Internal and External Organisation and Administration of Higher Education Institutions aimed at deregulating this catalogue of provisions.

2.1. FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

2.1.1. Standard procedure for higher education funding

Legal basis for funding higher education

The State's responsibility for funding higher education is based on the principle of academic freedom guaranteed in the German Basic Law (*GG*, 1949, Art. 5, Par. 5). This wording establishes not only the right of rejection in relation to higher education institution's core academic matters, it also sets out the State's responsibility for the functioning of higher education as an institution and, thus, for its financing. Within the context of unified administration - self-administration and state administration - the higher education institution simply administers state matters regarding economic management. German higher education institutions are in principal governed by budgetary legislation (Federation budgetary principles, federal budget regulations and the budgetary regulations of the *Länder*). Under budgetary law, higher education institutions funded directly by the State are regarded as dependent state institutions.

Pre-reform higher education funding procedures

The present procedure (before the reform) for basic state funding is traditionally based on actual needs. This is an incrementalist approach that takes as a starting point the staffing and equipment resources already available at the respective higher education institutions. Budget calculations are based on input-related formulae such as the number of students, the number of professorial posts or teaching capacity.

2.1.2. Reform trends in higher education funding

Reform initially focused on changing budgeting procedures. It is only very recently that the distribution procedures of internal and external resource allocation have also been included in the deliberations in this regard.

Reform of budgeting procedures

Recommendations for the more efficient distribution, utilisation and control of resources allocated to higher education institutions were put forward by the Science Council as long ago as 1979 (*Wissenschaftsrat*, 1979).

The recommendations made by the Science Council were not implemented initially. The *KMK* then took up the Science Council's recommendations in its *Eleven Theses for Strengthening the Financial Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions* presented in 1994 (*KMK*, 1994). These theses are embedded into a comprehensive state deregulation policy.

In 1996, the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs noted diverse measures for making higher education budgets more flexible in its *Report on the Realisation of Structural Reform in the Higher Education System* (*KMK* (a), 1996), with evidence from pilot projects concerning the use of block grants in several *Länder*.

The pilot projects concerning the introduction of block grants also pursue different directions. Sometimes, the award of block grants is part of an ongoing state (*Kameralistisch*) budgeting approach and introduces a range of special provisions. In the pilot project conducted in another *Land*, public

companies of the *Land* using double-entry bookkeeping were established which draw up their own economic plans on the basis of a cost framework developed by themselves outside the *Land* budget. According to the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the degree of flexibility that can be achieved using either of these methods is so high that such budgets can also be deemed to be 'block grants'.

Reform approaches for distributing resources

With the recommendation according to which 'resources for teaching (...) are to be distributed in the medium and long term in accordance with student-related parameters', the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs opened the debate on the revision of resource allocation between the State and higher education institutions by presenting its *Eleven Theses for Strengthening the Financial Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions* (KMK, 1994). The reference to student-related parameters signals the first call for the inclusion of performance components in the allocation of resources (cf. 'Benchmark Paper' drawn up by the Federation-Länder working party under section V, Point 2, 1993). In its report entitled *Differentiation in the Distribution of Resources*, the Standing Conference of Ministers proposed that a relatively approximate procedure based on only a small number of indicators would be suitable for the allocation of state resources (KMK (b), 1996). Regarded as suitable indicators for calculating the teaching budget are the number of first-year students, those studying within the standard period of study and the number of examinations taken.

Characteristic features of the German approaches to reform

The resource distribution models normally comprise multi-component models based on volume and performance, while a so-called innovation criterion for funding is also under discussion. The volume component depends primarily on the capacities available (study places on offer). The performance component is calculated according to achievement, which is also associated with higher education policy objectives (e.g. rewarding short study duration and high graduate numbers). The innovation component is conceived as a discretionary allocation criterion (e.g. rewarding measures planned to increase the percentage of women, internationalisation).

The outcome of the higher education funding reforms cannot be predicted as yet.

The new Higher Education Framework Act of 20 August 1998 also supports these endeavours and, in § 5, sets out the outline legal requirements for a nationwide solution regarding output-oriented performance-based funding (HRG, 1997): 'State funding of higher education institutions is oriented towards achievement attained in research and teaching as well as in promoting up-and-coming academics'.

In the paper on future perspectives entitled *Higher Education Institutions and Higher Education Policy Facing New Challenges* (KMK) dated February 1997, the *Länder* underline the necessity of changing the funding systems in such a way as to offer effective incentives to enhance performance and monitor quality.

The need to undertake a 'clarification of objectives' as a framework for performance-based resource allocation and autonomous management of resources by higher education institutions is emphasised here for the first time. Such contracts are intended to provide the framework for further utilisation of resources.

This clarification of objectives helps strengthen the *Länder* in their framework competence relating to structural changes (closure and establishment of study courses, plus shifts of emphasis, financial

sanctions in the case of inadequate performance in quantitative and qualitative terms) despite administrative deregulation and provides higher education institutions with a planning safeguard.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The situation concerning quality assurance in the higher education sector has also changed with the greater emphasis placed on the autonomy of higher education institutions in matters of supervision and administration. In the same way as the areas of administration and supervision are undergoing change from input-related to output-oriented steering, the reform of quality assurance can be described as a transition from traditional ex-ante to ex-post quality assurance.

2.2.1. Evaluation in the form of crisis management

The main impetus for the introduction of process and success-oriented quality assurance approaches emerged from particular crisis phenomena evident in the German higher education system. The increasing duration and frequent discontinuation of studies not only gave rise to targeted measures for reforming study structures - these aimed mainly at reducing the length of studies - but also gave an insight into the fact that implicit forms of traditional quality assurance had to be supplemented by explicit forms of quality control.

In the joint declaration made by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in July 1993 with regard to reforming study structures (*KMK/HRK*), higher education institutions expressed their support for the initiative to 'investigate particular deficiencies in teaching'. Suddenly, numerous initiatives regarding the evaluation of teaching emerged from the student body. The orientation of these appraisals of lectures and seminars is made very clear by the slogan attached to the most popular evaluation programme, i.e. 'Test the Prof'.

2.2.2. Systemic approaches concerning quality assurance and evaluation

Systemic approaches to the evaluation of higher education institutions have developed within a very short period of time from initial single action approaches and are part of the overall renewal of the higher education system.

Teaching reports

Significant for the development of a new evaluation culture are the mandatory teaching reports stipulated under the amendments made to the *Länder* higher education laws in the early 1990s. As a new form of reporting, the teaching report is intended, in a similar manner to research and accountability reports, to inform the public at large about the higher education institution's objectives and functions and the fulfilling of these. The obligation to draw up teaching reports has been incorporated into the higher education laws in almost all *Länder*.

Models of internal and external evaluation

Besides statutory provisions, the mid-1990s also saw the introduction of new evaluation activities oriented towards a model of internal and external evaluation.

In 1995, the Science Council carried out model teaching evaluations at 11 higher education institutions in the subjects of business administration and physics and, on the basis of this experience, developed an evaluation procedure as well as detailed individual recommendations relating to the application of this model.

At the same time as the model assessment conducted by the Science Council, selected higher education institutions participated in the European Union evaluation pilot project, with this coordinated by the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (*HRK* (a), 1995).

By virtue of the positive experience gained in the course of the two pilot projects, the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions presented recommendations in 1995 on 'Evaluation in the higher education sector with special attention to teaching' (*HRK* (b), 1995). The resolution recommends linking internal self-evaluation by academic departments with external evaluation carried out by scientifically recognised groups of experts.

2.2.3. Institutionalisation

In its recommendations for strengthening teaching at higher education institutions through evaluation, the Science Council advocates a 'system of decentralised evaluation groups as an appropriate form of institutionalisation for the evaluation of teaching' (*Wissenschaftsrat*, 1996).

Initial evaluation structures have already emerged within the context of a system of decentralised evaluation groups. The 'Northern Association' (*Nordverbund*) has, for example, developed into a permanent body for the evaluation of teaching with a joint secretariat. The activities of this association overlap partly with the central evaluation agency for higher education institutions of Lower Saxony (*ZEVA*) founded in 1995.

Individual *Länder* are in the process of institutionalising quality control and evaluation procedures in a similar manner. It nonetheless remains open to what extent the two-stage internal and external evaluation model will be adopted by other *Länder*. A large number of *Länder* are not yet committing themselves to one specific system in order to promote a diversity of evaluation methods at higher education institutions (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia).

Even though it is not comprehensive, a new, modern evaluation culture has asserted itself at German higher education institutions within a very short period of time.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

3.1. ACCESS AND ADMISSION

Under the provisions of § 27 of the Higher Education Framework Act (*HRG*), every German citizen is entitled to pursue the course of study of their choice when furnishing proof of the required qualification for admission to such course of study. For courses of study leading to an initial professional qualification, such proof is normally provided in the form of successful completion of school education preparing for studying at a higher education institution. In Germany, this entry entitlement has come to be known by the term *Hochschulreife*.

A distinction is drawn in Germany between three types of entitlement to study:

- General *Hochschulreife*: Confers an entitlement to pursue any course of study at any higher education institution in any subject area.
- Subject specific *Hochschulreife*: The subject specific *Hochschulreife* confers the entitlement to pursue studies only in a particular subject area.
- *Fachhochschulreife*: The *Fachhochschulreife* certificate confers the entitlement to pursue studies at a *Fachhochschule*. This is normally acquired at *Fachoberschulen*, two-year *Fachschulen* or *Berufsfachschulen* or after completing the 12th grade of the *gymnasiale Oberstufe* (i.e. one year before the *Abitur*).

Out of all first-year students at higher education institutions in Germany, approximately 80% have the general *Hochschulreife*, around 15% the *Fachhochschulreife* and about 5% the subject specific *Hochschulreife* or other entitlement to study.

In Germany, the *Abitur* (general upper secondary school leaving certificate) or general *Hochschulreife* signifies a general entitlement to pursue studies, i.e. it is a type of automatic entitlement to higher education access. This principle is given special significance by the fact that the German Basic Law (Article 12) guarantees the free choice of profession, which means that all German citizens have the right to freely choose their occupation, place of work and vocational training. Higher education admission restrictions in Germany thus operate within the tight framework of educational and constitutional law, and it follows that the selection criteria have formed a central, controversial issue in higher education policy for the past 25 years. It has been confirmed by the judiciary that admission restrictions - the so-called *numerus clausus (NC)* - may be imposed only under precisely defined conditions, i.e. the capacity available for study places must be exploited to the utmost.

The increasing disparity between demand and available capacity in a number of very popular subject areas has led to a renewed extension of admission restrictions over the last ten years. A distinction has to be drawn here between **local** admission restrictions that apply only to a particular higher education institution which itself decides on their enforcement, and **nation-wide** admission restrictions which are subject to a central allocation procedure and nationally and/or super-regionally standardised regulations. In 1972, the *Länder* established the central office for the allocation of study places (ZVS) in Dortmund to carry out the administrative implementation of admission and allocation procedures.

There are currently two models under discussion for restructuring access and admission to higher education, i.e. the selection model and the distribution model. The **selection model** provides for the introduction of higher education entry examinations with the express objective of cutting back access to studying and reducing the numbers of first-year students and students in general. This model is not only controversial in terms of constitutional law, but is also contentious with regard to the general and subject-related requirements and standards to be taken as a basis for higher education entry examinations.

The **distribution model** is aimed at organising access to higher education in a more competitively and performance-oriented manner by means of a multi-stage selection procedure and in two directions, i.e. those applying to study compete with each other for places at the best higher education institutions, and the latter compete with each other for the best students.

This model does not meet with the objections raised against the selection model as it does not, in principle, exclude any applicant from studying. Rather it is intended merely to optimise the distribution process.

3.2. ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ADULTS WITH PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONS WITHOUT TRADITIONAL ENTITLEMENT TO STUDY

With regard to higher education access for adults with professional experience, a distinction is made in Germany between subsequent acquisition of entitlement to study through **possibilities existing under school education law** and ways of accessing higher education based on **provisions under higher education law**. School education law provides the following possibilities for adults with professional experience but without traditional entitlement to study to subsequently acquire such entitlement:

Kollegs - i.e. institutes at which the *Hochschulreife* can be acquired,
Abendgymnasien - general upper secondary evening schools,
Abitur examination for non-pupils (*Nichtschülerprüfung*).

Both *Kollegs* and *Abendgymnasien* come under the heading of the *Zweiter Bildungsweg* (second chance).

Besides these possibilities under school education law, a number of other opportunities exist under higher education law - normally under the higher education laws of the *Länder*. These are normally subsumed under the heading of the *Dritter Bildungsweg* (third chance) and provide for three different methods of access:

- A higher education access examination for especially able working persons.
- Other, more occupation-related methods facilitating the pursuit of studies via an entry or admission examinations in varying forms carried out at the higher education institution concerned.
- The so-called trial study period, which provides for provisional registration for a limited duration without the need to take an examination to gain access to the higher education institution.

3.3. WASTAGE: FREQUENCY, CAUSES AND MEASURES

On balance, it can be said that the frequency of discontinuation of studies has increased considerably over the past 25 years, though the image of the typical person who gives up studying does not correspond to people's conventional ideas. People discontinuing their studies are not necessarily low achievers not meeting requirements, and they do not necessarily plunge into a crisis of existence after discontinuing their studies. Nor can the discontinuation of studies be regarded as proof of the supposed inefficiency of higher education institutions. Rather, it is more a sign of deep-rooted decision-making, orientation and transition problems at the interface between school and higher education and the education, vocational training and employment systems.

The problems of discontinuation of studies is given only marginal consideration in higher education policy concepts, recommendations for action, and proposed ranges of measures.

The focus of a targeted higher education policy strategy to reduce the frequency with which studies are discontinued therefore is measures for improving the information and guidance given to those potentially interested in studying before the commencement of their studies, as well as ongoing guidance and counselling during their studies. The question of certifying course credits achieved prior to discontinuing studies is currently the subject of a controversial debate.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Data and information in this regard is available in the comparative analysis by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe*, 1999.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

The studies offered at higher education institutions in Germany are, in principle, organised into courses of study which can, as a rule, be assigned to a single subject area or, in some cases, to several subjects (scientific disciplines) and lead to a professional qualification. A course of study is formally defined as having its own examination and study regulations stipulating the structure, content, duration and requirements of the studies as well as the examinations procedures.

5.1. THE STATUS QUO

In view of this high degree of differentiation, the planning, structure and content of studies offered at German higher education institutions can be characterised here only in terms of their ideal form based on the following structural features:

- **Discipline and vocational orientation of study courses:** The aim of higher education studies is to prepare the student for a field of professional activity.
- **Principle of one-tier specialist studies:** Studies at German higher education institutions are organised from the outset as continuous specialised studies without any vertical breakdown into stages.
- **Standardisation and differentiation:** The most important institutional and curricular difference is between *Fachhochschule* studies on the one hand and university studies on the other.
- **Study system at universities:** University studies comprise specialised scientific training for a profession as well as academic qualifications for research and/or up-and-coming academics.
- **Study system at *Fachhochschulen*:** In contrast to university studies, studies at the *Fachhochschulen* are more practical and application oriented - with (mostly two) practical semesters outside the higher education institution forming an integral part of the course.
- **Full-time studies:** Studies are mainly organised as full-time attendance studies, with flexible study courses and forms such as part-time and distance courses (studying while working) generally less widespread.
- **Final higher education examinations:** In Germany, an examination system comprising both academic examinations and state examinations has developed historically in the higher education sector. *Magister* and *Diplom* degree as well as state examinations are equivalent with regard to their academic status, which is also expressed in the fact that they provide entitlement to pursue doctoral studies. Courses of study at *Fachhochschulen* also finish with a *Diplom* examination, the corresponding degree identified by adding the letters *FH* after the title (e.g. *Diplom-Ingenieur (FH)*). This degree does not, however, or at least not generally, entitle the holder to pursue doctoral studies.
- **Study courses, examination and study regulations:** Examination and study regulations are the central instrument for the planning and organisation of studies. Examination regulations are coordinated at supraregional level by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in the form of framework regulations.
- **Postgraduate studies:** Advanced study courses are offered either as further education or postgraduate courses of study. The terminology used for this in Germany is neither clearly defined nor standardised.

5.2. REFORM CONCEPTS AND REFORM MEASURES

The system of studies at German higher education institutions is currently undergoing a far-reaching restructuring process. The new orientation and reorientation of higher education planning and policy has, in essence, been based on two conclusions:

- Development problems of higher education institutions in Germany are rooted in the growing discrepancy between the huge and ever-increasing demand for study places since the mid-1970s and the under-funding and under-equipping of German higher education institutions.
- Extensive agreement has now been reached in German higher education policy to the effect that the strong quantitative growth of the higher education sector occurring as a result of the expansive development in the demand for study places has not yet brought about the qualitative changes required in relation to the organisational and study structures at German higher education institutions.

The Science Council thus addressed the necessity for fundamental study structure reforms, in relation to which it submitted a large number of proposals in its *Ten Theses*:

- Targeted expansion of the *Fachhochschulen*.
- Structural change and differentiation of content in study courses offered by the universities.
- Sharpening the profile of the different types of higher education institutions in a differentiated higher education system.

The Science Council has published a whole range of specific recommendations, studies and expert reports on individual points over the past few years in order to further develop the concept presented in 1993 and formulate it in more precise terms. Similarly, the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (*HRK*) adopted a 'Concept for the development of higher education institutions' in Germany in 1992 (*HRK 1992*).

Two reports drawn up by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in 1993 and 1996 provide information on the situation concerning the implementation of study structure reforms at the level of the *Länder* (*KMK 1993, 1996*). These make it clear that a wide range of measures have already been initiated or implemented in all the *Länder* over the past few years with regard to study and study structure reforms. 'Measures for rationalising study courses and reducing the duration of studies leading to a professional qualification' have become the 'core element of study structure reform' (*KMK 1996, p. 11*). It has emerged to an increasing extent that the reform of study courses and study organisation is dependent upon a framework formed by way of more far-reaching strategic concepts and measures for increasing the efficiency of higher education institutions (monitoring and quality assurance, deregulation of decision-making powers, efficiency of utilisation of resources, strengthening higher education management, etc.) and facilitating structural change in the higher education sector (strengthening the *Fachhochschule* sector, extending alternative training pathways for persons entitled to study, etc.).

The reforms already implemented mainly include the following measures:

- Quantitative benchmarking for studies and examinations in order to improve the 'study-feasibility' of courses up to successful completion.
- Measures for improving the organisation of examinations and speeding up the examination administration processes (e.g. introduction of a 'free attempt').
- Reforms in the area of postgraduate studies.
- Qualitative improvement of higher education teaching, e.g. greater consideration of pedagogical competence in relation to post-doctoral lecturing qualifications and appointments.
- Improving information and guidance given to students as well as general study guidance, subject-area guidance and psychological counselling.

- The objective of increasing the proportion of first-year students at *Fachhochschulen* to between 35% and 40%.
- New study course concepts in the *Fachhochschule* sector; dual study courses interlinking study at *Fachhochschule* with workplace training.

5.3. TEACHING AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The teaching methods employed at German higher education institutions are classical forms of formal teaching, such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical training and study trips. This applies both to universities and *Fachhochschulen*. At universities, special emphasis is also placed on private study in addition to formal teaching.

At universities, lectures and seminars are attended according to individual performance levels and study planning. Studying in strict year cohorts tends to be less common.

One particular feature of the *Fachhochschulen* is the practical study semester integrated into the study course.

Innovative teaching methods mainly follow concepts associated with the principle of project-based study. Attempts at reform towards organising study entirely around project-based studies have not gone beyond the trial stage.

The use of new media is currently still confined, in the main, to the provision of information, allocation of tasks and other forms of teaching support. Greater use of new media is planned.

Study attainment and certification

The prerequisite for being admitted to interim and final examinations are performance credits (*Scheine*), which are acquired on the basis of oral and written contributions made in the optional and compulsory optional lectures and seminars. This provides for ongoing assessment of performance. Where students do not successfully complete one or the other series of lectures or seminars, they have only to repeat these and can, at the same time, keep up with their fellow students in the same semester.

Awareness of the advantages of a Credit Points System is growing through the introduction of the ECTS system. The examination certificate system is now being replaced by a Credit Points System in various courses of study at individual higher education institutions and is being used as a standard procedure for recognition of attainment.

Final examinations

A standard period of study is stipulated in the examination regulations for each course of study. However, the actual average duration of studies at universities is, in many cases, one to two years longer than the standard study period and one to two semesters longer at the *Fachhochschulen*. In most cases, written dissertations have to be prepared for the final examinations, the scope of which has increased considerably.

Final examination and qualification

Both academic and state examinations can be taken at German higher education institutions. The performance requirements for the state examination correspond to those of the higher education institutions. In the state examinations, representatives of the State Examinations Bodies of the *Länder* are also involved besides the relevant professors.

The first state examination is, particularly for prospective lawyers and teachers, followed by an additional preparatory service period which is concluded by taking a further state examination (*Zweite Staatsprüfung*).

Training of higher education teaching staff

There is no formal training system in the German higher education sector for training higher education teaching staff in the performance of teaching duties.

Professors at *Fachhochschulen* normally have to be able to produce evidence of relevant professional practical experience, while university professors usually have to be in possession of an additional academic qualification in the form of the post-doctoral lecturing qualification (*Habilitation*). Pedagogical aptitude is normally verified by means of a test lecture.

The introduction of higher education didactic centres has not led to the improvement in teaching ability hoped for.

Currently being discussed as measures for improving pedagogical ability for teachers are direct and indirect forms of quality assurance.

The post-doctoral lecturing qualification as proof of scientific qualification is, at present, the subject of critical debate because of its lack of assessing and predicting teaching ability.

A further problem associated with higher education teaching is the high average age of higher education teaching personnel. This is one reason that innovation in higher education teaching has not emerged to the extent desired within the context of reform deliberations. It is hoped that the impending wave of retirements and the associated generation change will lead not only to greater attention being paid to teaching but also to increased openness in relation to pending reforms.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

The international orientation of higher education is a self-evident obligation for higher education institutions in Germany, which is also established in the Higher Education Framework Act.

For this reason, over the last decade the following three objectives have been the focus in relation to internationalising higher education institutions:

- Expanding cooperation relations amongst the industrialised countries, with special regard for the European dimension.
- Overcoming the political differences between East and West.
- Cooperation with the developing countries.

6.1. STUDIES ABROAD - POSSIBILITIES FOR GERMAN STUDENTS

Institutionalised support

The establishment of *Akademische Auslandsämter* (international offices) at all universities and, subsequently, at all *Fachhochschulen* served to create special information, advice and placing centres at local level. Besides their advisory and placing functions, the *Auslandsämter* also carry out various preparatory functions, including the organisation of language courses in cooperation with the higher education institution's foreign language programmes.

The most important institutional prerequisite for studying abroad at supraregional level is the 'intermediary organisation', *DAAD* (German Academic Exchange Service). The *DAAD* is an autonomous organisation of the higher education institutions, although it receives most of its budgetary resources for awarding foreign study grants from the federal departments (Foreign Office, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation, Federal Ministry of Education and Research).

Mobility

In 1997, the *DAAD* provided support to a total of 13,515 German students studying abroad.

In addition to this, there are the EU mobility programmes, for which the *DAAD* performs implementation and information functions (1996: 13,460).

The great interest shown by German students in studying abroad is evident from the fact that the vast majority (approximately 80%) of studies abroad are organised by students themselves without any assistance from intermediary organisations. An important role is played by the support provided under the Federal Training Assistance Act (*BAföG*). In 1997, for example, 8,905 students received financial support for studies abroad, with the Federation and *Länder* providing around DM 38 million for this purpose.

In absolute figures, the number of German students studying abroad virtually quadrupled between 1975 and 1996, rising from around 10,700 to approximately 42,600 (*Bundestagsdrucksache* published 9 December 1997, p. 5). This corresponds to 2.5% of the total number of students in Germany. Despite this low percentage, Germany is amongst the countries sending most students abroad at both European and international level. There is, therefore, no evidence, at least on a European level, of the often implied reluctance of German students to go abroad.

Besides the classic limited study visit, a large number of students also go abroad for work experience, language courses or other study-related purposes. Taking the total number of all types of study visits abroad, around one quarter of German higher education graduates have gathered relevant experience abroad (Schnitzer, K. and Schröder, M., 1996, p. 4).

Internationalisation of curricula

The innovative expansion of the classical approach to international mobility through 'virtual mobility' was advanced by concept proposals of the OECD on the 'development of internationalised curricula' (OECD-CERI Guidelines, 1994, p. 7) as well as through the support measure under Chapter I of the Socrates programme in which universities are increasingly offered incentives to introduce a European dimension into courses attended by students not directly implicated in the mobility programme (European Commission 1995, p. 17).

Two measures for 'strengthening the international competitiveness of Germany as a study location' (*Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz*, 1997), which primarily concern support for foreign students play a part in ensuring that the study courses of German students studying at home are also internationalised to an even greater extent in the future. One of these measures is the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's courses/qualifications at German higher education institutions.

On the other hand, the 'Internationally Oriented Study Courses' programme initiated in 1995 by the Federal Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology in cooperation with the German Academic Exchange Service and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions offers a special opportunity for creating a particular emphasis on individual subject areas. These study

courses combine subject-related training with a selected foreign language and intensive international cooperation. More faculties have applied for these support measures than there are resources available.

6.2. SPECIAL MEASURES FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

The aims of studies for foreigners are more diverse than those of German students studying abroad. A distinction has to be drawn in relation to this between three important target groups with differing training needs:

- Educational aid for students from developing countries.
- Student exchange between industrialised countries.
- Integration of student offspring of foreigners resident in Germany (*Bildungsinländer*).

Increasing the attractiveness of Germany as a study location

The recent finding that German higher education institutions did not, as destinations for foreign students, participate in the world-wide increase in student mobility to the same extent as other countries (USA, Australia, Japan, Great Britain) has created a desire to enhance the attractiveness of German higher education institutions for foreign students. 'Strengthening the international competitiveness of Germany as a study location' has been declared a priority matter (resolution adopted by the *Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz*, on 18 December 1997). The 'Declaration by the Heads of Government of the Federation and the *Länder* on implementing measures to strengthen the international competitiveness of Germany as a study location' provides for the following action:

- Facilitating access to higher education institutions.
- 'Internationally Oriented Courses of Study' programme and a 'Master's Plus Programme'.
- A performance points system: an internationally compatible Credit Points System to increase attractiveness.
- Internationally recognised qualifications.
- Social and academic guidance: use of tutors, places in student residences, catering, health insurance and guidance.
- Increasing the exchange of scientists, academics and lecturers under the Special Higher Education Programme III (*Hochschulsonderprogramm III*).
- Marketing and information abroad.
- A central standardised test for German.
- Improvement of the legal framework governing foreigners: non-bureaucratic issuing of entry and residence permits.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>BAföG</i>	<i>Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz</i> (Federal Training Assistance Act)
<i>DAAD</i>	<i>Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst</i> (German Academic Exchange Service)
<i>GG</i>	<i>Grundgesetz</i> (German Basic Law)
<i>HRG</i>	<i>Hochschulrahmengesetz</i> (Higher Education Framework Act)
<i>HRK</i>	<i>Hochschulrektorenkonferenz</i> (Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions in Germany)
<i>KMK</i>	<i>Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i> (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the <i>Länder</i> of the Federal Republic of Germany)
<i>WRK</i>	<i>Westdeutsche Rektorenkonferenz</i> (West German Rectors' Conference)

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Eurydice
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

GREECE

National description

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GREECE

INTRODUCTION

Higher education began in Greece in 1937 with the creation in Athens of the Othon University of Greece, in other words, much later than in certain other European countries (due to the Ottoman domination). Following the liberation of Northern Greece at the start of the century, the Aristotilian University of Thessaloniki was established in 1922/23 to have an influence not only on education, but also in the political and economic arena in this 'sensitive' region of the country, which is extremely important from a geopolitical perspective. These two institutions, which are still operating, became centres of education and research and have served as a model for more recently established university institutions.

Although the institutional framework governing the functioning of Greek universities cannot really be assimilated to a specific European framework, because of the considerable German influence in the 19th century, during this time and until the 1970s the basic administrative and operational structures and models were marked by the German 'Humboltien' model. The fundamental characteristics of this model were the considerable administrative powers of professors of the first rank, the institution of the professorial chair and the approval of programmes of study by the Minister of Education, which restricted the autonomy and self-governance of higher education institutions.

Greece enjoyed the highest growth rate among the countries of the OECD in the post-war period and in particular during the 1950s and 1960s. This paved the way for industrial development and, more generally, the economic and social modernisation of the country, leading to a dramatic increase in the demand for higher education. As a result, Greece now has 18 *Anotato Ekpaideftiko Idryma*, or *AEIs*, (university institutions), 14 *Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma*, or *TEIs*, (technical educational institutions) and the Patras Open University.

However, the increase in the provision of higher education has been delayed due to the slow pace of modernisation of the political system. Indeed, it was only during the 1980s that the 8 regional universities genuinely began to develop. Around the same time, there was a radical change in the institutional and organisational framework of the university institutions, whereas up to that time it was still based on Act 5343 of 1931.

Framework Act 1268/82 on the structure and functioning of the *AEIs* (*OEDV*, 1982) made significant changes to the operational framework of the *AEIs*, while from 1983, thanks to the establishment of the system of general examinations for entrance to higher education under Act 1351/83, the number of admissions increased significantly year by year (the number of admissions was 33,000 in 1982, 42,000 in 1983, and 51,000 in 1984). Framework Act 1268/82 also brought changes to the basic operating framework of Greek higher education institutions from an organisational, administrative and, more generally, institutional perspective.

The institutional framework then introduced by this act did away with the considerable power of the professorial chair, consolidated university asylum, the autonomy and self-governance of universities and legislated on second-level (postgraduate) studies and research. Meanwhile, a major event was unfolding: the strengthening of democratic procedures at all levels based on the participation in a significant responsible fashion of all bodies of academia in teaching, research and administration (*OEDV*, 1982, p. 9).

The recent education reform (Act 2525/97, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1997) completed the modernisation drive that began in the 1980s with Framework Act 1268/82. This reform

consolidates the concept of equal access to education, reinforces the concept of free education, promotes further the adaptation of the human and exact sciences to current new international conditions and requirements and, more generally, helps foster the cultural and personal development as well as the abilities of young people in order to facilitate their integration into the fast-evolving international environment.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Two fundamental reform acts were passed in 1982 and 1983: the Framework Act on the new structure and functioning of the *AEs* (Framework Act 1268/82) and the Act on access to higher education (Act 1351/1983, Government Journal 56A/1983).

The provisions of these laws remained in force until late 1997 when the new Education 2000 Act 2525/97 was passed. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that a similar attempt at reform undertaken by the Government of the New Democracy in 1992 (Act to modernise higher education, Act 2083/1992, Government Journal 159/1992) remained in force only for a very short time since a new Government, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (*Panellinio Socialistiko Kinima, PASOK*), came to power the following year. However, it should be noted that Act 2083/92 made few changes to certain articles of Framework Act 1268/82, most of which were abolished by the new Government.

As regards Framework Act 1268/82, relating to the reform of higher education, the following particular points must be emphasised:

- The 'chair' as an institution was abolished and replaced by the 'section-department' system. The General Assembly of the Department is responsible for setting out the policy on teaching and research activities in the corresponding scientific field. The section is responsible for carrying out the day-to-day university work dictated by the basic decisions of the department. This arrangement is still in force.
- The administrative bodies of the universities (rector, vice-rector, faculty dean and president of the department) are now elected by special electoral bodies comprising a relatively high number of students who participate and vote.
- The National Council of Higher Education, created to establish the link between universities and the needs of the country and to advise the Government on education policy, such as on the creation of new *AEs* and new departments, the introduction of new disciplines, number of admissions, etc., was set in place and started its operations. However, pursuant to Act 2327/95, its powers were eventually conferred on a new body, the *Ethniko Symvoulío Paideias*, or *E.S.Y.P* (National Education Council).
- Second-level studies at Greek universities are arranged on the basis of models in current use at other European universities. However, this reform ran into some practical difficulties, and it is only in recent years that many *TEI* departments have begun the task of putting together second-level courses of study, not only to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of specialised scientists with respect to demand within Greek society, but also to contain the high number of young people who go abroad to follow second-level (postgraduate) courses.
- Abolition of the 'study year' and introduction of a two-semester year (winter and summer), a system which is still in use, to ensure better overall harmonisation of study programmes with the models of other European universities.

The application of this act was not preceded by an experimental phase. It was implemented immediately, keeping to the calendar. By and large, it is regarded as a success. The aim was to modernise the institutional structures and functions in line with European models, to democratise university life and the operation of universities and to adapt them to national and international economic and social situations. Framework Act 1268/82 was the most radical attempt at reforming higher education in Greece since the war. All subsequent legislative reforms have been inspired by this act.

The *TEIs* were also created in 1983 pursuant to Act 1404/83 on the structure and functioning of technological education institutions, *TEIs* (Government Journal 173/24.11.83). It should be stressed that up until 1970 (Decree on higher non-university technical education, 652/1970), there were only 3 state-run higher education institutions for assistant engineers, in Athens and Thessaloniki, while most technical education was provided by private institutions. The (non-university) higher technical education centres (*KATEs*) had been set up under this decree to cover many different specialities. Nonetheless, a few years later, the *KATEs* were replaced by the higher technical and vocational education centres (*KATEEs*), which are the direct predecessors of the *TEIs*.

The above-mentioned Act of 1983 (1404/83) also established the Technological Education Council, a body made up of members of scientific, professional and social organisations that was to play a consultative role with respect to the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs in the development of the *TEIs* (organisation, setting-up of the *TEIs* and their departments, financial assistance, number of new students admitted each year, etc.).

Act 2525/97 (Education 2000 Act), which was passed by the Greek Parliament towards the end of 1997 (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1997), was an attempt to effect a radical facelift of higher education and to keep in step with the rapidly changing international scene.

The main reforms introduced by this act were as follows:

- **The abolition of the general examinations system from June 2000 onwards.** Free access to higher education was introduced, and pupils leaving secondary education were offered a wider choice of courses of study. The necessary conditions were created to increase the number of admissions to *AEIs* and *TEIs* from the year 2000 onwards with the aim of providing an ample supply of places to accommodate the number of pupils leaving upper secondary education and wishing to pursue higher education. As it is expected that after the year 2000 demand will continue to outstrip supply for a short time because of the existence of applicants from previous years, the priority for enrolment in departments will be given on the basis of the overall results obtained by pupils at upper secondary level as recorded on the *Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou* (upper secondary leaving certificate). It is anticipated that from the year 2000 to the year 2004, the supply of places in higher education will amply satisfy demand.

In spite of the improvements achieved in recent years, Greece is still lagging behind other European countries somewhat as regards not only the number of students (per thousand inhabitants) but also the percentage of the working population with higher education qualifications. Furthermore, the data (OECD, *Education at a Glance, Indicators*, 1995/1996 and Pyrgiotakis I.E., '*Rethemniotika Nea*', 1.4.97, p. 7) suggests that the number of places in higher education in Greece must be increased, which is also the aim of Act 2525/97.

The current imbalance between supply and demand with respect to places in the *AEIs* and *TEIs* is effectively one of the greatest problems facing not only the education system in Greece but also Greek society as a whole.

70 new departments will be required, especially in the fields of technology, business administrative, socio-economic sciences and humanities. These new departments will be created with a view to fully satisfying the demand for higher education.

- **The creation of new open choice study programmes (PSEs)** in higher education and the introduction of the Open University, opening in the academic year 1997/1998.

This initiative involves 32 inter-departmental study programmes beginning in 1998 and chiefly oriented towards giving students who have passed the entrance examinations to an *AEI* or a *TEI* the opportunity to enrol. If demand increases, the president of each open choice study programme guides students towards other courses and credits or towards other times or, alternatively, increases the number of hours of teaching during the period concerned.

If it is impossible to meet the increased demand, a system of objective criteria is introduced the weighting of which is decided by the Assembly for Open Choice Study Programmes and approved by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1997). The duration of these courses is estimated at 4-6 years, and they are free for students under 25 years of age.

As regards the Open University, pursuant to its introduction under Act 2552/97 (Government Journal, 266), there are plans for a series of departments for first-level (undergraduate) and second-level (postgraduate) courses to be up and running by the academic year 1997/98. Holders of the *Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou* (upper secondary leaving certificate) or of an equivalent secondary school qualification obtained in Greece or abroad are admitted without having to take an examination. If demand is too high, priority is given to applicants between the ages of 23 and 45 years and to applicants from border regions.

- **The restructuring of the study programmes of *AEIs* and *TEIs*** and the enhancement of these courses through the introduction of new teaching tools, the production of new teaching materials, the development of the physical and technical infrastructure, the promotion of scientific and technological progress in an international context, the promotion of inter-departmental and inter-university cooperation and the introduction of systems of evaluation of the teaching provided and of course planning.
- **The development of second-level study programmes with greater emphasis on research and an improvement in the quality of the existing programmes.**

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

The reforms introduced by Framework Act 1268/82 significantly increased the administrative autonomy of the *AEIs* the *TEIs*. They are autonomous entities, and the departments enjoy unrestricted decision-making powers in matters concerning scientific research and study programmes in university and non-university education. At the same time, responsibilities which fell exclusively within the competence of professors of the first rank have been curtailed, and democratic decision-making bodies have been set up within university departments and councils. Since the entry into force of Framework Act 1268/82, students have been allowed to participate in the departments and councils in proportions that are among the highest in Europe. It should be emphasised that representatives from outside the university milieu may not participate. Students are now well represented within the Assembly of the Department (one student for every two members of the teaching staff) and within the university council in equal proportions to teaching staff.

The consultative bodies (including the Higher Education Council) have been combined at all levels of education into a single national educational development and planning body, the *E.S.Y.P.* (National Education Council), which is responsible for framing proposals to the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs and to the Government on social strategy and priorities in specific areas of educational policy. The *E.S.Y.P.* was initially set up under Framework Act 1268/83 as the *Ethniko Symvoulío Anotatis Paideias* or *E.S.A.P.* (National Council of Higher Education). The name of the Council has since been changed to *E.S.Y.P.* under Act 2327/95.

In the wake of the reform of the Education 2000 Act, the *AEIs* and *TEIs* were given wider responsibilities with respect to academic and administrative management. The legislative provisions on these increased responsibilities were implemented in the first half of 1998.

On the whole, under the reforms introduced to date, Greece has managed to apply the principle that the university decides and the State supervises. Under the new legislative framework that has been introduced, the role of the Ministry is restricted to monitoring the legality of the procedures of the *AEIs* with respect to the recruitment of teaching staff, while planning with regard to the recruitment of administrative staff has been entrusted to the institutions themselves. The Ministry, therefore, no longer approves the study programmes of the departments of the *AEIs*. The State now only handles general structural matters and leaves the university and social bodies free to resolve more specific problems.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

The Greek Constitution does not make any provision for profit-making higher education institutions (*AEIs* - *TEIs*). Consequently, higher education, which is free of charge in Greece, is funded by the budget and the public investment programme. The specific needs of each university (in particular, the current development phase and the extent to which its development constitutes a national objective) are seriously taken into consideration when negotiating the amount of funding to be provided.

The dramatic improvement observed in recent years in the quality of research work carried out in Greek *AEIs* and *TEIs* is due not only to the modernising of the institutional structure and operating conditions, etc., but also to the return to Greece of internationally renowned scientists, which has led to the release of additional finance to institutions from the funds of the two EU-related Delors Packages as well as from private funds. It should be noted that, for such awards, research programmes are subject to the submission of research proposals which are assessed according to the conditions of the free market and competition.

Nonetheless, the problem of excessive demand has prompted many young people who have failed the entrance examinations to opt for private institutions (independent study laboratories), mainly for courses of study geared towards labour market needs (business management, marketing, IT, etc.). At these private institutions, the courses are mainly taught by second-level (postgraduate) students and by graduates studying for doctoral degrees at public universities. These institutions mainly serve to prepare students for admission to other university-level institutions in Europe and America. The diplomas and other certificates awarded by these private institutions are not university level and are not recognised as such.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

As regards the quality of education provided and the quality of the higher education institutions, it should be emphasised that study programmes have now been brought into line with commonly applied European standards in order to permit the funding of student exchanges (Erasmus programmes, etc.) and teacher exchanges. It should be mentioned that the enhancement of study programmes and of the

physical and technical infrastructure is funded by European programmes. Act 2083/92 included a number of provisions on the evaluation of *AEIs* which, in the end, were not implemented.

Within the framework of the Education Act 2000 (Act 2525/97), a number of educational planning and evaluation councils will be set up, *inter alia*, to evaluate the quality of teaching offered by the institutions and the efficiency of their operation. This will take effect following discussions with the competent authorities within the institutions in 1998. Finally, within the framework of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training (1994-99), measures have already been announced which aim to support the procedures for the evaluation of the activities of higher education institutions, while the Centre for Educational Research has also begun the process of evaluating the *AEIs* and *TEIs*.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

As mentioned previously, all higher education institutions in Greece (*AEIs*, *TEIs* and others) impose limits on the number of enrolments in the different departments. Only students with an upper secondary certificate (*Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou*) can take the entrance examinations (the so-called general examination) in subjects connected with the field of study they have opted for. These examinations are held every year during the second fortnight in June. The selection is carried out by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. Applicants list the fields of study and institutions in which they are interested in order of preference and they are then given guidance on the basis of this list. Higher education institutions (*AEIs* and *TEIs*) offer only as many places as they can provide, a fact which the Ministry generally takes into account.

Because of these limitations and in spite of the 70% increase in the number of students in higher education between 1980 and 1990, as has already been mentioned, since 1986 there has been a relative drop in the number of admissions. This has created a disparity between demand and supply which is still quite large. In 1983 and 1984, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs significantly increased the number of admissions under an agreement with the higher education institution departments. During the years which followed, there was a relative drop in the number of admissions, while in recent years a slight increase has been observed. In 1997, this increase was 5% in relation to 1996, i.e. from 49,000 to 51,000 admissions. It should be noted that around 150,000 young people complete upper secondary education every year, but that there are 148,000 applicants for higher education because many applicants try to gain admission to higher education two or three times.

More specifically, between 1986 and 1990, the number of applicants virtually quadrupled, while the number of students (university and non-university) only doubled, which meant a drop in the overall success rate for admission from 27% to 18% (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1991). Consequently, the proportion of (university and non-university) students in higher education in Greece rose only slightly from 1980 onwards, unlike in other European countries, where in 1980 there were 1,256 students (university and non-university) for every 100,000 inhabitants, while in 1991 there were 1,906 students for every 100,000 inhabitants (Unesco, 1995).

In 1997, according to figures released by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, there were 147,876 applicants, while 25,740 students were admitted to the *AEIs* and 25,560 to the *TEIs*. If we add to this admissions to the military schools (1,250) and to the Police (1,550) on the basis of the general examinations, the total number of admissions to higher education for the academic year 1996/97 was 54,100.

Prior to 1983, pupils took examinations during the final two years of *Lykeio*. There were 2 branches: the first covered the exact sciences (practical work and science) and the second the classics (art and humanities). For each branch, applicants took examinations in different subjects. Applicants were

admitted to higher education on the basis of the marks obtained in the different subjects and taking into account the faculties of their choice. With the introduction of the general examinations system in 1983, the number of branches increased to 4, giving applicants a wider choice.

Generally speaking, there are no specific provisions for the admission of adults or graduates. However, with the start-up of the Open University and the open choice study programmes, possibilities for admission to higher education were offered under objective criteria for these two types of applicants.

For the open choice study programmes, these objective criteria relate to the age of the student, the marks obtained in the secondary school-leaving examination (*Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou*) or any other equivalent or corresponding qualification obtained in Greece or abroad, the marks obtained in the general examinations, years spent outside the job market, years of seniority, years of post-secondary education, marks obtained in diplomas (for graduates of *AEIs* or *TEIs*), the average marks (for *AEI* or *TEI* students) and the number of successfully completed courses in higher education (for students from abroad and from Greek *AEIs/TEIs*). The Open University accepts - without examinations - holders of the secondary school-leaving certificate (*Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou*) or any other equivalent or corresponding qualification awarded abroad or in Greece. If demand is excessive, priority is given, as mentioned above (Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, 1997), to applicants between the ages of 23 and 45 years and to applicants from border regions.

However, it should be noted that entrance examinations will cease after 1999 in higher education institutions. In fact, the general examinations will be abolished in the year 2000. Furthermore, from then on, the total number of available places at *AEIs* and *TEIs* (85,000) will exceed the number of pupils who leave upper secondary education and wish to pursue higher education. Nonetheless, because of the additional demand relating to pupils with secondary school qualifications gained in previous years and due to the excessive demand placed on certain high-level departments, it is estimated that supply will not meet demand until around 2002-2004.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the excess demand will be absorbed not only by the open choice study programmes and the Open University but also through the creation of many new departments. As regards the conventional study programmes, because of the excellent ratio of students to teaching and academic staff, it should be remembered that, in 1997, admissions increased by 10% and that this trend should continue in the years ahead. From the year 2000 onwards, the choice of conventional study programmes will be based on the preference expressed by the applicants. Access will depend on the 'points' that they have obtained on the basis of their result in the secondary school-leaving certificate (*Apolytirio Eniaiou Lykeiou*), their marks in the aptitude tests and their results in two subjects per branch in the third year of *Lykeio*. Students in conventional study programmes are expected to complete their studies within a reasonable time limit to be defined by the departments and institutions concerned. The aim is to gradually eliminate the problem of students failing to complete their course of study within the stipulated time, which is a particularly important problem in Greece and a serious weakness in the country's higher education system.

To improve the studies completion rate in conformity with Act 2525/97, the universities deliberate and implement the provision foreseen by this act. The normal duration of courses is 4 years for *AEIs*, 3.5 years for *TEIs* (+1 semester for work placements), 5 years for *Polytechneia* (technical universities), the faculty of pharmacy and the faculty of dentistry and 6 years for the faculty of medicine.

There is currently no data available on the percentage of students who complete their studies.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Greek students do not pay enrolment fees. Healthcare and textbooks are provided free of charge to students in *AEIs* and *TEIs*, and they have a 25-50% reduction on public transport. In addition, free meals and housing are provided for students from low-income families. There is also a programme whereby grants are awarded to a certain number of students admitted with good grades to an *AEI* or a *TEI* or who obtain excellent results every year. In the academic year 1996/97, a total of 5,405 students received a grant.

Act 2413/96 did not provide for student loans. Accordingly, the system of student loans set in place in 1991 was discontinued from 1995/96. The funds awarded as loans were incorporated into the grants awarded to students.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Since 1982, as in universities in other European countries, the departments of *AEIs* and *TEIs* have been autonomous as regards the design of their study programmes, the introduction of compulsory or optional courses, progress evaluation through examinations, end-of-study assignments, mid-term progress assessment, and decisions on the number of hours of teaching and the teaching methods employed, following the examples of other European universities.

For the provision of vocational training in the *AEIs* and *TEIs*, Greece has now adopted the international model of higher education, and this training is provided by two main categories of higher education institutions, i.e.:

- universities and university-type institutions, and
- non-university institutions.

The former category includes higher education institutions (*AEIs* - universities) which, as has already been mentioned, in conformity with article 16, paragraph 5 of the Greek Constitution are completely autonomous, while the second category mainly includes *TEIs*. These two types of institution differ in terms of the time required to obtain a diploma and the fields of vocational training on offer. Courses last for 4 years (8 semesters) in *AEIs*, 3.5 years (7 semesters and 1 semester of work placement) in *TEIs* and 5 years (10 semesters) in Polytechneia (technical universities). *TEIs* are organised and function along similar lines to *AEIs*. *TEIs* are more geared towards the application of the most up-to-date technological know-how and professional practices, while *AEIs* are basically scientific and research institutions that provide students with theoretical and practical training.

The establishment of the university departments for pedagogical training (article 46, Framework Act 1268/1982) in 1982 came in response to the need to upgrade the standard of the courses which had previously been offered by the pedagogical academies and the pre-school teacher training faculties. This ensured that primary school children would be taught by teachers who had received scientific/academic training equivalent to that of secondary school teachers. The creation of these departments also met the need to bring the different courses of study into line with the international situation in which educational specialists and, more generally, teachers are trained at higher education level even though this training is provided by different types of institutions. Thirdly, there was a need to take certain initiatives as part of a combined effort to achieve the decentralisation and restructuring of the education system. Within the framework of decentralisation and restructuring, the progressive abolition of pedagogical academies and of the pre-school teacher training faculties got under way, while

at the same time the university departments began to function within different university-level institutions. These departments also enjoyed greater flexibility as they were responsible for defining, adapting and implementing study programmes and for selecting all teaching staff, which had not previously been the case. Before, the system had been extremely centralised and these aspects had been completely under the jurisdiction of the central authorities, or in other words, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs.

During 1998, by ministerial decision and within the framework of Act 2525/97 (Education 2000 Act), a detailed procedure was established for gaining the certificate of pedagogical and didactic aptitude awarded by the *AEIs*. This certificate is required for taking part in the competitive examinations for vacant posts. It should be pointed out that because of the gradual abolition of staff lists from the academic year 1997/98 onwards, all those wishing to have tenure in the public sector must have the above-mentioned certificate. It should also be mentioned that graduates of the faculties of theology, philosophy, physics and mathematics, for example, were appointed with tenure to posts in secondary education without first having received any pedagogical training or even professional training.

Lifelong learning was introduced into higher education institutions through the creation of open choice study programmes, (*PSEs*) and through the courses offered by the Open University.

Open choice study programmes (*PSEs*)

For the academic year 1997/98, the *EPEAEK* (Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training) launched a project with overall funding of GRD 8 billion initially for the funding of 33 open choice study programmes (*PSEs*) in Greek *AEIs* and *TEIs*. These are very flexible programmes that enable students to put together an up-to-date course of study (focusing mainly on new disciplines) and to follow either single courses or a combination of courses to supplement their skills according to the ever-changing requirements of the labour market.

The *PSEs* were designed with the following built-in characteristics:

- flexibility, complementarity and lifelong learning,
- open access to higher education,
- high quality and low operating costs,
- links with the job market.

These optional programmes dovetail with the scientific/academic fields covered by higher education institutions. They comprise a series of subjects in one or more related fields of study. A *PSE* can be departmental, inter-departmental or inter-university (in certain cases the programme can be in a foreign language). Beyond this initial stage, students can obtain approval for individualised courses of study and specialise in 'composite' disciplines that involve several scientific/academic fields (e.g. a *PSE* incorporating separate major and minor fields).

By following a *PSE*, students can gain a higher education qualification once they have acquired a certain number of credit units in the corresponding subject areas which make up each programme. Alternatively, students can simply follow a certain number of courses to supplement their education or for professional reasons. In this case, a certificate is awarded for these courses.

Students are admitted to open choice study programmes without having to take any examinations. All Greeks and foreign nationals are entitled to enrol on individual courses or on an actual study programme if they have a secondary school-leaving certificate or any other equivalent certificate awarded in Greece

or abroad. Students are enrolled after they have submitted their application to the secretariat of the programme of their choice. If the staffing resources of the institutions concerned are insufficient to cope with the number of persons expressing interest in a particular *PSE* for a given period, priority for enrolment to a particular course or a series of courses is determined according to objective criteria and on the basis of a combination of quotas set for each category of applicants as well as the number of 'points' obtained by each candidate.

Since, unlike conventional study programmes, *PSEs* are open to students of different ages, in the event of excessive demand (and until the general examinations are abolished), priority is given to:

- students who take the general examinations (45%),
- students of universities or equivalent institutions which are recognised abroad (20%),
- students of Greek *AEIs* and *TEIs* (15%),
- graduates of *AEIs* and *TEIs* (10%),
- other applicants who have obtained an upper secondary school-leaving certificate (10%).

The number of 'points' obtained by each applicant according to the category to which they belong is calculated on the basis of objective criteria such as age, the result shown on the upper secondary school-leaving certificate, the marks obtained in the general examinations (up until the year 2000), the average marks obtained during higher education, years spent outside the job market, post-secondary education, years of professional experience, etc. The weighting coefficients of the above-mentioned objective criteria are set by decision of the *PSE* Assembly and are approved by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs.

5.2. EDUCATION AND EVALUATION

The teaching methods used in Greek universities are those which are tried and tested and applied in other European universities, i.e. lecture-based, mid-term progress assessment, final exams and home assignments. The *TEIs* impose and incorporate work experience, since they are geared towards the needs of the economy and, more generally, areas where specific practical training is required. Practical training of *TEI* students was introduced under Act 1404/83 on the structure and functioning of the *TEIs*, and practical training was set as a condition *sine qua non* for the awarding of a diploma.

Practical training is continuous and uninterrupted.

The department which awards the diploma exercises general supervision over the ongoing practical training received by students in the relevant professional field.

Each department of the faculties of the *TEIs* has a work placement committee made up of three members of the scientific/academic staff and two student representatives. The sole task of the committee is to coordinate the different activities connected with work placements, and in particular,

- work placements searches, and
- checking the suitability of the places of employment to which the students are to be assigned.

Supervision of the practical training of students is entrusted to members of the scientific/academic staff who visit the places of employment, keep up to date with the students' activities, monitor their progress and help them overcome any problems, either relating to the students themselves or to the individuals designated by the company to supervise the trainees' work and progress.

Each trainee keeps a work placement journal in which they record weekly the work they have been involved in and the tasks entrusted to them. These notes are checked and signed by the appointed trainee supervisor in the company or service concerned. Upon completion of the work placement, the head of department, in consultation with the work placement committee, decides whether the student has passed or failed.

The period of study within each department includes a semester of practical training. The work placement of a *TEI* student is assessed since it is an integral part of the study programme (one semester), and students must complete a work placement to obtain the diploma.

Within the framework of the self-governance of Greek universities, which is guaranteed by the Constitution (article 6, paragraph 5), the universities themselves decide on the type of training, evaluation and teaching without any involvement on the part of bodies outside the university.

The evaluation rules are established either by the internal regulations of the university or by the university teaching staff themselves. One of the main weaknesses of the system as a whole is the absence of internal operating rules for many departments and faculties, which complicates not only the routine work of the administration of the departments but also, more generally, teaching and research activities. This weakness in the system is a problem in many *AEI* and *TEI* departments as certain practical issues, particular to each department, are not regulated by legislation. For example, in certain departments, there is no clear definition or legislative guarantee of the criteria for the admission of students to the second (postgraduate) level.

As regards the conventional study programmes, students are not required to obtain the diploma within a specific period. In certain faculties (mainly in *Polytechneia* and, to a lesser extent, in medicine), students are given 'end-of-study projects' which generally take six months. There are no external examiners for first-level (undergraduate) courses.

For postgraduate courses - second-level and doctoral level - in principle there is a consultative committee made up of three members, one of whom can be from another *AEI*.

More specifically, for the doctoral programme, following the submission of a thesis, a 7-member examination panel is set up that includes members of staff from other *AEIs*. After the evaluation, the panel decides whether the student should be awarded the doctoral degree.

Finally, the Open University applies the international practice of distance teaching/learning using traditional materials (textbooks, notes, evaluation checklists, etc.), audio-visual methods (cassettes, video cassettes, optic disks, etc.) and IT and multimedia (at a later stage).

In higher education, as in all universities throughout the world, a prospective university teacher's aptitude is assessed mainly on the basis of their research work.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Generally speaking, within the framework of the reform acts passed in recent years, provisions have been laid down to encourage Greek *AEIs* and *TEIs* to be more receptive to the needs of the economy and of society both in Greece and at an international level. In practical terms, the following initiatives have been taken:

- systematic second-level studies designed to monitor and develop research in an international context and the training of high-level specialised scientific experts who can help meet the ever-growing needs of the country in science, technology and development;
- promotion of research at an institutional and financial level together with changes in the institutional framework governing the establishment and functioning of university research institutions designed to meet not only the increasing 'demand' from society for more specific research but also the requirements of the scientific/academic community at an international level;
- the possibility of effective cooperation between universities and public and private bodies in the field of research.

In connection with the activities that have been encouraged and launched with the assistance of the European Community Support Frameworks and, more generally, within the framework of other European programmes, it is important to recognise the decisive impetus that such programmes have given to study programmes and to the 'opening-up' of the higher education institutions to international trends and developments. Study programmes are being harmonised, and more and more students are obtaining 'credits' by taking part in exchanges lasting one or two semesters with other European universities, arranged through programmes offered by the European Union. This not only helps harmonise education in Europe, but also encourages the internationalisation of Greek *AEIs* and *TEIs*. European students are generally offered programmes in English, while the University of Thessaloniki has a centre with a one-year intensive course in Greek for foreign students who enrol normally for the first semester of first-level (undergraduate) studies.

Finally, the *EPEAEK* opens up the institutional and financial possibility of cooperation between different departments or institutions (including foreign institutions), allowing students to obtain credits from other departments or universities in Greece or in other countries. This (like the common inter-departmental or inter-institutional study programmes) further strengthens the internationalisation of the country's institutions and the quality of education provided.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>AEI</i>	<i>Anotato Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i> (university institutions)
<i>E.S.Y.P</i>	<i>Ethniko Symvoulío Paideias</i> (National Education Council)
<i>E.S.A.P.</i>	<i>Ethniko Symvoulío Anotatis Paideias</i> (National Council of Higher Education)
<i>EPEAEK</i>	<i>Epicheirisiako Programma Ekpaideusis kai Archikis Epaggelmatikis Katartisis</i> (Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training)
<i>KATE</i>	<i>Kentra Anoteris Technikis Ekpaideusis</i> (higher technical education centres)
<i>KATEE</i>	<i>Kentra Anoteris Technikis Epaggelmatikis Ekpaideusis</i> (higher technical and vocational education centres)
<i>PSE</i>	<i>Programmata Spoudon Epilogis</i> (open choice study programmes)
<i>TEI</i>	<i>Technologiko Ekpaideftiko Idryma</i> (technical educational institutions)

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Eurydice
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

SPAIN

National description

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SPAIN

INTRODUCTION

The history of higher education in Spain

In the mid-19th century, a great reform of all education structures took place in Spain through the Public Instruction Act. It regulated higher education, drawing a distinction between the different kinds of university education: firstly, those that were offered at the faculties of philosophy and arts, mathematical science, natural and physical science, medicine, law and theology; secondly, higher education for civil, mining, forestry, agricultural and industrial engineering, fine arts, diplomacy and notary; and finally, vocational schooling, including veterinary science, so-called *profesores mercantiles*, navigation, and for works clerks, master builders and surveyors and primary school teachers. This division of higher education served as a basis for the present system, with natural modifications brought about by historical development.

The creation of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts in 1900 brought about a strong impulse towards the general improvement of higher education at the beginning of the 20th century. However, the ideological disputes on the freedom to teach, the struggle between public and private education and the attempts to restrict university autonomy and academic freedom defined a good part of the politics of the period before the Second Republic. The Second Republic implemented an important reform programme concerning teaching matters and, above all, made a huge budgetary effort towards education in an extremely difficult economic context.

Until 1970, Spanish university life had been organised under the 1943 Act on University Regulation, which took the inspiring principles of the regime arising in the Civil War to the classroom. The Act confirmed the existence of twelve universities: Barcelona, Granada, La Laguna, Madrid, Murcia, Oviedo, Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela, Sevilla, Valencia, Valladolid and Zaragoza, and also divided the national territory into twelve university districts in which each university exerted its own powers. It covered the existence of the following seven university faculties: philosophy and arts, sciences, law, medicine, pharmacy, political and economic sciences, and veterinary sciences.

The Ministry of Education appointed all academic authorities, as there was no university autonomy during this period and most of the university budget came from the State. The Catholic Church was also allowed to establish universities. Later, a 1965 reform created departments in the university faculties as bodies to coordinate teaching and research, as well as the figure of the *profesor agregado* (assistant professor) as the civil servant just under the *catedráticos* (professors).

The beginning of the economic and industrial recovery of the country in the 1950s gave rise to the Act on the Regulation of Technical Education of 20 July 1957. Most of the existing institutions (*escuelas*) were basically aimed at the training of public officials and depended on the Ministries, which employed them in the corresponding bodies. The most important innovation of this act consisted of the incorporation of all *escuelas* into the Ministry of Education and their inclusion in the university model.

In the 1960s, the economic expansion, the industrialisation process, the school explosion and the internal tensions of the political system, deeply affected the education system and made small partial adjustments no longer possible.

In 1968, a new team arrived at the Ministry of Education and Science, which soon identified the need for a deep reform in the whole Spanish education system, including the university sector, which, as a

result of the lack of civil liberties in the country, had become a political problem of foremost importance under Franco's regime. In addition, university students' views not only on Spanish political problems, but also on the functioning of the university itself must be borne in mind. At this time, countless tensions arose between the university and the regime, and the university student movement became opposed to the prevailing system.

One of the first measures taken by the new team was to put forward a White Paper on the entire Spanish education system, an unprecedented event in the history of Spain's administration. This document was widely circulated and had an impact on public opinion, particularly within universities. The White Paper scrutinised the educational situation in the country and approached the existing problems in a critical way with a technically sound analysis. In higher education, it pointed out the lack of efficacy of the selection systems, the existence of 'extra-mural students' (those who only take examinations and do not attend lessons) and the low number of teachers per student. It also highlighted excessive centralisation and the lack of appropriate governing bodies, as well as issues of administrative organisation. Additionally, the rigidity of syllabuses and their orientation towards traditional professions, which actually excluded the new courses of study society demanded, came under examination. The sparse practical content in teaching, the absence of a relationship with scientific research, and the lack of real equal opportunities in access to the latter also came under fire.

According to this White Paper, only education offered at university faculties and higher technical schools, fine arts schools and music and declamation conservatories was to be regarded as higher education. In the chapter devoted to *enseñanzas medias* (secondary education), *magisterio*, (formerly, studies leading to a (pre-)primary teaching qualification) mid-grade technical schools, social work and commercial studies were all included, following the traditional convention which can be traced back to the so-called Moyano Act (Public Instruction Act).

The resultant General Act on Education of 1970 defined the goals of university education, establishing that education given at the faculties and higher technical schools should consist of three educational cycles: a three-year first cycle, also offered at the *escuelas universitarias* (university schools); a two-year second cycle of specialisation; and finally, a third cycle leading to the title doctor, aiming at both further specialisation and future teaching and research.

The Act designates as university studies the courses of technical architecture and engineering, and those corresponding to the *escuelas normales*, training *maestros* (schoolteachers). All are taught at *escuelas universitarias*. It also includes in university education the higher schools of fine arts, music conservatories and drama schools, together with journalism studies. Under this legal framework, physical education, nursing assistant studies and language schools could also be incorporated. The *institutos universitarios* (university institutes) were also created as centres for research and specialisation, among which there are the institutes of educational science (*ICE*) for initial and further teacher training.

The Act also creates second tier vocational training which is open to those holding the (secondary) certificate or to those who have taken first tier vocational training. It even provides for third tier vocational training for those who have finished the first cycle of university studies, but this has not been put into practice yet.

To summarise, the General Act on Education incorporates a whole set of first cycle studies of a three-year duration into the university system, studies which were previously considered as secondary education and which could be accessed from elementary *bachillerato* (henceforth abolished). It is this decision that has designated most of higher education in Spain as university education today. However, most of the provisions of the General Act on Education have not yet actually been implemented.

Conflicts within the Spanish university system were a feature of the early 1970s, intensified by the approaching end of the regime. The lack of measures taken to try to deal with essential university reforms and the rapid rise in student numbers meant that decisions in the final years of Franco's rule tended to limit access. In fact, the growing mass of students outstripped university provision and the demand for teachers and equipment increased. Act 30/1974 of 14 July established selective tests for admission to faculties and higher technical schools, after passing the pre-university course, *Curso de Orientación Universitaria (COU)*. Royal Decree 9/1975, concerning the functioning of the university, limited students' opportunities for examination retakes to four, with a view to preventing protracted stays at university.

In the early 1960s, the number of higher education students had doubled, and this had happened again before 1970 and yet again by 1980 (650,000 students at the beginning of the decade).

Political, social and economic context

The Restoration of the Monarchy with King Juan Carlos I of Borbón, in the final days of November 1975 after the death of Franco, meant the beginning of the Spanish political transition, which culminated with the first democratic elections on 15 June 1977 and the beginning of the constitutional period on 6 December 1978.

Under the Government of the *Unión de Centro Democrático*, the creation of 17 Autonomous Communities began. Possessing a wide range of powers, their Parliaments and Governments were directly elected by the citizen. In 1981, the attempted coup d'état of 23 February took place. Following its abortion, the Calvo Sotelo Government was constituted, which, after a year and a half, called the general elections of 28 October 1982.

The *Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)* achieved an overall majority of votes with 201 seats and the *Coalición Popular*, the origin of present-day *Partido Popular (PP)*, became the main power in the opposition, with 105 seats. The *PSOE* is a social democrat party and a member of Socialist International.

During its political transition, Spain joined the Council of Europe, the European Community (1 January 1986) and NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). Finally, on 3 March 1996, legislative elections were held, and won by the PP with a relative majority of votes.

Out of this long period of 17 years under consideration, the following factors are of greatest significance:

- The existence, for the first time in Spanish history, of a 'long rule' by a Party to the left of the political spectrum. This party has ruled for almost fourteen years, and has achieved an absolute normalisation of democracy, a notable improvement in the welfare state, and the full incorporation to the European institutions.
- The swing in power, with the main party in opposition, the *PP*, managing to win the legislative elections and introduce an era of economic recovery.
- The broadest process of political decentralisation, with the creation of 17 Autonomous Communities.
- The full incorporation of Spain into the European Community and NATO, which has involved overcoming the isolation experienced by the previous regime.

In this period, the Spanish economy has achieved not only full integration into the European economy - finding itself among the first countries to meet the requirements for access to the single currency - but also into the world economy. However, the period under consideration began with an important

economic crisis, which caused negative growth in the years 1979 and 1981. The economic situation did not fully stabilise until 1994.

With regard to social aspects, the consolidation of the welfare state has been the most remarkable achievement. Social expenditure has had a faster rate of growth throughout this particular period than total public expenditure. Profound changes have been introduced in education, health and social services, housing, pensions, social integration of the disabled and unemployment benefit, amongst other things. It can be concluded that the basic guarantees for equality, universality and equity in all these areas are included among the social rights of Spaniards.

As for demography, the most outstanding phenomenon over this period was the sharp fall in fertility rates, to the lowest level since 1977 and below the threshold of generation replacement. The growth rate of the group 0 to 14 year-olds fell sharply from 1981 to 1986 and the growth rate of the 15 to 64 working-age group was double the estimated value for the whole population. This has had evident effects on the number of people in education.

Structure of higher education

Higher education comprises university education, which integrates more than 95% of students at this level, and non-university education. The latter includes a series of educational opportunities which may be grouped into three categories. These are higher grade art education and higher military education; higher specific vocational training; and lastly, a collection of educational opportunities which follow particular legislative regulations and lead to a specific qualification. The first two categories offer a qualification equivalent to the university one although, owing to their specific nature, they are not offered at university.

University education

The autonomy of universities concerning teaching and training makes them responsible for the organisation and the establishment of their education offers.

University education is organised into cycles according to which there are five types of teaching:

- **Only first-cycle**, which has a clear vocational orientation, without a further second cycle. However, in certain cases, the holders of a diploma in these studies will be allowed to continue their studies in similar second-cycle courses.
- **Two cycles without intermediate qualification**. These studies are arranged into cycles, yet passing the first one does not give entitlement to any certificate.
- **Two cycles with intermediate qualification**. In these cases, students begin by taking a first cycle so as to achieve the *diplomado* degree, technical architect or technical engineer certificates, and they can progress to the second cycle of the same studies in order to achieve the *licenciado* degree, engineer or architect title.
- **Only second-cycle**. These studies constitute the major novelty as regards the organisation of university studies.
- **Third-cycle**. These are studies intended for *licenciado* holders, engineers or architects consisting of two academic years. This cycle aims at specialisation in a scientific, technical or artistic field, as well as at training in research techniques.

Together with these cycles, which lead to officially recognised certificates, the universities offer professional specialisation courses.

In all of them, the centres responsible for the organisation of studies are the faculties, which offer two-cycle education and only second-cycle for humanities, social and law sciences and experimental sciences, as well as a third cycle for this kind of education. Higher Technical Schools offer technical training of two cycles or only second-cycle and the third cycle of these studies. University schools offer only first-cycle education.

Together with these centres, the universities have so-called *institutos universitarios* (university institutes), the activities of which are basically focused on research. Yet teaching activities concerning specialist training or doctoral courses also take place in them.

Non-university studies

Higher art education provides qualifications for future professionals of music, dance, dramatic art, plastic arts and design.

Music and dance studies have experienced a great development in the last decades, reflected in the sharp rise in the number of students and centres. The higher cycle of these studies lasts for four years, except for the specialisation in composition, choir conduction and orchestra conduction, where they may be extended to five. At the end of this grade, the higher certificate is conferred, equivalent to all intents to that of university *licenciado*. These are, therefore, studies on a par with university education and there is the possibility for graduates to take doctoral studies.

Music and dance education is offered at the *conservatorios superiores* (higher conservatories). There are private centres offering this education as well.

Dramatic art education provides qualifications to professionals of the performing arts, stage design, stage direction and playwriting. It was first introduced in the academic year 1992/93.

Dramatic art education lasts for four years and offers the higher certificate of dramatic art, equivalent to all intents to the university *licenciado*. The studies are offered at the higher schools of dramatic art. There can be higher centres of a private nature.

Education in plastic arts and design comprises studies related to plastic arts, artistic trades, different types of design and the preservation and restoration of cultural assets. Higher studies for related specialisations consist of high-grade training cycles in plastic arts. The certificate awarded on completing these cycles is that of higher technician in plastic arts, equivalent to that of the technician of higher grade specific vocational training, and are offered at schools of applied arts and artistic trades.

The specialities corresponding to preservation and restoration of cultural assets and design also have the status of higher education. The qualification awarded at the end of these studies is equivalent to that of university *diplomado*. The studies in preservation and restoration of cultural assets are the only ones to have been developed and introduced so far. Those of design have not yet been introduced. These studies are offered at the Higher Schools of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Assets.

Higher grade specific vocational training covers a series of studies offering qualifications for the practice of different trades, and prepares students for activity in a professional field.

Specific vocational training offers professional qualifications for the practice of different trades. The goals of specific vocational training are to facilitate the incorporation of the young into working life, to encourage continuing training of citizens and to meet the demands of production.

Professional level corresponds to that of an intermediate technician; academic level, to that of higher non-university education; and, from the perspective of European equivalence and following the 2nd Directive 92/51/EEC, such training corresponds to the third level and confers a certificate.

The higher-grade training cycle is offered at establishments where the other vocational training studies are taught. At the end of it, the certificate of higher technician is awarded. This certificate also gives access to university studies.

Apart from specific vocational training and higher grade art education, there is a group of **other post-secondary non-university studies** of very different types and with a fundamentally professional character. Among these studies may be mentioned higher military training and certain specialised studies, such as interior design, private detective, civilian pilot, and occupational therapy.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

1.1. CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

The basic orientations that rule the range of legislation on educational matters can be found in the Spanish Constitution. Three essential features can be highlighted: firstly, the recognition of education as one of the fundamental rights public powers must guarantee; secondly, other basic rights related to education; and lastly, the distribution of educational powers between the State General Administration and the Autonomous Communities.

The right to education is stipulated in section 27 of the Constitution and the general principles which must guide all legislation on education are determined in it. The specific acknowledgement of university autonomy stands out.

There are also other sections directly related to higher education, such as 'academic freedom', which appears in section 20, devoted to freedom of speech. Ideological and religious freedom come under section 16. Respect for the other official languages of the Autonomous Communities is established by section 3. These fundamental rights enjoy special constitutional protection and their legislative development requires that they be passed by organic act. Such an Act requires overall majority in Congress in order to be passed, modified or repealed.

Finally, the 1978 Constitution promotes a new territorial organisation of the State, according to which 17 Autonomous Communities have been created. These have taken different powers in many fields of administration.

The distribution of powers between the State and the Autonomous Communities in education is determined under section 149.1.30, in which the State has the exclusive power to 'regulate the requirements for obtaining, issuing and recognising academic and professional certificates, and the basic rules for the development of section 27 of the Constitution, with the aim of ensuring the compliance with the obligations of the public powers on this matter'.

Moreover, the State has the power, attributed to it by section 1.15, to 'promote and generally coordinate scientific and technical research'. Under different regulations within the same law, the State is also empowered to establish 'the bases of the legal status of the public Administrations and the statutory condition of their civil servants'.

The aforementioned constitutional provisions do not involve a process of mere decentralisation, no matter how wide it may be considered, but a sharing of power, by virtue of which the Autonomous Communities have not only executive-administrative powers, but also far-reaching regulatory ones. Yet the State retains ample power to ensure the substantial unity of the education system and to guarantee the basic conditions of equality to all Spaniards and the necessary inter-territorial solidarity so that all citizens may exert their rights to education.

The process envisaged in the constitutional provisions has already been completed as far as university education is concerned, so that every university, with the exception of the National Distance Learning University (*UNED*), which still depends on the Ministry of Education and Culture, is dependent on the Autonomous Communities. Regarding the rest of higher education, the devolution of powers to the Autonomous Communities is at its final stage.

1.2. THE BILL ON UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

Once the Government was established after the legislative elections following the passing of the Constitution, the Ministry of Universities and Research was created through the redistribution of responsibilities previously under the Ministry of Education and Science. The creation of an independent Ministry attracted interest because of the autonomy of universities laid down in the Constitution. However, the Ministry of Universities and Research lasted for only two years.

The Government presented a bill to Parliament on a future organic act on University Autonomy, with the objective, announced in its preamble, of confronting the 'notorious crisis' through which the university was going and of making university a basic instrument to promote progress, equality and social mobility. The constitutional principles of university autonomy and academic freedom were developed alongside specific university goals. Universities could be public and private, and the former run either by the State or by the Autonomous Communities. The structure of teaching and research was regulated, together with the economic regime, the governing bodies, university management, the drafting of syllabuses, and the lecturer's status. The General Council of Universities was created as the body that would offer support to the Ministry of Universities and Research on planning, organisation and coordination of university activities. It was made up, under the presidency of the Minister, of Autonomous Community councillors, of the same number of representatives from the General State Administration, and of the Rectors of public universities.

The Government finally withdrew the bill, however, on 17 April 1982, so it was not introduced. However, it is important because it was the first attempt at university legislation after the Constitution, it was based upon constitutional principles and it provoked an important social debate in the academic world.

1.3. THE ORGANIC ACT ON UNIVERSITY REFORM (*LRU*)

The change of government taking place in December 1982, as a result of the triumph in the elections by the *PSOE* with its large overall majority, allowed the new Government to immediately send an Organic Act on University Reform (*LRU*) to the Houses, which was passed in August 1983, scarcely ten months after the new Government had come into power. The provisions of the *LRU* set out the structure of the Spanish university system in the reform period considered. Its provisions are all in full effect today, because the attempted reforms have not been completely passed.

The *LRU* has three basic goals. The first is to develop the constitutional principle of university autonomy as established under section 27 of the Constitution. Secondly, it is to determine how to develop the powers on university education shared among the State, the Autonomous Communities and the Universities themselves. Finally, it is to enable the reform and running of the university so that it adapts

itself to the modernisation and democratisation of Spanish society in the form of a parliamentary monarchy.

The goals that the *LRU* attributes to the university are the following:

- The creation, development, transmission and critique of science, technology and culture.
- Preparation for the exercise of professional activities which require the application of scientific know-how and methods or artistic creation.
- Scientific and technical support to cultural, social and economic development, both at national level and at the level of the Autonomous Communities.
- The extension of university culture.

The sharing of power among the State, the Autonomous Communities and the universities themselves was also set out and the Council of Universities was established as the co-ordinating, planning and organising university body. (See section 2, 'Management, Finance and Control' below). As regards students, the *LRU* confers on the Government the establishment of selection procedures for admission to university centres, and the establishment of a general policy of grants, aids and credits for students, in collaboration with the Autonomous Communities and universities themselves, so that nobody is excluded from studying on economic grounds. Furthermore, student representatives should take part in the governing and administrative bodies of the universities.

Certain certificates must have official validity across national territory, and the government is responsible for their approval and for general guidelines on the corresponding syllabuses. It follows the suggestions of the Council of Universities. These suggestions should identify the subjects that must be taken and the academic periods that students must attend, as well as the methods of evaluating their performance.

The Act contains a radical reform as far as university lecturers are concerned. It establishes four corps of public teaching officials and the posts of associate lecturer and the visiting lecturer, over and above the assistants. It also contains transitory measures for access to the new corps of hired lecturers, who did not actually hold their posts. On two successive occasions, the socialist Government submitted two bills to Parliament proposing changes in the status of university lecturers. The first one was in 1992 and the second in 1994, but in the end none of these projects, under the title of 'Up-dating of the Organic Act on University Reform', were passed by the Houses.

The economic and financial autonomy of Universities is also established, and the budgetary and audit regulations which it must abide by.

Finally, the *LRU* allows the creation of private universities, on the basis of the freedom to create educational centres under the Constitution, as long as these meet certain requirements concerning the number of centres, facilities and staff. They must likewise be passed by an Act from the corresponding Assembly of the Autonomous Community.

1.4. THE ACT ON SCIENCE

On 14 April 1986, the Act on the promotion and general coordination of scientific and technical research was passed. This act has very positively influenced the fostering of scientific research and its development at university.

The Act lays down the National Plan for Scientific Research and Technological Development for the promotion and general coordination of scientific and technical research, of which the goals are to ensure

the progress of knowledge and the advancement of technological innovation and development, as well as to adapt Spanish society to the changes that new technologies involve.

In order to attain those goals, the National Plan will promote basic research in the different fields of knowledge through regular financing making possible the maintenance and promotion of quality research teams, both at universities and at other public centres for research. Thus, existing human resources in the Spanish scientific and technological community, its future prospects and the need to achieve a high capacity of its own in science and technology must be taken into account. The Plan will include provisions for the promotion of scientific research in business companies and also National and Sectorial Programmes of Scientific Research and Technological Development, as well as National Programmes for the Training of Research Personnel.

The Act establishes the Interministerial Commission of Science and Technology as the body responsible for the planning, coordination and follow-up of the National Plan, and it is in charge of assigning public funds and guiding the training policy of researchers at all levels. A technical body is also created, the Advisory Council for Science and Technology, as well as a General Council of Science and Technology in which all the representatives of the Autonomous Communities are included.

In order to promote the introduction of new technologies, the Centre for Technological and Industrial Development is likewise created. It is in charge of collaborating in the achievement of the right scientific, technological and industrial results within the international programmes Spain takes part in, as well as of creating a strategy with universities, public research bodies and companies to promote commercial exploitation of the technologies they develop. Coordination between all public research bodies, as well as universities, is also established.

1.5. THE ORGANIC ACT ON THE GENERAL ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (*LOGSE*)

An Act that has also had a notable influence on the organisation of higher education, the Organic Act on the General Organisation of the Education System 1/1990 of 3 October (*LOGSE*), regulates the structure and organisation of the whole education system. Although the basic goals of this Act do not specifically refer to higher education, there are two important decisions which affect it, such as the regulation of higher grade specific vocational training and the ordinance of art education, which have been discussed above.

For art education, the Act distinguishes three categories within the group of art studies: music and dance, dramatic art, and plastic arts and design.

1.6. AUTONOMY CONFERRING AGREEMENTS IN 1992

The Spanish process of conferring autonomy has been gradual, both from the point of view of the passing of by-laws and of their implementation.

On 28 February 1982, the Government of the nation and the representatives of the two most important parties, the *PSOE* and the *PP*, signed certain agreements by virtue of which the Autonomous Communities which had gained their autonomy via Section 143 of the Constitution assumed new powers. At the same time, the operating scheme for all the Autonomous Communities was completed.

As a consequence of such agreements, the Organic Act 9/1992 of 23 December, on the transfer of powers to the Autonomous Communities which gained their autonomy via section 143 of the

Constitution, was passed in Parliament and later, in 1994, the corresponding by-laws were reformed. On the basis of such acts, the other Autonomous Communities assumed the 'power of legislative development and implementation of education in all its extension, levels and grades, modalities and specialities' according to all other existing provisions. Thus, the Autonomous Communities exert powers over universities according to the *LRU*.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

When analysing the responsibilities for the management of higher education institutions in Spain, it is necessary to distinguish between universities and all the other higher education Institutions. Universities enjoy autonomy, which was acknowledged in the Constitution and developed under the *LRU*. The sharing of powers between the State, the Autonomous Communities and universities has the following principles as its basis:

- Academic freedom (of teaching and research) is the foundation but also the limitation of university autonomy and is manifested in
 - statutory or governing autonomy, which concerns the drafting of by-laws and other internal regulations, as well as the election, appointment and removal of its governing bodies;
 - academic or curricular autonomy, in which the powers to elaborate and approve curricula and to create specific teaching and research structures and the regulations on admission, permanence and evaluation of student learning are included;
 - financial autonomy or managing and administering its resources;
 - authority to select and promote lecturers, always respecting the principles of merit, publicity and non-discrimination which should rule any appointment for a job in the State structure.
- The powers attributed exclusively to the State concern the equality of all Spaniards when exercising their right to study, the determination of the basic regulations of the statutory conditions of civil servants and the requirements for obtaining, issuing and recognising academic and professional certificates.
- Remaining powers are exercised by the Autonomous Communities.

The structure for universities as laid down by the Act focuses on the strengthening of departments as the basic organs for organising and developing research and teaching suitably for their scientific, technical or artistic subject area. They are created and modified by the university itself in accordance with its by-laws. The faculties, higher technical schools and university schools are defined as the bodies in charge of administrative management and the organisation of university studies leading to academic certificates, while the university institutes are centres devoted mainly to scientific and technical research.

In the academic year 1996/97, responsibility for universities was completely devolved to the Autonomous Communities, in such a way that these authorities are in charge of their ordinary management. The Autonomous Communities have ample powers to deal with university policy, while they leave the State government to deal with general legislation.

The two most relevant actions in this period have without a doubt been the establishing of university autonomy and that of making all university education depend on the Autonomous Communities.

National and regional government responsibilities in the management of university education are as follows. General legislation on universities has to be approved by the Spanish Parliament. The Government has specific control of these university matters:

- the establishment of the number of universities and minimum material and personnel requirements;
- the procedure for selection for entrance to university centres;

- the establishment of university qualifications that are officially recognised and have validity nationwide;
- the establishment of general guidelines for the syllabus;
- the recognition conditions for foreign university degrees;
- the validation of qualifications awarded by private universities;
- the scale of remuneration for university lecturers.

The Autonomous Communities have other powers:

- the establishment of public universities, and the acknowledgement of private universities under the Act of the Legislative Assembly of the Autonomous Community;
- the authorisation of the initiation of university activities;
- the creation of faculties, higher technical schools, university schools and university institutes, proposed by the Social Council with a previous report by the Council of Universities;
- the approval of the Statutes by the Council of the Government of the Autonomous Community on condition that they are adapted to the *LRU*;
- the determination of the global grant assigned to each university, the authorisation of the transfers of expenses from capital to any other part of the university budget;
- the recognition of new centres in private universities.

A Council of Universities was set up under the *LRU* as the coordinating, planning and arranging university body, presided over by the Minister in charge of higher education. It is made up of those responsible for university education in the Autonomous Communities, the Rectors of public universities and fifteen members appointed in a balanced way by the Congress of Deputies, the Senate and the Government. Consultation with the Council of Universities is mandatory for the Government or the Autonomous Communities in the exercise of many of their powers.

The responsibilities of the institutions and their governing bodies come from the autonomy widely established under the *LRU* and its regulations for development. Universities are endowed with legal competence and develop their rules on the basis of autonomy and coordination between all of them. This coordination is ensured through the Council of Universities. The devolution of powers to all the Autonomous Communities has brought about the establishment of Inter-University Councils, coordination bodies for all the universities within any Autonomous Community. These participate in certain areas, such as student admission, which are generally decided together.

The economic and financial management of universities is determined under the VII Title of the *LRU* and universities enjoy autonomy to determine their expenses according to a budget and the structure and system of accountancy determined by general rules established for the public sector and approved by the Social Council.

With regard to equipment and buildings subject to hiring regulations for public sector contracts, including those for hiring in the European Union, universities manage their investments directly.

Concerning staff management, it is necessary to distinguish between civil servant teachers who belong to the university body established under the *LRU* and other lecturers. Regulations on teachers' qualifications and the statutory management of civil servant teachers are determined in general terms, and it is up to the university to call the corresponding competitions. Other teaching staff who are not civil servants can be employed by the university on a temporary basis, according to the conditions established in its statutes and within its budget. Administrative and domestic staff are civil servants and hired staff who are wholly dependent on the university.

According to the general regulations, universities also determine curricula and courses, as well as teaching methods. They are obliged to follow the general curriculum guidelines for qualifications that are official and have nation-wide validity, but have freedom with respect to the programmes leading to other diplomas and certificates. The university organises the research programmes of its departments and institutes, in agreement with other public or private institutions or on its own initiative.

The operational rules of centres devoted both to art education and higher-grade specific vocational training are the general ones for education centres established initially under the *LODE* (Organic Act on the Right to Education) and amended in 1995 under the *LOPEG* (Organic Act 9/1995 on the Participation, Evaluation and Government of Educational Centres of 20 November).

Concerning this type of higher education, the functions of the Government and the Autonomous Communities are the same as for the rest of the education system. The State is in charge of determining the education system's general organisation, the general programming of education, the establishment of the core curriculum, the regulations for obtaining, issuing and recognising academic and professional qualifications recognised nation-wide in Spain, and adequate inspection to guarantee that public duties are correctly carried out. The Autonomous Communities, according to their statutes, are in charge of the regulating and management of these types of education, with the exception of the obligations reserved to the State Administration.

The most important reforms since 1980, are as follows:

- The establishment of autonomy for universities under the *LRU* and the devolution of powers from universities to all the Autonomous Communities. This devolution of powers has taken place gradually, with some time between the adoption of legal provision and the actual assumption of new powers. The devolution of power over the universities to the Autonomous Communities started in 1985 with the Autonomous Communities of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Valencia. In 1986, they were devolved to Andalusia and the Canary Islands; in 1987 to Galicia; in 1991 to Navarra; in 1995 to Extremadura, Asturias, Murcia and Madrid; and in 1996 to La Rioja, Castilla-la Mancha, Castilla-León, Cantabria, Aragón and the Balearic Isles. Before 1983, the universities were regulated under the 1970 *LGE* (General Act on Education and Financing), which meant that they were directly controlled by the Ministry of Education and Science with no autonomy of their own.
- The modifications introduced under the *LODE*, the *LOGSE* and the *LOPEG* concerned the governing bodies of non-university higher education institutions. The main change introduced by the *LODE* 1985 was the creation of school councils, representing the academic community (parents, teachers, students, etc.) who were given powers including choosing the Director of public centres and approval of the budget. This represented a considerable democratisation of these institutions. The 1990 *LOGSE* regulates the structure and organisation of non-university level education. This reorganisation is intended to achieve, among other things, the effective regulation of the stage prior to compulsory education; thorough reform of vocational training, establishing a post-secondary level; etc. The 1995 *LOPEG* expands the *LODE* provisions regarding the participatory nature of establishments and specifies certain standards for the organisation and operation of governing bodies in publicly-funded establishments to adjust them to *LOGSE* stipulations.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

2.1.1. University financing

According to the *LRU*, university finance comprises the following:

- The overall subsidy fixed annually by the Autonomous Communities. This subsidy should distinguish clearly between running costs and investment costs. For the former, the costs of the teaching staff and non-teaching civil servants have to be specifically authorised by the Autonomous Community. The global amount of each university subsidy is determined by objective criteria reached according to the number of students and lecturers, the number of subjects they teach, the state of the up-keep of the university buildings and the universities' need for innovation and funds for scientific research. However, there is some negotiation between the institutions and the appropriate Autonomous Community in deciding these overall amounts.
- Tuition fees and any other charges that are legally established. In the case of studies that lead to an official qualification, tuition fees should be set by the Autonomous Community, within certain limits which are established by the Council of Universities. Fees paid by students vary and are in line with the degree of experimentation involved in their studies.
- The subsidies, legacies or donations that are awarded through any public or private entity. These kinds of donations come under laws that apply to foundations benefiting the student population.
- The income from its estate and other economic activities carried out according to statutes. The patrimonial goods of the university are understood to be all the public state goods possessed and being used for the funding of university expenditure that were in effect in that university at the coming into force of the *LRU*. It may also be other help that is destined for the university from the State or the Autonomous Community. These estates and gains together with the revenue from them are exempted from taxes.
- The income derived from the agreements that the university departments and institutes and their staff make with public and private institutions in order to be able to carry out work of a scientific, technical or artistic nature.
- The credit for the financing of its investment costs which can be agreed upon after the authorisation of the Autonomous Community.

2.1.2. Financing in non-university higher education

The rest of non-university higher education is financed directly through the budgets either from the Ministry of Education and Culture, or from the corresponding Autonomous Communities. Students in this sector, with the exception of training cycles, pay registration fees, established by the respective autonomous governments or by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which are lower than for university studies. Such fees are directly paid to the Public Treasury and do not constitute the budget revenue of the respective centre.

2.1.3. Reforms in financial matters

The most significant modification in university financing has been determined by the devolution of powers to the Autonomous Communities, as these, now responsible for the expenditure on services, have generally been able to augment university budgets from their own resources.

University financing and the need to coordinate the different actors that take part in the system have been the subjects of a detailed study conducted by the Council of Universities with the participation of representatives from all the Autonomous Communities, entitled *Report on the Financing of Universities* of 15 December 1994.

The main conclusions of this report were:

- Within the next ten years Spain should make an effort to raise its level of spending on higher education to the average for developed countries.
- Growth in spending should be much higher in the non-university sector than in the university sector.
- The overall balance between public and private funding should remain at current levels.

- Public university self-financing should increase both through tuition fees and other income. The latter should grow more than fee income.
- New funding formulae for public funding of universities should be introduced which incorporate incentives for quality and competence.
- A new student aid system should be developed to compensate for the increase in fees, guaranteeing equal opportunities and facilitating mobility. It should include a system of loans.
- The necessary institutional reforms should be undertaken to support the adequate coordination of the university system, the professionalisation of management and the diversification and specialisation of the universities.

The report has a ten-year implementation period, until 2003, but many of its recommendations are already being carried out.

Another important reform in the field of financing has arisen from the implementation of the National Plan for Scientific Research and Technological Development, established under the Act on Science, according to which most of the scientific research carried out at universities is funded. The grants universities may apply for are awarded according to the principles of publicity, competition and objectivity.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

2.2.1. The National Plan for Evaluation of the Quality of Universities

Royal Decree 1947/1995 of 1 December established the National Plan for the Evaluation of Universities, proposed by the Agreement of the Full Assembly of the Council of Universities held on 25 September 1995. This is, therefore, a recent plan yet it sets the foundations for and embraces the Universities Council actions developed in the last few years through the Experimental Programme for the Evaluation of the Quality of the University System and the European Pilot Project for the Evaluation of the Quality of Higher Education.

The Experimental Programme had established three different levels of university participation. In level I, 17 universities participated with the aim of designing a system of indicators which would allow for the evaluation of global aspects of attainment at universities. In level II, 6 out of 17 participated and certain qualifications and areas of knowledge were evaluated with more precise indicators. In level III, 3 universities participated and external assessors were incorporated. Some of the deficits of the Experimental Programme were covered by Spanish participation in the European Pilot Project. A distinguishing feature of this project is that it focuses on education evaluation and only includes research and management subjects directly related to teaching quality. In Spain, only four universities have participated and two qualifications have been evaluated.

The objectives of the National Plan for Evaluation of the Quality of Universities are the following:

- To promote the institutional evaluation of the quality of universities, in the field of teaching as well as research and the rest of its services.
- To compile a homogeneous methodology and common criteria in order to evaluate the level of quality in current practice taking account of today's European context.
- To provide society and mainly university students with relevant and objective information on the level of quality in Spanish universities, their different curricula, their departments of scientific specialisation and the level of benefits and services that are on offer.
- To provide educational authorities with objective information on the level of quality in universities providing them with the basis for the adoption of decisions under their powers.

The Plan will last five years; it shall be revised annually, and it should be executed through annual calls for institutional evaluation projects so that public and private universities are able to participate in the project. The first of these calls took place under the Order of 21 February 1996. The duration of an evaluation project will be one year.

The institutional evaluation projects can be thematic or global. In both cases, the evaluation will have as its aim the education, research and management of university services. The thematic projects will refer to a qualification or a group of qualifications of the same scientific-teaching field in one or various universities. The global projects will take one or several universities into consideration. The evaluation projects will follow a mixed methodology of self-evaluation and external evaluation.

The self-evaluation stage is carried out by the Assessment Committee in the university and the result is a report of self-evaluation which is submitted to the Council of Universities. This report reflects the objective situation of the evaluated unit, as well as the opinion of the university community on its strengths, weaknesses and its possibilities for improvement.

The external evaluation stage is conducted by a group of experts, not related to the evaluated institution and appointed specifically for each project. The group of experts writes a report from the data provided in the Committee of Evaluation report and the information gathered in situ, through interviews with the authorities of the institution or evaluated unit, as well as with representatives of the different university sectors.

In the first call of the Plan in 1996, 46 public and private universities participated, handing in projects to evaluate 130 qualifications of which 7 were global projects for evaluating 40 qualifications, 2 were to evaluate 9 qualifications and 26 were thematic projects to evaluate 81 qualifications. There were also 13 special action projects. The Ministry of Education and Culture has financed the carrying out of these evaluation projects with the sum of ESP 184 million. The results of this first call are presently being evaluated by the Council of Universities.

There are also specific processes to evaluate teachers. The Royal Decree 1086/1989 of 28 August on university lecturers' remuneration established a 5-yearly evaluation system for university teaching to be conducted by the university itself, which can judge the teaching activity developed in the work post as favourable or unfavourable. Likewise, a system of evaluation of the lecturer's research activity is conducted every six years to judge its efficiency. The assessment is conducted by a National Commission made up of the Ministry of Education and Culture and Autonomous Community representatives, which can take advice, after hearing the Council of Universities, from relevant members of the national and international scientific community. Both evaluations are voluntary and if the result is favourable it means an increase in remuneration.

Before 1995, quality evaluation was the responsibility of the individual institution, aided by its institute of educational sciences. The Council of Universities, which was behind the National Plan, initiated interest in quality evaluation.

2.2.2. Quality control and evaluation of the rest of higher education

According to the *LOGSE*, educational authorities shall evaluate the education system. In this Act, the National Institute for Quality and Evaluation for the whole system was established, in charge of designing evaluation systems for different studies and the corresponding centres. The *LOPEG* has established that educational authorities shall carry out periodical evaluation plans of all centres supported by public funds, mainly through education inspection. The Order of 21 February 1996 establishes that all centres

must undertake an internal evaluation of their operations and the results achieved at the end of each school year, and must undergo an external evaluation every four years through education inspection.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

3.1. ACCESS

The problem of access to university is not new and it has always caused debate, yet a new element has come up in the last few years: the ever-growing imbalance between the university places on offer and the demand for university studies. This has caused the university entrance examinations to play a role they were not initially designed for. They no longer 'select' students for entry to higher education, but 'put them in order' to allocate places on those courses of study where demand is greater than supply, an evermore common occurrence.

The present examinations were originally conceived as 'maturity' tests with the purpose of making sure that pupils of *bachillerato* (post-compulsory secondary education, general branch) could successfully follow university studies. Furthermore, these tests became the only external evaluation of the system, which enables comparison of the grades achieved by pupils and established educational targets. However, as the number of students who enter university has been growing and, consequently, the number of applications for certain courses, entrance examinations and academic record have become the instruments for classifying applicants and deciding who is given first choice of university centre and course of study. This has aroused strong social sensitivity and people have called for the abolition of testing for admission to university studies.

The main problem facing the university entrance system in Spain today is the difference between the demand for university places and the number available on certain courses. As an example, in some Spanish universities in recent academic years there have been three times as many applications as the number of places available for certain studies, such as dental surgery, nursing, telecommunications, architecture and journalism.

The *PAU* (university entrance examinations), together with the academic record of *bachillerato*, have become the fundamental tools for arranging and establishing who is given priority in choice of course of study. And since this matter affects a good number of families, it may be concluded that it has become a real social problem, which has led the Congress of Deputies and the Senate to debate it repeatedly.

Reforms

From the legislative point of view, two regulations deal with this matter. Firstly, the *LRU*, in section 21, establishes that it is the Government, after hearing the Council of Universities, that lays down the selection procedures for entry to university centres. It is therefore a power reserved to the State General Administration and not to the Autonomous Communities, so that a uniform system is maintained across national territory. Admission is restricted only by the facilities of university centres. Public powers are left with the responsibility of trying to implement a policy of investment to adapt facilities to social demand under the framework of a general provision programme for university education. Public powers should bear in mind affordable public expenditure and compensation for territorial imbalances.

Secondly, the *LOGSE* establishes in section 29 that those who have completed *bachillerato* and wish to access university studies must pass an entrance examination, which, together with the grades achieved in *bachillerato*, give credit for the academic maturity of the pupils and for the knowledge acquired at that level.

It should be pointed out that the preceding legal principles have not been developed into regulations and that the many rules that have been issued continue to be based on the 1974 legislation, which introduced tests. Changes introduced in the last few years are focused on the progressive improvement of the results achieved and on the standard of tests, with the aim of ensuring objectivity, accuracy and fairness in the placing of students.

Thus, the Royal Decree 406/1988 of 29 April set down the obligation for the evaluation of each subject to be assigned to a group of specialists and also for the creation of homogeneous criteria for the evaluation of all students sitting the exams at the same university. A later modification under the Royal Decree 807/1993 of 28 May stipulated that the tests be marked by specialist teachers who should not mark the exercises of pupils from the same centres in continuation. On this, there have been a proliferation of ministerial orders. In search of the utmost objectivity, these have regulated in greater detail the participation of teachers from secondary centres and university establishments and the content and the evaluation of the tests. The Order of 4 August 1995, following the decisions taken in the Commission of Education and Culture of the Congress, has laid down that, in order to take part in the panels judging university entrance examinations, one must be teaching either at secondary education level or at university in the corresponding academic year, and be a specialist in the respective subject. It should also be ensured that the number of secondary education teachers and university lecturers is the same and, finally, that teachers are appointed at random. Before signing the official acts, the teachers must make sure that the grades given are faithfully transcribed.

Parallel to all these measures, procedural rules for entry to university centres have been established under Royal Decree 1005/1991 of 14 June. The criteria to be applied by universities in classifying applications and assigning places are extensively regulated under this, as are places to be compulsorily reserved. It is also laid down that those applicants who are nationals of any Member State of the European Union shall have the same treatment as those of Spanish nationality. Finally, a link is established between the *COU* or *bachillerato* options and the different courses of study which may be taken.

Lastly, and resulting from the introduction of the new autonomy conferring system, there is the incorporation of a test in the co-official language of the relevant Community.

For admission to programmes of study of art education and higher grade specific vocational training, under the *LOGSE* students must at least hold the *bachiller* title (i.e. have successfully completed the *bachillerato*). For art education, it is also necessary to pass an entrance test. For the higher-grade vocational training cycle, applicants must have taken certain subjects depending on the cycle in question. Admission is also possible without these standard requirements by passing an entrance test that evaluates the candidate's maturity in relation to both the goals of the *bachillerato* and to the skills corresponding to the professional field. One must be over 20 years of age to be allowed to sit this test.

3.2. WASTAGE

The reform of university studies brought about by the *LRU* has as its main objective the change of conditions of study at university in order to ensure the highest possible success rate among university students. The reform of the curricula, the establishment of credits, the organisation of subjects in four-month terms, and the reform carried out with respect to the lecturer body itself have contributed to improving the performance of universities, despite expansion of this sector.

Under the *LRU*, the Social Council of the university, following a report by the Council of Universities, shall establish the rules regulating the time spent at university by those students who are unable to pass the relevant tests within the time limits set for different courses.

Students, as a consequence of this, can sit an examination a limited number of times, from four to six, with a maximum of two attempts per academic year. The last two attempts must be made before panels made up of three official lecturers nominated by the faculty or school board, so that impartiality in the grade is ensured.

The most important measure taken for the reduction of the drop-out rate has undoubtedly been the establishment and extension of short cycle studies, which have meant that a good number of students can successfully complete their studies even within the period foreseen. In such short cycle courses of study, an important reduction in completion time may be observed, approaching the duration theoretically established.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Economic aid for students is framed by the general policy of compensatory education based on the principles of equity and solidarity. The system of scholarships and other study grants constitutes its basic tool, the objective being to allow access and continuation of higher education studies to those who show ability but lack economic resources.

The general rules regulating grants are established under the Royal Decree 2298/1983 of 28 July, and there have not been any subsequent modifications, although there is an annual updating of the basic grant amount.

A scholarship includes an exemption from paying tuition fees and enables registration at higher education institutions. The Ministry of Education and Culture, in turn, gives the universities annual compensation for the amounts that they do not receive as a consequence of this exemption.

The system of scholarships and grants applies to the whole of Spain, and only the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country awards its own scholarships, because of its special system of financing through an economic agreement. Most of the Autonomous Communities organise additional calls to complete or widen the scope of scholarships in general.

Grants are awarded according to an assessment of academic record and family income, using a legally established formula. The Government establishes the threshold above which it is not possible to be awarded a grant. The renewal of a grant from the previous year has priority over new applications as long as a certain level of academic attainment is maintained.

The scholarships awarded to higher education students can comprise the following (amounts academic year 1996/97): exemption from paying tuition fees (university compensated directly), compensating aid (ESP 261,000), aid for transport (in four payments of ESP 18,000 up to ESP 100,000), aid for accommodation (ESP 272,000), aid for books (ESP 26,000), aid for end of studies project (ESP 60,000).

The different types of aid are cumulative. The total amount of assistance cannot be higher than the minimum salary of a public or private sector worker.

The total number of grant-holders in higher education for the school year 1996/97 was 276,081. The total expenditure on grants by the Ministry of Education and Culture was ESP 62,000 million, of which ESP 22,000 million correspond to university rates.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. PLANNING OF COURSES; STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

5.1.1. University studies

There have been two objectives in the process of reform in this field. The first is to organise courses into cycles in order to facilitate the gaining of an official first-cycle qualification which leads to a profession or to second-cycle studies. Secondly, in redefining the training and academic content of the curriculum, the aim is that university education comes closer to professional and social requirements and is thus more responsive to labour market demands. While not neglecting the tasks of carrying out and communicating the results of research, an appropriate and coherent range of qualifications is required to meet these demands.

The common guidelines which apply to all curricula leading to the official qualifications of *diplomado*, technical architect or technical engineer, *licenciado*, architect or engineer have been established. These conditions have to be fulfilled by the universities when establishing the general syllabus for education leading to an official and nationally valid title or qualification. Such titles or qualifications are subject to the approval of the Council of Universities, once approved by the university.

Universities have academic autonomy to design differentiated curricula which lead to the same official qualification. The differentiation can be on the basis of a rigid or flexible curriculum in terms of content, duration of studies, number of hours, compulsory subjects, optional subject opportunities, the possibility of equivalencies, and so on.

The components of different curricula are grouped under:

- Common subjects, those which constitute the minimum common content of syllabuses leading to the same qualification. These subjects must make up between 30 and 45% of the total number of study hours in the first cycle and from 25 up to 40% in the second cycle.
- Subjects defined by each university when approving their curriculum. Some of them will be compulsory for all students while others will be optional so that they can choose from different subjects offered by the university.
- Subjects that the student can choose freely from the ones offered by the university for any qualification, or even by other universities, if there is such an agreement. They will represent at least 10% of the total number of study hours.

The duration of each type of study, or university cycles, follows some general rules common to all qualifications.

In general, first-cycle studies last three years, and the student must obtain between 180 and 270 credits. The courses of the first and second cycle together last four or five years (six for medical studies); the duration for each cycle is at least two years (two or three for the first cycle and two for the second, except for medical studies, which last three). Throughout these four-, five- and six-year courses students must obtain between 300 and 450 credits in order to obtain the qualification. On the other hand, universities may establish minimum and maximum periods of study for students.

Programmes for obtaining a doctorate should last at least two academic years, and should be structured around courses and seminars aimed at specialisation in a scientific, technical or artistic field, as well as around training in research techniques. Topics less central to the programme but of interest to it are also

covered. Doctorate programmes represent a total of 32 credits. The maximum time for obtaining a doctoral degree is 5 years although the Doctorate Commission may extend this given an appropriate reference from the relevant department.

There are also specialist vocational courses at the end of which the university awards the title (not officially recognised) of specialist knowledge, master or similar.

University courses can be grouped into four streams: humanities, experimental and health sciences, social and law sciences, and technical studies. Each stream comprises first cycle studies, first and second cycle and only second cycle, as well as third cycle (doctoral degree).

Before 1983, the 1970 *LGE* divided courses in faculties and upper technical schools into three cycles (a first cycle of three years, a second of two years and a third specialisation cycle which, after approval of a thesis, led to a doctorate) and established that university schools would have a single three year *diplomatura* cycle. It was only with the study plans of the *LRU* that a first university cycle with its own qualification appeared. This was of two or three years' duration and conferred the title of *diplomado* though many now lead on to other courses. Equally, a two-year second cycle course may be taken which leads to a *licenciado* degree, though these usually take five years.

5.1.2. Non-university higher education

Art education

The 35 specialisations in advanced level music studies cover the four major fields of music expression: composition, playing, musicology and pedagogy.

For higher dramatic art studies, there is a single level divided into three specialities: stage management and playwriting, stage design, and, finally, performance.

The certificates, curriculum and admission requirements for advanced level plastic art and design studies have been adopted, to date, for sculpture-related applied art and jewellery design, mural applied art, book art, artistic ceramics, graphic design, fashion design, industrial design, interior design, artistic textiles, enamels art, floral art and artistic glassware.

Courses on preservation and restoration of artistic objects are organised around a single cycle; the first year is the same for all five specialities into which such studies are divided: preservation and restoration of archaeological objects, painting, sculpture, graphic documents and textiles.

Higher education and vocational training

The higher level vocational training qualifications are part of the vocational training system created by the *LOGSE*. They were created by the government in consultation with the Autonomous Communities. The aims of these studies were defined under the Royal Decree 676/1993 of 7 May, and they provide students with the necessary training to acquire professional competence, to understand the organisation and characteristics of the relevant sector and to help acquire confidence and professional maturity.

Access to such courses requires the *bachiller* qualification. The title higher technician (*técnico superior*) is conferred on successful completion allowing entry into the profession and entry to related university-level studies. The length of each course varies from 1,300 to 2,000 hours depending on the vocational area. The length of the workplace-based training is between 350 and 750 hours.

Higher level vocational training takes place in secondary education institutions, in centres for the *bachillerato* and in centres for vocational training.

The qualifications of the higher education training cycles which have been established and which are being put into practice gradually are divided into vocational families.

The reforms in university courses and in the non-university sector have aimed at reaching a balance between the academic content of courses and their relationship with the world of work. The new qualifications created are much closer to the needs of the labour market. The appearance of university programmes of one cycle only and the artistic and vocational training courses also aim in the same direction. Universities themselves have begun to offer specialised vocational courses leading to qualifications which are not nationally recognised, such as Specialist, Master's etc. The private universities offer similar types of courses, though they aim at areas where the demand is higher.

The increased power of university departments under the *LRU* influenced the change in the content of courses, which are now organised at departmental level rather than at faculty or school level. This has also led to greater specialisation and more systematic teaching.

5.2. TEACHING METHODS AND EVALUATION

5.2.1. University education

According to the *LRU*, universities enjoy autonomy in the organisation of academic life. Departments are the basic entities in charge of organising research and appropriate programmes in their subjects. Therefore, departments are in charge of the structuring and the coordination of education and the research activities of the universities. Departments have the task of launching new teaching methods and are the main instigators of their renewal. Mention should be made here of the establishment of the credit system through Royal Decree 1497/1987. This laid down general regulations for the evaluation of study plans for university qualifications throughout the country. It defined a credit as a unit of theoretical or practical teaching which corresponds to 10 hours or its equivalent. Established numbers of credits for each qualification are between 60 and 90 per academic year. This means between 20 and 30 hours work per week, including practical work. In any case, more than 15 hours teaching per week for theoretical education is not possible. Respecting this minimum, the guidelines for each qualification determine, by cycles, the minimum and maximum number of credits for the programme.

At the beginning of each academic year, all activities must be made public, specifying the number of hours for theoretical and practical work per week, seminars and tutorials and attendance of students.

Universities may establish minimum and maximum periods for students' education. Therefore, each student should attend for a specified number of hours in order to pass the subjects he has chosen. In addition, a maximum number of additional years for course completion (at least two years more than the length fixed under the relevant syllabus) has been established by each University Social Council. First year pupils who do not pass any of the subjects they are registered in, without any justifiable reason for such low attainment, cannot continue their studies in that centre. This can also be applied to subsequent years.

Universities, as entities in charge of awarding qualifications, also have to verify the knowledge, intellectual development and attainment of students, for which certain rules of assessment are required. Each university department is in charge of assessment and of its teaching staff. The assessment system depends on the type of work done during the course and the amount of practical work and uses oral exams, written exams (the most common form of evaluation), written assignments, and practical

problem-solving. Some universities include a *practicum*, or compulsory practical component in some courses; and for experimental sciences such as medicine, physics, chemistry etc, laboratory work is evaluated.

5.2.2. Non-university education

The methodology for the teaching of art subjects is adapted to the special characteristics of each subject. In general, these reinforce the basic principles of theory and at the same time take into account the predominantly practical element involved in these studies.

In music studies, there is a need for individual teaching, whereas in studies in conservation and restoration of cultural assets, team study is better for future professionals.

Assessment of special subjects is continuous but varies between the subjects of the programme followed. In the same way as at the different levels of general teaching, assessment should take into account the learning capacity of the student as well as teaching methods.

5.2.3. Teacher training

With respect to training for university teachers, in the majority of cases, civil servant teachers are required to have a doctorate for any position. It is also necessary to have completed the third cycle of university studies and to have obtained a pass in the doctoral thesis in order to be allowed to teach at university. In addition, under the normal system for training university teachers, they have to work as an assistant teacher possibly on a university contract. The activity of assistant teachers is directed towards the completion of their scientific training but they may also collaborate in teaching duties. Assistant university teachers are appointed through public competitions for people who have finished their doctorate and who have been following a research programme for at least two years. The appointments are for two years full-time, with the option for renewal for a further three years on condition that the assistant has obtained his doctorate.

There is no requirement that university teachers have pedagogical training, in addition to the research experience and training discussed above. Created by the General Act on Education, the Institutes of Educational Sciences (*ICE*) are dependent on universities and it is here that university graduates who wish to go into teaching receive training, and here that in-service training is provided.

In non-university higher education, it is up to the area educational authorities to promote teacher training under the relevant provisions.

The evaluation of quality has led to improvements in university teaching. The current debate focuses on how to continue to improve the quality of teaching, taking into account the great increase in the number of students in higher education.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

6.1. ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR NATIONAL STUDENTS

Student exchanges for national students are subject to rules established by reciprocal international agreements. In these exchanges, the system of scholarships and aids makes provision for the transfer

of financial assistance awarded in Spain for use on similar courses in another country. There are also programmes financed by the European Union.

The Order of 12 June 1992 which concerns aptitude tests for entrance to faculties, higher technical schools and university colleges for students with recognised studies has entrusted the *UNED* with the administering of these aptitude tests. Spanish students who have studied in foreign countries may take these tests when the courses they have studied are recognised by the *COU*, either outside Spain or in authorised foreign centres in Spain.

6.2. SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Foreign students wishing to follow university studies in Spain have to sit the aptitude test held at the *UNED* discussed above. 5% of places are reserved for foreign students (from countries outside the EU) who have not passed such tests.

There is a Spanish language certificate for foreign students showing an adequate knowledge. The associated tests can be held in Madrid and in some other capital cities outside Spain.

Universities organise Spanish language and culture courses for foreigners.

The validation of foreign studies for undertaking university studies in Spain is covered by the 1989 resolution of the Academic Commission of the Council of Universities. Under the *LRU*, Spanish universities have to comply with the following regulations:

- to validate those subjects with the same name and level as the ones existing in Spain;
- to validate those subjects with similar content to those of the Spanish Curriculum;
- to adjust the basic validation tables prepared for this purpose by the Council of Universities by subjects, credits and cycles;
- to adjust to the regulations on validation and equivalence existing within the agreements or international conventions signed by Spain.

The recognition of foreign university diplomas is covered by a decree of 1989, under which the requirements for foreign higher education qualifications are regulated. The basis for any decision to recognise foreign qualifications is any of the following:

- International treaties and conventions, bilateral or multilateral in which Spain participates.
- Tables for the recognition of the curriculum and the qualifications approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture, following the report of the Academic Commission of the Council of Universities.
- If these two criteria are not fulfilled, the procedure for recognition has to take into account: the academic and scientific curriculum of the candidate; the prestige of the university awarding the qualification and the reciprocity given to Spanish qualifications in the country where the studies presented for validation were undertaken.

A royal decree of 1991 regulates the general system of recognition of higher education qualifications in the Member States of the European Union and stipulates a minimum training of three years. In 1995, this royal decree was modified by another, extending its area of application and widening the range of professions it regulates.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

As regards university studies, the *LRU* has defined a framework not only to regulate university autonomy adequately, but also to enhance the modernisation of the system from a scientific and academic point of view. It also makes Spanish universities more responsive to the demands of society. Other legislative reforms, particularly the Act on Science and the implementation of the National Plan for Scientific Research and Technological Development, have had a positive influence on the university scientific work and its quality. In parallel, a generalised increase in the demand for these studies has also taken place together with a considerable expansion of the supply of these studies.

The *LOGSE*, in turn, has managed to modernise, adapt, and regulate all aspects of higher art studies, and at the same time to create new higher studies by means of higher grade specific vocational training.

With regard to universities, there are currently three main problems:

- Access reform: to guarantee that the maximum number of students can enter the course of their choice and to guarantee the equity of the selection process and the suitability of selected candidates for different studies. A recent report by the Senate justified the university entrance examination and has recommended a series of measures for its improvement, even a double checking system and a new session in February. The social debate on its matter is still open.
- Reform of the curriculum: to amend some of its problems, mainly the excessive number of subjects per year, to organise study into two four-month terms and to guide students when choosing optional subjects. Likewise, the reorganising of credits is planned. The Council of Universities and the Ministry of Education and Culture are tackling the problem and its possible solutions.
- Specific measures concerning teachers: Many 'associate professors' have been taken on by universities to help teach the increasing number of students; they do not have the status of permanent professors and should not strictly be employed as associate professors. Furthermore, the competitions which facilitate promotion to the position of permanent professor have resulted in very little mobility of the teaching body. This needs addressing.

According to the *Report on University Financing* prepared by the Council of Universities, in future the priorities of university policy have to change. The objectives should no longer be the qualitative expansion of the system and the consolidation of autonomy since these objectives can be considered as already achieved. Rather, they should be a generalised improvement in university education quality, and greater efficiency in the use of university resources. This can only be achieved with a far-reaching reform of the whole university coordination system.

The effort made in higher education throughout the period analysed coincides with the full incorporation of Spain into the group of European democratic countries. In this context, Spain can optimistically face the challenge of responding to the increasing demand for higher education from all sections of the population. The balance between higher vocational training and university education constitutes an issue which has to be seriously considered in relation to the growth of higher education as a whole. Achieving this balance will help maintain the development levels which an advanced society needs.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>COU</i>	<i>Curso de Orientación Universitaria</i> (Pre-University Course)
<i>ICE</i>	<i>Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación</i> (Institute of Educational Sciences)
<i>LGE</i>	<i>Ley 14/1970 General de Educación y Financiamento de la Reforma</i> (General Act 14/1970 on Education and Financing)

LOGSE	<i>Ley Orgánica 1/1990 de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo</i> (The Organic Act 1/1990 on the General Organisation of the Education System)
LODE	<i>Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación</i> (Organic Act on the Right to Education)
LOPEG	<i>Ley Orgánica 9/1995 de la Participación, la Evaluación y el Gobierno de los centros docentes</i> (Organic Act 9/1995 on the Participation, Evaluation and Government of Educational Centres)
LRU	<i>Ley Orgánica 11/1983 de Reforma Universitaria</i> (Organic Act 11/1983 on University Reform)
PAU	<i>Prueba de Acceso a la Universidad</i> (University Entrance Examination)
PP	<i>Partido Popular</i>
PSOE	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i>
UNED	<i>Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia</i> (National Distance Learning University)

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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

FRANCE

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 1960s, French higher education was still very much a binary system. On the one hand, there are the traditional faculties, formally grouped under each regional education authority (*académie*) into universities, but benefiting from virtually total autonomy with respect to one another. Even though the courses of study at these faculties, which essentially originate from the Napoleonic era, were reformed in the late 19th century, they continue to be characterised by free access to all holders of the French *baccalauréat* (still considered to be the first level of higher education) and by highly theoretical courses which are hardly, if at all, vocational and are usually delivered to sizeable, if not huge, audiences in the form of lectures.

On the other hand, there is a small group of *Grandes écoles*, some of which were created at the end of the *ancien régime* but the majority during the course of the 19th century, plus one or two in the 20th century, which provide high-level general and technical training for the purpose of grooming France's future captains of industry and senior government officials. These *Grandes écoles*, unlike the faculties, admit students on a selective entry basis and endeavour to resist the pressure of demand by only very gradually increasing student numbers in their classes.

Contrary to what is apparent in most other developed countries, particularly in the rest of Europe, it is this secondary sector that is considered to be the most prestigious. In spite of everything, the creation of new institutions, sometimes referred to as the 'little *Grandes écoles*' and, above all, the opening of higher technical sections (*sections de techniciens supérieurs* - STSs) and later university technology institutes (*instituts universitaires de technologie* - IUTs) during the Fifth Republic, started to call into question these impenetrable barriers between the two sectors and to introduce real diversification.

During the past 30 years, higher education reforms have been introduced in fairly rapid succession. It is therefore neither feasible nor desirable to take 1980 as the starting point. Some of these reforms have led to quite far-reaching changes in the organisation and operation of the higher education system, in particular in the university sector.

The first reform was the Blueprint Act on Higher Education (*loi d'orientation sur l'enseignement supérieur*) of 11 November 1968, known as the Faure Act, followed by the Higher Education Act of 26 January 1984, known as the Savary Act, and finally the Blueprint Act on Education of 10 July 1989, known as the Jospin Act.

Further legislative provisions have had an impact on the way the higher education system and institutions operate, even though the aim of such provisions was not to completely overhaul them.

There was also the Delors Act of 1971 on continuing training, although this was of only marginal concern to universities in that it led to the creation of a university continuing training department in each institution and, as an indirect result, to a number of changes in the design of certain types of training (Decree of 18 October 1985 on continuing training in higher education).

The Laws of 1982-1984 on decentralisation have also had an influence, despite the fact that they did not actually target higher education, in particular on the role which the regions have been called upon to play in funding university buildings and research.

Finally, there have been various measures relating to the organisation of studies, to curricula, to the rules for allocating public funding to teaching institutions and for creating new vocational branches of study.

This multitude of reforms and adjustments has taken place during a period where political majorities have changed, yet this has not resulted in major policy shifts. The most striking example is perhaps the setting of an 80% target for each age cohort at *baccalauréat* level by a socialist minister in the face of widespread scepticism. This, however, was not challenged by either the political right or left.

Economic change brought about by the recession, in the wake of the first oil crisis and, in particular, rising unemployment among young people at the start of the 1980s with its consequences on budgetary balances and decisions, have probably played a more important role even though certain decisions to accord priority to education in general, and higher education in particular, were clearly taken in the face of pressure for spending cuts.

Demographic trends do, in part, explain the trend in student numbers. These have increased significantly since the end of the 1950s. However, the size of cohorts plays only a secondary role. Admittedly, the arrival of larger classes with the increase in the birth rate after 1945, making classes 30% larger than before the war at the higher education level, contributed to a rapid growth in numbers in the 1960s. However, the falling birth rate from 1965 onwards had no decisive impact on the number of university admissions in the 1980s and notably fails to explain the explosive increase in higher education students between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s.

It is more the issue of school demography, the steep rise in the number of *baccalauréat* holders which was the decisive factor in this case, but which was itself the result of implementing a highly voluntarist policy.

Finally, social trends, in particular the growing concern of young people about rising unemployment on the one hand and the growing heterogeneity of the student body on the other, have played a role and prompted a number of reforms. An example is more vocationally-oriented university courses and changes in the student grant system.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

1.1. REGULATIONS RELATING ESPECIALLY TO HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1.1. Blueprint Act on Higher Education of 1968

This law, known as the Faure Act, abolished the former discipline-based faculties created by Napoleon in 1806 and created new multidisciplinary public institutions, universities, divided into education and research units (*unités d'enseignement et de recherche - UERs*). These universities were endowed with consultative councils comprising representatives from among the staff, for the most part teachers, and from among the students, together with key figures from the worlds of politics, business and culture. They were granted fairly extensive formal autonomy and were no longer subject to a *posteriori* control. These new structures, which were established very rapidly, resulted in a fragmentation of decision-making centres. For example, the four Parisian faculties were transformed into 13 universities. Between 1968 and 1971, throughout France, 73 faculties were turned into 66 universities, comprising 674 *UERs*.

As its name would indicate, this blueprint act lays down principles. It had to be accompanied by implementing decrees to make it specific and operational. Its three fundamental principles were applied to university higher education at varying speeds:

- The participation of students and of the various categories of staff in the decision-making bodies was introduced fairly swiftly. However, students have always stayed away from governing board elections and their elected representatives have failed to attend on a very regular basis.

- Autonomy remained formal up until the late 1980s, due to the centralist tradition. However, universities have always had a considerable degree of autonomy over teaching matters.
- The multidisciplinary approach, when tried out in universities such as Paris-Nanterre and Paris-Vincennes, did not meet with much success. The disciplinary logic soon re-established itself, with the *UERs* modelling themselves on the departments or chairs of the former faculties.

Although it is true to say that not all of the provisions of the Faure Act had been applied by the time the Savary Act was adopted, there was not the same resistance and the same refusal to implement its provisions as there was with those of the Savary Act.

1.1.2. Higher Education Act of 26 January 1984, the ‘Savary Act’

This law was much more ambitious, since it covered the entire state higher education sector, whereas the Faure Act was targeted only at educational institutions that came under the Ministry of National Education. It contained many provisions that were to acquire major importance in the years to follow.

To some extent, it increased the autonomy of educational institutions, by allowing them to conclude contracts with the State (article 20). It prohibited selective access to the general branches of study but laid the foundations for consultation between the different types of higher education institution, with the particular aim of providing better student guidance at undergraduate level (known in France as the first cycle) or upon completion of their studies (article 14). The law defined the universities’ continuing training mission and provided for the accreditation of professional experience to facilitate access to higher education (article 8).

Alongside the governing board and the academic council (*conseil scientifique*), the law introduced a Council of Studies and Academic Life (*Conseil des études et de la vie universitaire*), entrusted with purely educational matters. This body, which included a large number of student representatives, made more tangible the principle of participation, which had been laid down in the Faure Act.

A statutory provision of this law provoked strong opposition. Tenured professors were in a minority on all of the consultative councils, with the exception of bodies which participated in teacher recruitment, where they had equal representation with the other teachers. Many universities refused to adapt their statutes to accommodate the new law, and the return of a conservative government in 1986 called this provision into question.

A bill put forward by Minister Devaquet in 1986 re-established the power of professors, but at the same time granted greater autonomy to universities, allowing them to define their teaching programmes and diplomas, and to freely fix student enrolment fees and the admission criteria into their different degree courses. Large-scale protests led to the withdrawal of the bill and to the resignation of the Minister.

In 1988, a socialist majority was elected to Parliament and the universities were forced to bring their statutes into line with the Law of 1984. However, the 7 new universities created in 1991 were subject to the Law of 20 July 1992, which authorised dispensations from the Savary Act solely with respect to the organisation of the institutions for a limited period of three years (extended to five years by the Law of 25 July 1994).

1.1.3. Blueprint Act on Education of 1989 (Jospin Act)

This law, which was preceded by consultations regarding teaching content, contains few provisions relating to higher education. Article 12 provides for students to be involved in induction activities, social

activities to assist with entry into employment. Article 20 concerned the construction of buildings by the universities. Article 23 concerned the disciplinary role of the National Council for Higher Education (*Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur*).

However, the law did introduce one major innovation into teacher training, by creating university teacher training institutes, the *instituts universitaires de formation des maîtres - IUFMs*, which are public autonomous institutions bound by contract to the universities and responsible for training primary and secondary school teachers.

1.1.4. Consultations on the higher education system

Recent years have been marked by two instances of national consultation regarding the status and future of higher education:

In 1989, the National Forum on the Future of Higher Education (*Assises nationales de l'enseignement supérieur*) under the theme University 2000, focused mainly on the conditions for developing universities. It concentrated on the participation in such development by the various local, regional and intermunicipal authorities, collectively referred to in France as territorial authorities (*collectivités territoriales*), after the decentralisation laws. It culminated in a series of agreements between the State and the regions on financing a huge construction programme which lasted right up until the mid-1990s.

A national consultation entitled Nation-wide Consultation of All Interested Parties on University Education (*États généraux de l'université*) launched by Minister Bayrou in 1995, resulted in a number of proposals, some of which were implemented before the change of government in 1997. The proposals primarily concerned simplifying and modernising university branches of study, as well as the student grant system, dubbed *statut de l'étudiant*, or student status. Paradoxically, this consultation gave rise to a publication at the end of the initial consultation phase¹ (1996), but no final document was published.

1.2. REFORMS WITH AN INDIRECT IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

1.2.1. Continuing training

The Law of 1971 on continuing training (Delors Act) had paved the way for expanding continuing vocational training. Higher education institutions, in particular the universities, were rather slow to respond to this new need, a response having been made financially possible by obliging businesses to finance such training.

Two provisions were introduced at a later date to allow continuing training beneficiaries to gain credit for professional experience. They are likely to promote the development of this accreditation in universities, which have an important advantage in this 'market' because they are able to open up their study courses to employees and issue them with national diplomas (*diplômes nationaux*). Accreditation of professional experience is foreseen and was arranged for admission to diploma studies (Decree of 23 August 1985). Professional experience can also be accredited and replace some of the examinations for obtaining diplomas (Law of 20 July 1992 and Decree of 27 March 1993).

Nevertheless, the universities' share of continuing training provision as a whole (together with the National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts (*Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers - CNAM*)) is quite

¹ Les États Généraux de l'Université, Ministry of Education, April 1996.

small (4.5% in 1995). Even for the higher levels (levels 6 and 7 of the ISCED classification), the universities represent only 43% of total training provision, with a mere 14% share for level five.

1.2.2. Decentralisation laws

In accordance with the model used for primary education since the end of the 19th century, the decentralisation laws² of 1983-1985 transferred the responsibility for administering secondary schools to the territorial authorities - the *départements* for schools of lower secondary education (*collèges*), and the *régions* for schools of upper secondary education (*lycées*). The State retained its powers over education by retaining its control over curricula and the management of teaching staff.

The regions also received powers over, and responsibility, for vocational training.

Even though the responsibility for higher education was explicitly left to the State, this reform had repercussions for higher education. The regions, in particular, became potential sponsors for the universities, in addition to the State, in areas of concern or interest to them. By funding vocational training, in particular, they were in a position to influence the development of post-*baccalauréat* training courses. They also showed an interest in research and development, which led them to finance universities in research-related investments.

From 1989 onwards, the territorial authorities, in particular the regions, were called upon to participate directly in funding higher education, by financing a vast real estate development programme, called 'University 2000 Plan' (*Plan Université 2000*). Interested chiefly in national and regional development, they had for some time been financing a number of university sites in medium-sized towns. What have been dubbed 'university relocations' have developed in a highly uncoordinated manner as a result of investment by the territorial authorities - the *régions*, the *communes* and the *départements*. Under the *Contrats de Plan État-Regions* (contracts concluded between the State and a region) - a new manifestation of 'French-style' planning - the State undertook to coordinate university development by negotiating five-year development programmes with the regions (and through their intermediary, with the other territorial authorities) involving the co-financing of new buildings. The level of interest shown by the territorial authorities in higher education explains why their financial participation has gone far beyond what was initially envisaged, often exceeding that of the State: the initial plan provided for a global investment of FRF 23 billion, 70% of which was to be financed by the State. However, the financial report drawn up at the end of the period covered by the plan revealed that the territorial authorities had in fact funded 53% of the total FRF 22 billion of investment (28% by the *régions*, 14% by the *départements* and 11% by the *communes*).

Since 1994, the regions have begun to develop 'regional higher education plans' (*schémas régionaux de l'enseignement supérieur*), on the preparation of which the universities are formally consulted.

At present, there are university sites in around 200 towns, compared with 40 in 1968.

1.2.3. Reform of admission to higher education

The special university entrance examination (*examen spécial d'entrée à l'université - ESEU*) was replaced by the diploma for admission to university studies (*diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires - DAEU*), and accreditation of professional experience for admission and for obtaining diplomas (see 1.2.1.).

² Law no. 83.663 of 22 July 1983, amended by Law no. 85.97 of 25 January 1985, Law no. 95.583 of 10 June 1985.

1.2.4. Reform of the organisation of studies

A reform of the organisation of the first and second (or final honours) cycle of the general university branches of study, which had begun in 1991, led to the publication of regulatory provisions in 1992 and 1993. These measures provided for considerable simplification, reducing the number of legal provisions governing diplomas from 300 to 10.

Following much prevarication, owing to the political context and to resistance from certain disciplines in the universities, it was not until several years later and after further ministerial decrees (in 1996 and 1997) that these reforms entered into force.

1.2.5. Reforms of teacher recruitment methods

Space is too limited in this report to detail the succession of reforms in the methods of recruiting university teachers. Every three or four years and every time there was a change of minister, a new report was commissioned and a new regulation published that modified an already highly complex recruitment system. Teachers are civil servants and, as such, they have to be recruited by means of national competitive examinations. However, the universities are voicing their desire to participate in the selection and promotion of their teaching staff. The successive reforms have sought to achieve a optimum balance between the role of local selection bodies and that of national accreditation bodies, which is an impossible task due to differences in recruitment traditions and practices between the various disciplines.

1.2.6. The institutional contract

Provided for under the Savary Act, institutional contracts (*contrats d'établissement*) were initially set up to fund academic research (the four-year plans being turned into five-year contracts). Later, as from 1990, they were introduced to fund the teaching operations of institutions (Circular of 24 March 1989 on contractual policy), in accordance with the philosophy presented by the director of academic planning and development³.

Based on an institutional development plan (*projet d'établissement*) drawn up by each university and adopted by its consultative councils for a four-year period, the Ministry of Education negotiated a portion of the funding for higher education institutions for the period concerned. Most of the non-wage administrative appropriations were still determined by allocation formulae (see below for the criteria used): *Groupe d'analyse et de recherche sur les activités et les coûts des enseignements supérieurs* (Analysis and Research Group on Higher Education Activities and Costs), or *Garaces*, and *San ReMo* (*Système analytique de répartition des moyens* (Analytical System for Allocating Resources)). However, around 10% had to be spent on financing those projects and innovations proposed by the universities in their institutional development plan and selected by the Ministry to receive funding. Sometimes such projects involved another sponsor, a local authority or private partner.

The great attraction of the initial contracts that were signed was that the Ministry agreed to make a commitment regarding staffing levels, spread over the entire term of the contract. This resulted in some universities receiving a promise to create new teaching posts (up to around 200 over four years), which enabled them to plan their development at a time when student numbers were still growing rapidly.

Another fundamental aspect of the contracts was that they included the procedure for authorising universities to issue national diplomas. The various types of authorisation were granted all at once for

³ A. Fremont (1990).

the term of the contract (sometimes shorter), which enabled the universities to start seriously planning their teaching activities.

The initial contracts were concluded at the time of the discussions on the regional programmes in the University 2000 Plan, which made it possible to link investments with the various objectives supported by the Ministry through the contracts.

The university contract management system was complete when research contracts were synchronised and later merged with contracts for teaching operations. The universities were then in a position to introduce consistency into all of their operations and development. Some then undertook to negotiate similar contracts with the territorial authorities, which had become sponsors which, though marginal, were essential in certain fields.

The main problem with this new approach was that the contracts concluded between public entities, and in particular between public university institutions and their supervisory authority, the Ministry, were not binding. Their legal status was poorly defined and the specialised courts did not recognise them. To make matters worse, in many cases the commitments undertaken by the State with respect to the creation of staff posts for the initial contracts failed to be honoured; the expenditure authorisations given in the budget were annual, and the Ministry was able to make commitments spanning several years only if the country was certain of great political and economic stability and if political choices were very clearly expressed. This so-called contractual approach did, however, develop in other sectors of activity within the framework of the policy of State modernisation which has been pursued with greater or lesser constancy since the mid-1980s. It is to be supposed that the legal difficulties will gradually be ironed out. All of the successive ministers of education since the end of the 1980s have manifested their attachment to this new form of relationship. The universities, via the Conference of University Vice-Chancellors (*Conférence des présidents d'université*), regularly report how much they appreciate it.

1.2.7. New financing methods and new financial management

The period under study was also marked by a change in the management rules applying to universities. In 1985 (Decree of 22 January 1985 on the budget and financial system of the *EPSCP*, or *Établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel* (Public Scientific, Cultural and Professional Institutions)), the management and accounting rules for public bodies were adapted to the specific problems of universities and to the new structures and tasks laid down in the Savary Act.

The development of relations with the regions, the contractual policy and decentralisation, gradually modified the universities' practices and requirements in terms of management. A new financial decree was drawn up in the early 1990s, at the same time as universities were setting up a new system of financing and accounting management (NaBuCo). It was published in 1994 (Decree of 14 January 1994 on the Budget and Financial System of the *EPSCP*) and came into operation in 1997 following a transition period.

This new decree allowed the universities to base their budget no longer on administrative considerations but on the major policy choices that they were offered ('management budgeting'). It strengthened management controls, whilst at the same time increasing the possibilities for decentralised decision-making within educational institutions.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

2.1. ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Since the Faure Act, universities have been specialised public institutions. As such, they are endowed with a legal personality, have their own assets and are free to run their own affairs. They are subject to the *a posteriori* control of the State (National Audit Office, Inspectorate of Public Finances, Education Inspectorates). They are also subject to the accounting and financial rules governing the public sector but have been endowed with a specific financial and accounting framework suited to their mission.

Their organisation is governed by law (the Faure Act of 1968 and later the Savary Act of 1984): their management bodies are appointed in accordance with a uniform set of regulations. The internal components of the universities are created by the Minister. Certain compulsory components are laid down in regulations. The universities are headed by a vice-chancellor who is elected for a five-year term of office and is not immediately eligible for re-election. The vice-chancellor is in charge of the university's administration, with the support of a secretary-general, appointed by the Minister, upon nomination by the vice-chancellor. Institutions have an accounts officer appointed by the Finance and Higher Education Ministers, after approval by the vice-chancellor. Although this person executes the decisions of the vice-chancellor, in the capacity of public accountant, they exercise control over the vice-chancellor's management.

The other higher education institutions that do not have university status are headed by a principal, appointed by the Minister. The *IUFMs* are governed by special regulations. They are administrative institutions bound by contract to one or more universities and have management autonomy. They are administered by a governing board, chaired by the chief education officer of the regional education authority (*recteur d'académie*) and headed by a principal appointed by the Minister from among three people nominated by the governing board.

The institutions' funding is in large measure allocated by the Government. For the most part, the buildings are made available to them by the State or the territorial authorities. The permanent staff are civil servants assigned to the universities. The responsibility for the operations of higher education institutions falls to the State, which pays them an allocation for operating costs via the higher education budget. However, universities are able to take out loans and procure other funding from the various partners.

Legally, the territorial authorities have no role to play in higher education, but in practice they contribute 'voluntarily' to funding universities and other higher education institutions, for equipment and operations. The universities are able to involve the territorial authorities in their activities by allowing their representatives to sit on the various consultative councils (governing board, Board of Studies and Academic Council).

The State has the monopoly over issuing university degrees. Through the intermediary of the Minister, it authorises universities to issue national diplomas and finances the study programmes leading to such diplomas. (However, the universities have the power to create their own diplomas, although such diplomas give no entitlement to funding.)

2.2. CHANGES IN METHODS OF FINANCING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

At present, the Ministry of Education is responsible for paying the salaries of tenured staff (teachers and other personnel), as well as the associated social security contributions. This represents nearly FRF 24 billion, of which 18 million is for universities apart from the *IUTs*.

The Ministry pays the institutions a grant for running costs and teaching operations determined partially according to a set formula (see below) and partially on the basis of contracts concluded with the educational institutions (around FRF 6 billion in total, with contract financing representing 7% to 8% of this figure), as well as a research grant of FRF 1.4 billion. Furthermore, the great majority of the research is financed via the major research bodies, including the National Centre for Scientific Research (*Centre national de la recherche scientifique*).

The research grant paid to the universities represents only a small portion of funding for academic research. The greatest share goes directly to the research teams through the intermediary of the national research bodies that conduct their scientific programmes in association with the universities. A quite significant share also goes to the Ministry for Research for remunerating doctoral students through research grants.

The funding received by the universities is essentially meant to finance research-based training organised in the doctoral colleges and in the research laboratories which train 3rd cycle students (*diplômes d'études approfondies*, or *DEA* (advanced studies certificate) and thesis).

The other ministries and the territorial authorities pay grants of up to a total of nearly FRF 2 billion (one billion from the other territorial authorities and one billion from the other ministries) and contribute part of the institutions' own resources by entrusting research or continuing training contracts to them. The territorial authorities finance higher education institutions in a host of different ways.

The regions are involved in funding research and development, as well as continuing training. They also contribute a considerable amount of investment funding, in particular for real estate (see above for the consequences of the decentralisation laws).

The other territorial authorities help to fund institutions which they have sought to attract to their area. Such participation includes operations (making personnel available, as well as subsidising the transport costs of staff and students) and investment.

Students and their families pay the institutions a total of FRF 1.4 billion in enrolment fees. Student accommodation and catering is not managed by the universities but by specialised public bodies, the Regional Centres for University and Student Social Services (*Centres régionaux des œuvres universitaires et scolaires - CROUS*).

Business is expected to finance initial vocational training by paying 0.5% of its wage bill either to the State, or to the vocational education bodies of their choice, or else by hosting apprentices who are undergoing training. Part of this tax on salaries, called apprenticeship tax (*taxe d'apprentissage*) goes to the higher education institutions (FRF 0.4 billion). Businesses contribute to the own resources of these institutions by buying their services in the form of research contracts (FRF 0.9 billion) and continuing training contracts (FRF 0.85 billion). Note that such resources from the sale of services come both from private enterprises and from public corporations and administrations.

The Ministry of Education, or the Ministry of Higher Education, makes an award made up of various subsidies. Up until the mid-1990s, these subsidies were each earmarked for a specific purpose. Since then, the subsidies have increasingly taken the form of block grants and universities are now free to use them as they see fit, provided that they stay within the limitations of the general financial regulations and abide by the contracts concluded with sponsors.

2.2.1. The grant for running costs and teaching operations

If the salaries of appointed staff who do not come within the budget of higher education institutions are disregarded, the grant for running costs and teaching operations is their largest source of funding. It includes a contractual portion and a portion allocated according to criteria based on a method that is adapted over time and was substantially modified in 1993.

As from 1976, the method developed by the *Garaces* group was used as the basis for calculating the different subsidies, the surface area of the premises, the value of equipment and the branches of study leading to the national diplomas which universities were authorised to issue. In particular, there was a subsidy for remunerating both teachers external to the institutions and the overtime of the institution's own staff.

This method of calculation had the result of prompting the universities to increase the number of diplomas and courses of study in order to procure extra funding. The proliferation in the number of branches of study led, in the early 1990s, to plans to reform the method of calculating subsidies.

In 1993, a new method was proposed, called *San ReMo*, which relied on a single criterion: the cost per student. The Ministry ascertained the cost of educating students enrolled in the different branches and cycles of study and paid part of this cost, leaving it up to the universities to finance the remainder with the aid of their own resources, which included the enrolment fees paid by the students. The method was gradually improved in order to take into account differences in teaching, administrative and technical staffing levels, and to offset them in the running-cost allocations granted to the institutions.

In order to implement this new method, a watchdog on higher education costs, the *Observatoire des coûts des établissements d'enseignement supérieur*, was created in 1990 under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. This watchdog carries out audits in the universities to ascertain the amount of funding spent on education. It supplies the Ministry with information about the average costs that serve as a basis for distributing funding, as well as highlighting the differences that exist between universities regarding the organisation of studies and the resources used. This information provides a valuable assessment of university management and steering by the Ministry.

2.2.2. Contract financing

With regard to universities, the contract does not cover all state funding, but only a small portion of the administrative appropriations and a far larger proportion of the investment payments. The vast majority of public financing is determined by methods based on the average cost per student. In the first contracts concluded with the universities, the Ministry even made commitments concerning the number of teaching posts to be created during the term of the contract. After a change in economic policy which led to spending cuts, this commitment was not kept.

Negotiating this contract means that the universities define their medium-term strategy and compare it with the government options for the higher education and research policy. The universities, within the limitations of their decision-making autonomy, put together a four-year project, which provides for setting up new courses of study, restructuring certain departments and the creation of new research units. After the project has been appraised by Ministry officials, the Minister decides on the accreditation of diplomas corresponding to the new courses, thereby making a commitment to finance their operations.

The evaluation of certain university projects, financed by the Ministry on an experimental basis through the contractual allocation, makes it possible to envisage extending them to all institutions either by regulatory means or by citing them as a model for voluntary adoption.

The diversity in the plans of the different universities makes it possible to set up a test bed which can later disseminate projects throughout the system if the experiments are judged to be effective. The Ministry's participation in this process of innovation dissemination involves the production and distribution of a 'compendium of good practices', the adoption of which is recommended. (The inspection bodies, which are particularly responsible for such evaluation, use their annual reports for this purpose or the ad hoc reports which they are in charge of producing).

2.2.3. Private funding

Students or their families pay enrolment fees. These are determined each year by decree and higher education institutions are not allowed to alter them. Student grant-holders do not have to pay enrolment fees. Since 1995, the Ministry has 'made up the difference' to those universities which take in more student grant-holders than others.

Up until 1986, enrolment fees had regularly been raised at a rate faster than the higher education budget. However, the student revolt against the Devaquet project, which allowed universities the freedom to set the fees within a fairly wide band, put an end to such fee increases for a time. It was not until the arrival of Jospin as Minister of Education that growth took off again and the fees were diversified depending on the type of studies undertaken.

Between 1982 and 1996, ordinary fees rose from FRF 150 per year to FRF 744. In 1996, they totalled FRF 1,240 for the second cycle technological branches of study and FRF 1,859 for engineering courses. They represent 25% of the universities' own resources.

Attempts by universities to impose extra fees for admission to certain very popular courses or certain student services have regularly been judged illegal by the competent courts.

One quarter of the apprenticeship tax paid by business goes to higher education institutions, but most goes to finance private institutions, for which it constitutes one of the essential sources of funding. The colleges of engineering or business administration which come under the chambers of commerce, in particular, have long been favoured by businesses. The amount of tax received per student in 1996 was FRF 1,800 for public institutions and FRF 8,250 for private institutions.

The stagnation of this source of funding, together with the fierce competition between both public and private institutions, has led to fewer resources for many institutions. The trend towards developing higher education through apprenticeship has also led to a reduction in the total amount to be distributed.

2.3. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

2.3.1. National Evaluation Committee of the EPSCP, set up under the Law of 26 January 1984

The National Evaluation Committee (*Comité national d'évaluation - CNE*), created in 1985, is an independent body appointed by the President of the Republic. The 17 permanent members have a four-year term of office. It has an administrative staff of around 25, together with a network of experts made up of French and foreign academics and key figures from industry or the administration, appointed for a limited period (since its creation, around 1,000 such experts have been appointed).

Its mission is to evaluate higher education, both by appraising individual institutions and through nation-wide studies. In order to do this, it conducts audits of both public and private higher education

institutions, universities and *Grandes écoles*. It has now virtually completed the first phase of evaluating all French universities (86 universities, including the national polytechnic institutions (*Instituts nationaux polytechniques*)) and a number of independent institutions (colleges of business administration, engineering and architecture).

The evaluations of the universities last for around one year and are conducted by a team of 5 to 20 experts headed by a member of the Committee. The evaluation covers all aspects of the institution's activities - **teaching, research and management**. It results in the publication of a bulky public report that is distributed fairly widely.

2.3.2. Transformation of inspection bodies into evaluation bodies

Unlike secondary education, French higher education is not subject to a teaching inspectorate. The General Inspectorate for Education (*Inspection générale de l'éducation nationale - IGEN*), which is organised by discipline to inspect secondary school teachers, has been given a wider remit and been entrusted with new responsibilities which take it into the higher education sector. Its evaluation of the training and recruitment of secondary school teachers has led it to take an interest in broad sectors of university education. The recently-created *IUFMs* have been the subject of an evaluation, as have the methods of teaching the different disciplines.

In addition, there is the General Inspectorate of Education Administration (*Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale - IGAEN*), the function of which has gradually evolved from monitoring administrative procedures and service management to evaluating the innovations and initiatives of public higher education institutions.

These two Inspectorates conduct studies on specific topics, at the request of the Minister. Unlike the National Evaluation Committee, they are not interested in evaluating the institutions, but can enter into competition with this body for across-the-board evaluations which explore a given topic or discipline throughout all universities.

The evaluation of educational resources, which the watchdog on costs (*Observatoire des coûts*) has recently been engaged in, can lead to rationalisation that brings about savings, but its main effect is to induce those in charge of university to query major discrepancies that can be found between the different institutions. This sometimes leads to the discontinuation of certain courses and to changes in teaching methods and in the quality of the equipment used.

2.3.3. Self-evaluation, the institutional development plan and the contract

The establishment of the contractual policy between the Ministry and the universities in the early 1990s made it necessary for the universities to carry out a review in order to construct their four-year 'project' or 'development plan' which was to be used as the basis of contractual negotiations. For a large number of universities, this provided an opportunity to engage in an initial exercise to evaluate their activities (apart from research, which had already been evaluated), sometimes with the aid of consulting firms, in view of the universities' lack of experience in this area. The Ministry provided the universities with financial assistance to undertake this process.

Since 1990, the Government has conducted a contractual policy, in much the same way as had been done for some time with nationalised companies and some public institutions. It determines by contract the nature and amount of its financial assistance and sets the targets which it assigns them over a four-year period.

2.3.4. Impact on study programmes

With the exception of the study programmes created by the universities leading to 'university diplomas' (*diplômes d'université*) i.e., diplomas issued by a university without the same value as a national diploma, the university system as a whole takes a conservative stance. The primary effect of evaluation procedures involving groups of experts at central level and representing a single discipline is to hinder significant innovations and the creation of multidisciplinary programmes. It is through university diplomas that the dynamic for renewal is set in motion. They allow for a period of relatively free experimentation and afterwards, if they are successful, they serve as models for defining courses leading to national diplomas (*diplômes nationaux*). These specific courses are ideally suited to the field of continuing vocational training. Employers, whether they are in industry or in administration, help to design them and provide an alternative type of evaluation - that of the market.

Although foreign examples of teacher evaluation by students have been copied by a number of graduate engineering colleges (*écoles d'ingénieurs*) or graduate business schools and by private institutions, they are met with scepticism or hostility from teachers, backed by the trade unions on this point.

However, following the *États généraux de l'université* (1995), universities were encouraged to organise a systematic evaluation of their courses. Many universities started the process in 1997.

In spite of all the official talk, France and the French higher education system have barely begun to adopt an 'evaluation culture'. The multiplicity of different bodies and evaluation methods has created conflicting messages concerning the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions, training and people.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

As seen in the introduction, formally speaking, the French higher education system (defined as the full range of post-*baccalauréat* training courses) is binary. On the one hand, there is what is referred to as the 'open' sector, in which the one and only prerequisite (except in exceptional cases) is to hold a *baccalauréat*. On the other hand, there is what is known as the 'closed' sector, in which the *baccalauréat* - though a prerequisite - is not enough in itself and where the supplementary requirements vary a great deal from one institution to another.

Originally, the 'open' sector was that of the university, that is, the faculties created or re-established by Napoleon I. The 'closed' sector was essentially that of the *Grandes écoles*. However, major distinctions developed over the years. Within the universities, there was an increase in the number of branches of study that were to a greater or lesser extent 'closed', and outside the university, short courses of study opened up, calling only for the *baccalauréat*. These distinctions have multiplied over the past 40 years or so and within universities even more so since the early 1980s.

Within the 'open' sector, there is a real problem of effectiveness. In most branches of study, there is a relatively high (apparent) dropout rate and, among those students who get as far as the diploma, the failure and hence retake rate is considered to be high. However, recent provisions have been introduced to improve this situation.

3.1. CHANGES IN ENTRANCE PROCEDURES AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

As regards the universities, the past thirty years or have seen the emergence and development of a 'closed' sector.

As soon as they opened during the latter half of the 1960s, the *IUTs* were authorised to set a specific maximum student intake for each department and to select applicants on the basis of qualifications. The effect of this measure was contrary to expectations. Instead of catering mainly for *baccalauréat*-holders from the technical branches of secondary education, who were seen as the primary targets of this type of short vocational higher education courses, the *IUTs* selected first and foremost holders of the general *baccalauréat* from the most prestigious branches of upper secondary education. As a result, enrolment in a faculty quite frequently became the second choice for the best students.

In medicine, the Law of 16 July 1971 on reforming the study of medicine, introduced a *numerus clausus* for the second year, which led to many students switching courses after two unsuccessful attempts, accompanied by psychological problems for those who were familiarly referred to as the 'successful rejects' (*reçus-collés*). (This means students who had scored higher than the average mark at the end of the first year but who were not considered good enough to be admitted into the second year.)

Thirdly, new, more vocational, branches of study were created, all of which imposed a *numerus clausus*. In the 1970s, the courses in science and technology, management sciences, applied computerised business administration, and biological and medical science all leading to the second cycle university degree (*maîtrise*) were all introduced.

They developed rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s, right up until 1992/93. At 3rd cycle level, the certificates of advanced specialised studies (*diplômes d'études supérieures spécialisées - DESS*), with a much more vocational content than the advanced studies certificates (*DEA*) and usually leading to a doctoral degree, were created in 1973 and met with great success. The 1980s saw the emergence of numerous 'university' diplomas (i.e., diplomas issued by a university without the same value as a national diploma), the best known and most widespread of which are the *Magistères* (a three-year diploma taken after completing two years at university, usually in vocational subjects, combining academic coursework with work experience in industry).

The greatest innovation in national diplomas was the creation, in the early 1990s, of the vocational university institutes (*instituts universitaires professionnalisés - IUPs*). The latter are able to recruit at the level of *baccalauréat* + one year or *baccalauréat* + two years and issue a diploma that is considered comparable to that of engineer (*ingénieur*), called *ingénieur-maître*. The number of *IUPs* grew very swiftly: from a total of 84 *IUPs* in 1992/93, the number had grown to 122 by the following year⁴.

One could add to this list the graduate engineering colleges which had been created within the universities since the 1970s but which enjoy a great deal of autonomy and operate a system of admissions and studies comparable with that of the other *Grandes écoles*. Graduate engineering colleges have developed faster than the other *Grandes écoles* and in 1996/97 they catered for almost one-third of all engineering students (24,850 out of a total of 76,850).

The 'closed' sector within the universities therefore developed rapidly and has diversified since the advent of the *IUTs*. However, their student numbers are still very small, although they are far from negligible. If the *IUTs* and graduate engineering colleges operating within the universities are included, around 230,000 students attended such courses in 1997/98, compared with 1,327,000 in the traditional faculty courses, i.e. a little over 15% of the total number were in the 'closed' university sector and only 5.7% in the new branches of study, excluding the *IUTs* and graduate engineering colleges. In general, the 'closed' sector of higher education ('closed' section within the universities, plus the *STSs*, the other graduate engineering colleges and the various other colleges of higher education) catered for around 840,000 students in 1996/97, representing approximately 40% of the total.

⁴ Goedegebuure et al. 1994, p. 109.

In order to paint a complete picture, mention should be made of practices based solely on circulars stating that any *baccalauréat*-holder is entitled to enrol in any regional education authority university course. This wording has been used in particular by certain Parisian universities to fix a maximum student intake for certain branches of study, with rejected applicants having to accept a place in another university under the Paris education authority. The pioneering role in this domain has been played by the University of Paris IX Dauphine which has been called before the administrative courts numerous times as a result of appeals from rejected students.

In the non-university sector, selective access is the rule. However, such selection varies a great deal between institutions.

In the *STSs*, the presence of a large subsidised private sector (30% of the total) facilitates admission without real selection in most sections of the tertiary sector, with only some sections in the secondary sector being highly selective.

Many of the new colleges of higher education, less prestigious than the old *Grandes écoles*, have emerged over the past 20 years or so. They generally have much less strict selection than the latter. Some recruit immediately following the *baccalauréat*.

Access to higher education is still reserved essentially for the holders of a *baccalauréat*. However, the *baccalauréat* has undergone changes recently, such as the creation in 1986 of a vocational *baccalauréat* (*baccalauréat professionnelle*) and the accreditation of prior learning, which had an impact on the number of students going on to higher education. In addition, admission without a *baccalauréat* is tending to open up further.

3.1.1. Type of *baccalauréat* and admission to university

For many years, the crowning achievement of general upper secondary studies in the *lycées* was the *baccalauréat* examination. However, the development of technical education has led to the creation of a new *baccalauréat* which, in several stages, was considered to be a full equivalent to the general *baccalauréat* (*baccalauréat général*). The technical *baccalauréat* (*baccalauréat technique*), which was created in 1946, became the technological *baccalauréat* (*baccalauréat technologique*) in 1986. The number of examination candidates and holders of the technological *baccalauréat* grew fast. In 1970, 28,600 technical *baccalauréats* were awarded (compared with 138,700 general *baccalauréats*), in 1980 the number had risen to 62,660 (compared with 159,769), and in 1990, to 112,621 (compared with 247,943), i.e. 28.5% of the total number of *baccalauréats* delivered.

The number of students continuing into higher education is lower for holders of the technological *baccalauréat* than for holders of the general *baccalauréat* (virtually all of whom continue into higher education), but the number is growing. From under 60% in 1980, it had risen to well over 80% by 1993.

Finally, a third type of *baccalauréat* emerged in 1986 (Decree no. 86-379 of 11 March 1986), the vocational *baccalauréat* (*baccalauréat professionnelle*). In the minds of its creators, this was a final qualification which was meant to lead directly to a job. However, its *baccalauréat* title, fought for by the trade unions after a bitter dispute, entitled its holders to continue into higher education in the 'open sector', as well as into the *STSs*. However, the number of vocational *baccalauréat* holders continuing into higher education has remained low (16% in 1996, more than half of whom went into an *STS*). For these new *baccalauréat*-holders with a much less thorough general education than that of their colleagues, continuing into long courses of general higher education poses problems. This explains why, on the one

hand, few such students attempt to enrol in a university, and on the other hand, why universities try to dissuade them from doing so.

3.1.2. Access to university by means other than the *baccalauréat*

Access to higher education is possible, in a limited fashion, for people who do not hold a *baccalauréat*. There are a number of different categories of potential candidates:

- Holders of a diploma considered to be equivalent to the *baccalauréat* (Order of 25 August 1969, amended several times since then).
- Holders of a foreign diploma. Within a European framework, following the agreement on the equivalence of qualifications, all secondary school leaving certificates give entitlement to enrol at a French university. There is also a list of French diplomas which automatically confer equivalence.
- Holders of other diplomas can be recognised by an institution as being of the same level as the *baccalauréat*, subject to the decision of its vice-chancellor or principal, on a case-by-case basis and for a specific course only.

Secondly, applicants can be admitted following a special entrance examination. For studies in law, access to the two-year training course leading to the basic legal qualification, *capacité en droit*, does not require the *baccalauréat*. Successful completion of the first year with a minimum grade (the level of which has changed over the years) gives entitlement to enrol in the first year of the certificate of general university studies the *diplôme d'études universitaires générales (DEUG)*, with exemption from the *baccalauréat*.

For all disciplines, a special university entrance examination (*examen spécial d'entrée à l'université - ESEU*) was created by the orders of 1957. This examination, which has been modified on several occasions, was aimed mainly at people of at least 20 years of age who had interrupted their studies for a minimum of two years. It included a study guidance interview and several written and oral examinations in order to assess the applicant's general standard of education.

In 1994, the *ESEU* was replaced (Order of 3 August 1994) by the diploma for admission to university studies (*DAEU*), issued following one year of preparatory studies and open to applicants with the same characteristics as applicants for the special university entrance examination, the *ESEU*.

It differs from the previous system in that the preparatory studies include a rather heavy course load (a minimum of 225 teaching hours) and in the fact that the *DAEU* 'confers the same rights as those attached to the *baccalauréat*' (Art. 6 paragraph 3 of the order). This means it gives entitlement to enrol in any university, not only the one in which the examination was taken.

Thirdly, it is possible for people who are able to prove that they have had work experience related to the planned studies, to enrol in a faculty following an examination of their application (Decree of 23 August 1985).

These different ways of gaining access to university undergraduate studies without a *baccalauréat* today represent only a small proportion of total admissions (5,020 out of 280,217 in 1994-95, i.e. less than 2%), but they are not totally negligible.

Occupational experience can also be accredited for obtaining diplomas (Law of 20 July 1992 and Decree of 27 March 1993). These provisions make it possible to admit young people who have undergone an apprenticeship or have work experience, into state vocational education (vocational *lycées* and post-

baccalauréat branches of study, like the *STs*, *IUTs* and *écoles d'ingénieurs*). They extend the decentralisation laws to the field of training by transferring to the regions the powers retained by the State. They provide for a regional vocational training plan for young people (*plan régional de formation professionnelle des jeunes - PRPF*) to be drawn up in partnership between the State and the regions.

This has opened up post-*baccalauréat* training courses to young apprentices, who are then able to continue with alternating periods of work and study. This type of higher education as part of an apprenticeship has developed very fast: 12,500 students in 1994/1995 and over 31,000 in 1997/98, representing 10% of the total number of apprentices, broken down as follows: 17,555 in the *STs* (56%), 4,437 in the *IUTs* (14%), 3,624 in the *écoles d'ingénieurs* (12%) and the remainder in other training courses, particularly the *DESS* (18%). The Ministry of Education forecasts that 40,000 students will adopt this alternating training route in 2005.

Finally, *baccalauréat*-holders and students exempted from the *baccalauréat* can continue university studies through distance learning, either by enrolling with the National Centre for Distance Learning (*Centre national d'enseignement à distance - CNED*), created in 1939, or with one of the 23 distance learning centres operating in the universities and grouped together in the inter-university federation for distance learning (*Fédération inter-universitaire de l'enseignement à distance - FIED*). In 1995, 190,000 students were enrolled with the *CNED* (21,000 of whom wished to prepare for a university diploma, and the others to prepare for competitive civil service examinations) and 35,000 were enrolled with the *CTU*.

3.2. INTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS: STUDENT DROPOUT AND RETAKE RATES

One generally accepted idea is that the 'open' sector and the 'closed' sector are in opposition: the 'open' sector is said to be characterised by high student dropout and retake rates, whilst the 'closed sector' is characterised by its ability to lead virtually all entrants to a diploma.

This dualistic vision is not really borne out by reality, all the more so since, over the past four years at least, major efforts have been made to reduce the number of students failing the first cycle of long university studies in the traditional branches of study.

Indeed, there would appear to be a high failure rate in certain branches of study, particularly the arts. However, the index generally used to measure the failure rate is the percentage of students who have obtained a particular *DEUG* following two or three years of studies. Measured in this way, the student dropout rate is high. A cohort study conducted in 1989 established the dropout rate to average 41%, with an even higher percentage in arts training and research units (*UFR Littéraires*) in some higher education institutions.

However, three observations can be made to qualify this pessimistic diagnosis to a very great extent.

Firstly, when one looks at it from the standpoint of the student and not of the institution and at the percentage of students who have not obtained a diploma three years after having enrolled, the student dropout rate falls to 15%.

Secondly, the same study estimated the proportion of students enrolled in a preparatory class, and not entering a *Grande école* upon completion of their training, at 38%, which called into question the image of 'study routes to success' (*filières de la réussite*) which are supposed to be the branches of study in the 'closed' sector.

Thirdly, these statistics fail to take into account the vital element of self-selection. In the 'open' sector, no selection is imposed by the institution. However, prior to enrolling, the applicants always assess their relative chances of success and tend to shun branches of study in which they feel they would have no chance of succeeding. This is all the more so if the branch of study is considered to be difficult. Therefore, in branches deemed to be easy, i.e., the arts and social sciences, one is going to find applicants who are least well-armed to succeed and who feel they have very little chance of succeeding elsewhere.

It is therefore in a way natural for those branches with the most lenient selection criteria (imposed or voluntary) to have a lower success rate.

Nonetheless, many students take longer than average to secure a diploma and a not insignificant proportion leave the education system without qualifications. It is therefore desirable to take measures to remedy student dropout and failure rates.

As the introduction of general selection upon entry to university is not on the agenda, due to massive public opposition, there have been attempts in recent years to counter student dropout and failure rates through guidance and better supervision.

Reform of the first and second cycles (1992)

The Order of 26 May 1992 on reform of the first and second cycles provides for introducing measures, the effects of which are already starting to be felt ⁵:

- Strengthening university information and guidance bodies and greater involvement at the level of *lycées*. The type of measure, left to the initiative of the universities, varies in nature (information sessions, career forums in the *lycées*, university open days for *lycée* pupils, etc.), but the practices are improving and becoming more widespread.
- An induction period of several weeks in the July preceding admission to university (*faculté*).
- Greater possibilities of switching courses at the end of the first semester and/or the first year, by organising a module-based *DEUG* (except in Law) and by improving information about possible choices.
- Better information about student assessment procedures.
- Finally and most importantly, a mentorship system which should make it possible to help students in difficulty.

Furthermore, the Fauroux Commission was set up in September 1995 to study the entire education system, and reported its conclusions in June 1998; it issued a number of recommendations concerning the planned improvement of the student induction and study facilities (with special emphasis on improving libraries, opening up less specialised *DEUG*, enhanced supervision by teaching staff, active and continual guidance practices and the creation of a real undergraduate community), all of which are gradually being put into effect, though not in a consistent manner. It proposed developing the academic and management autonomy of institutions and improving the transition between secondary and higher education by means of guidance and mentorship⁶.

Although it is still too early yet to make a general assessment of these reforms, the signs all seem to point to quite a marked improvement in internal effectiveness.

⁵ 1997 general report of the *Inspection Générale de l'Administration de l'Éducation Nationale*.

⁶ 'Pour l'École', 1996.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

The student financial assistance system, originally based chiefly on awarding grants on the basis of social criteria, has diversified a great deal.

Between 1955 and 1981, the greatest innovation was to introduce aid in kind, in the form of subsidies to restaurants and student halls of residence. Also evidenced was the emergence of a variety of grants for the third cycle based on university criteria (*bourses sur critères universitaires*). However, the findings of the Mallet Commission in 1969, concerning student social unrest and the scale of need, had no effect. On the contrary, the percentage of students receiving grants on the basis of social criteria, which was high on 20% in the mid-1960s, had dropped to just over 10% twelve years later, rising only very slightly in 1980 (11.2%).

In the early 1980s, the debate concerning student life was re-launched. The proceedings of the Domenach Commission, appointed in 1982, culminated in the proposals included in the Law on higher education of 26 January 1984 (Savary Act). The principal measures concerned increasing the number and amount of grants (the number of grants based on social criteria rose from 116,800 in 1980 to 253,250 in 1990, now involving 16.4% of students), modernising and unifying grant management bodies and services, and improving student integration into halls of residence.

4.1. STUDENT SOCIAL PLAN OF 1990

In the early 1990s, following a consultation procedure culminating in the National Forum on the Future of Higher Education in June 1990, the Minister of Education announced the Student Social Plan (*Plan social en faveur des étudiants*). This plan included the measures detailed in a series of circulars in 1991:

- setting a student social index (*indice social étudiant*) which would serve as the basis for establishing the grant scale;
- qualitative and quantitative development of the grant system;
- setting up a system of loans to supplement the grant system;
- planning for more student accommodation;
- planning for more places in university restaurants;
- introducing a transport season ticket for students in the Île de France district of Paris;
- setting up a health and welfare fund.

This plan was rapidly implemented in respect of student grants and accommodation, and was not called into question when the political majority changed in 1993.

Only the loan system was a complete failure, even though there were attempts to set it up. The main reason was that it failed to take into account the financial interests of the banking institutions which were responsible for managing it.

Thus, more energetic action by the State was evident, with a real desire to introduce concrete measures and proper planning, stemming from a heightened awareness of these issues at a political level. Moreover, this was confirmed by the subsequent phase, to develop a student welfare benefit (*allocation sociale d'études*), which was meant to unify the wide variety of benefits in existence and took into account the various causes of inequality and different levels of need among students. The student social status project (*projet de statut social de l'étudiant*), discussed during the summit on universities (*états généraux de l'université*), gave rise to a debate in Parliament in June 1996. Despite being widely approved, in particular by the student representatives, it was not implemented after the political majority

changed. The debate on reforming the system was resumed, but looks like being problematic due to the commitments already made to the student unions and to the expected high costs⁷.

4.2. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

There is general agreement that a far-reaching reform is required in the short term. Indeed, the characteristics of the current system make it untenable. It is possible to pinpoint two main features that are causing malfunctions and are potentially explosive.

4.2.1. Complexity of the system

The system has become increasingly complex. Its original philosophy has never been challenged, even though certain new types of aid take a different approach or have been diverted away from their initial objective.

The basic philosophy is of a public welfare benefit to offset inequalities, by supplementing the funding which parents are meant to provide to their children, even those over the age of majority, 'for as long as the latter are unable to provide for their own needs' (Art. 203 of the civil code and consistent jurisprudence of France's highest court of civil and criminal appeal, *la Cour de Cassation*). The primary responsibility for financing student activities therefore falls to the parents and, in accordance with this philosophy, government assistance should only serve as a supplement to parental support, in cases where the family's means prove insufficient.

Grants based on social criteria, the central, and for many years, virtually the only element in the student grant system, should therefore, firstly, have risen in number and been revised upwards in line with increases in the cost of living and, secondly, include a growing number of students as higher education gradually becomes more democratised. However, the figures show that this has not always been the case. In spite of all this, since 1980, there have been conspicuous, if irregular, efforts especially between 1983 and 1990 and then again between 1993 and 1996. However, 1997 marked a slight swing in the opposite direction, with the proportion of total students receiving assistance based on social criteria tending to shrink.

Furthermore, several types of assistance that had emerged or been developed over the past twenty years or so have not followed the same philosophy. These include, first and foremost, student support based on academic criteria awarded primarily to third cycle students. In spite of this, where academic performance is equal, priority is accorded to students from a modest background. Certain types of aid in kind, such as subsidies to university restaurants or to Student Social Security, are offered to all students indiscriminately. Finally, tax relief for parents of students favour the most affluent families, despite adjustments such as imposing an upper income limit, so much so that it has been demonstrated that the total amount of assistance for a family with three children is greater if the parents earn more than FRF 400,000 per year (taxable earnings) than if they earn less than FRF 59,800. (This is even higher for families who earn more than FRF 600,000). The individual accommodation allowances (*aides au logement indépendant*), which were initially designed to help the poorest students to secure accommodation, serve mainly to help well-off students gain independence from their parents.

Such complexity leads to high administrative costs, rivalry and major malfunctions. Despite efforts in this direction, there is still a long way to go towards a one-stop shop and, according to a survey by the General Inspectorate, the processing of grant applications is 'needlessly complex and leads to unequal treatment between applicants due to differences in examining applications'⁸.

⁷ See the feature article devoted to this subject in the *Revue de l'Université*, 1996, no. 8, pp.105-135.

⁸ Bousquet and Wahl, 1997.

4.2.2. High cost of the system

The system has become increasingly expensive, without properly rectifying the inequalities.

For the past twenty years or so, a more than fourfold increase in the aid budget in real terms has been evidenced, so much so that in 1996 it represented more than 50% of the Ministry of Education's higher education budget. It should be noted that, for the most part, this drift has been recent (a two-and-a-half-fold rise between 1988 and 1995) and that the increase is due mainly to housing assistance and a steep rise in tax relief for families, two types of aid which are tending to prompt a redistribution in order to counter the current trend.

It is therefore right to conclude, with some justification, that the current system of student grants is over-complex, incoherent, inefficient and inequitable. Government support does not allow the poorest students to provide for their own needs. A far-reaching reform is urgently required. In July 1998, the present Minister, C. Allègre, presented a new Student Social Plan which, for the most part, will enter into effect at the start of the 1999 academic year. This plan introduces considerable improvements into the student support system. It is meant to be comprehensive and, together with a reform of grants, includes measures to improve student life. Grants based on social criteria were significantly increased at the start of the new 1998 academic year (from 3% to 6%, depending on the level). From now on, they will be granted for a full cycle of studies and no longer on a year-by-year basis; students who fail will have the possibility of retaining their grant for one year ('joker year'), if they receive approval from their educational supervisors. A zero-payment grant has been created which entails no payment to the beneficiary student but exempts them, like all grant-holders, from paying enrolment fees and social security contributions. The number of special individual allowances is increasing and merit scholarships of a higher amount have been created for students from a modest background who have obtained top marks in the *baccalauréat*. A discount travel card has been created for students in the Paris region.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING

The structure of higher education has altered considerably over recent years.

With the exception of students of medicine, the percentage of whom has fallen markedly due to a more restricted intake, vocational branches of study have all seen their student numbers increase faster than in the general branches. Over the period 1987-1997, the number of students in higher education as a whole grew at an annual rate of 4%, just like the number of students in the universities.

The opening up of the new *IUTs* and new branches in the *IUTs* has led to a 6% growth rate in such branches of study, rising by the same percentage as university colleges of engineering (*écoles universitaires d'ingénieurs*) which have been created within universities.

The number of students enrolled in the new vocational branches of study which opened up within the traditional faculties has grown by 11% per year.

Today, vocational branches of study therefore represent nearly one quarter of all students enrolled in university (23.3%). There is thus now no longer a dichotomy between a sector where only the traditional academic disciplines are taught and a sector where teaching is purely vocational.

One important sector - that of teacher training - is worthy of special note. Traditionally, universities were not involved in the vocational training of school teachers.

The *Écoles normales d'instituteurs* are training colleges for aspiring primary school teachers and, up until 1980, had no links with the universities. Secondary school teachers received vocational training in regional teaching centres (*centres pédagogiques régionaux*) after passing competitive recruitment examinations: the certificate of professional competence in secondary level teaching (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle à l'enseignement secondaire - CAPES*); the certificate of professional competence for teaching technical education (*certificat d'aptitude professionnelle à l'enseignement technique - CAPET*); and the national competition for civil servant secondary school teachers (*agrégation*) for candidates holding a *maîtrise*. The universities confined themselves to preparing students for competitive recruitment examinations based purely on academic selection criteria.

The Blueprint Act on Education of 10 July 1989 profoundly modified this system by creating university teacher training institutes (*IUFMs*), public administrative institutions which were autonomous but had to be attached to one or more universities.

The objective was, on the one hand, to provide general and vocational training to all school teachers, and on the other hand, to 'forge closer links between teacher training and universities'⁹.

The subsequent development of legal provisions favoured the involvement of the universities, although this has not yet gained universal acceptance. Prior to 1980, the State had substantial supervisory powers over university programmes. The proposals of the universities were restricted by a national regulation, stipulating the key elements in the structure of study programmes. It set the statutory maximum number of teaching hours per year, the compulsory subjects for a given course, and the basic rules governing evaluation and examinations. For each course or group of courses, these mandatory rules were represented by what were called national 'models' (*maquettes*). Since then, successive decisions have been adopted to loosen such supervision.

The reforms implemented since 1980 have consisted mainly of giving greater autonomy to universities in developing new branches of study and organising programmes. However, the attachment of all - students, teachers, employers and the Government, alike - to national diplomas and to the necessarily rigid and uniform curriculum related to them considerably limits the ability of the universities to continually adapt their methods and the content of their studies.

Admittedly, 'the monopoly over the conferring of university degrees and qualifications' was left to the State in the Savary Act of 1984 and has not been challenged. However, since 1989, the directives have been fewer and less specific, which gives universities much more freedom of action and initiative.

In 1993 and 1994, these 'models' of all first and second cycle general courses leading to national diplomas were extensively revised and the number of diplomas and courses drastically reduced. The courses leading to the *DEUG* were the subject of a far-reaching reform, called 'modernisation of the initial cycles'. The reorganisation covers the first and second cycles of the general branches of study. It therefore does not concern the medical sector and engineering courses. This modernisation was introduced progressively, as and when the universities needed to request their authorisation to issue the corresponding national diplomas.

⁹ Bancel, 1990.

The main aim of this modernisation is to modify the organisation of studies in such a way as to reduce the number of students failing the initial years of general studies in French universities. It consists of introducing modular courses and making it easier for students to switch courses early.

It is noted that universities have used this room for manoeuvre to gain national recognition for new branches of study or new specialisations within traditional branches of study. The difference compared with the previous system is, firstly, that the initiative for the creation or adjustment of a branch of study can now come from the institutions themselves and secondly, the latter are able to confer with the authorities and the economic players in their region, to propose courses that better match local requirements. It is also evident that there are greater possibilities for streamlining programmes, even though the general parameters are still imposed by the central administration. Such changes have stemmed, firstly, from the realisation that the rigorous centralised regulation of an area as complex as higher education had resulted in paralysis and secondly, from a desire on the part of certain universities and of the regions, to take their own decisions in this area.

5.2. TEACHING AND EVALUATION

5.2.1. Teaching methods

Traditionally, university education in France has taken the form of regular lectures by professors, sometimes attended by vast numbers of students. There is no audience participation. All French universities have a host of large-capacity lecture halls (the record being a lecture hall in Paris to seat 2,500). This method has largely survived in law and the arts and explains the low cost of undergraduate students in these disciplines.

The need for participation and coaching has led to the introduction, in these sectors, of tutorial instruction in smaller groups (guided study, practical assignments), but it is not unusual for them to cater for groups of 45 students or more. In the scientific disciplines, practical instruction takes place in smaller groups of around 20 students.

In the second and third cycles, where numbers are much smaller than in the first cycle, the distinction makes less sense, although it does exist due to the varying prestige and importance accorded to the different types of teaching. It is mainly professors who give lectures, whereas the other categories of teacher are chiefly in charge of guided and practical instruction.

In the vocational courses, the *numerus clausus* makes it possible to limit group sizes, and the number of students can drop as low as 12 for a *DESS*, for example. In such a case, where a large proportion of the students are executives or engineers from industry, the courses are much less formal in character.

In technological courses, supervising individual student assignments and monitoring their compulsory work placements is a sensitive issue, especially when the time devoted to such activities is not recognised as teaching time.

In order to enhance the supervision of undergraduate students, help them to settle in and guide them, use has been made in recent years of more advanced students, called mentors (*tuteurs*). Such mentoring is laid down in official provisions and universities have often asked for contract financing for this activity. Initial assessments of these experiments have proved very positive.

5.2.2. New technologies

As a general rule, teachers use few new teaching technologies (although they do use them when presenting their academic work). The training given to teaching assistants (*moniteurs*) in higher education includes familiarisation with such techniques and this comes through in their teaching when they are recruited.

One obstacle to the use of new technologies in teaching is the narrow definition given to this activity in determining teachers' service obligations (teaching in the presence of students). Teaching activities which involve a significant investment in terms of time and equipment do not tend to be taken into account.

Computing and new information and communication technologies are gradually creeping into teaching. The reforms in the 1992/93 programmes provided for compulsory computing courses for all undergraduate students. In the 1980s, a plan entitled 'computing for all' made it possible to equip all universities with a minimum number of computers for teaching purposes. Libraries were computerised and language laboratories were often equipped with computers for self-instruction in foreign languages.

Once again, it is in the better-equipped and better-supervised technological branches of study that the greatest advances have been made with students learning about new working and communication tools.

5.2.3. Assessment methods

The traditional organisation of study courses into years is gradually giving way to modular teaching. In the arts disciplines, dividing courses up into small units, which fits in well with the individualism of teachers, has led to knowledge and assessment being parcelled out. Students were able to obtain diplomas by building up, over a long period, distinct elements which they themselves chose quite freely, without any overall assessment of the students' abilities being made. Other disciplinary sectors, like law, had maintained a rather rigid form of organisation into years, which was not very conducive to allowing students who were failing to switch courses. The reform of 1992/93 imposed an intermediary solution, with 3 to 6 modules per year, grouping together a coherent set of courses. It is these modules, and no longer the teaching units that make them up, which students must acquire and accumulate in order to obtain their diplomas.

5.2.4. Work placements and vocational training

Work placements, which initially existed only in the technological branches of study, are now requested by most students to allow them to familiarise themselves with the world of work and to increase their chances of finding a job upon completion of their studies. Indeed, it has emerged that the work placement, in particular the end-of-studies work placement, was one of the means most frequently used by employers to try out and select their future employees.

However, students expect this work placement to form part of their teaching received, that is, it should be educational and be supervised by teachers. This demand, as well as a certain amount of suspicion about employers who might wish to use work placements to procure free labour, explains the reasons behind the protests raised in 1996 against the plan to create a vocational induction certificate (*certificat d'initiation professionnelle - CIP*) to accredit work placements for all students. The plan was withdrawn.

5.2.5. Teacher training

The abolition of the *doctorat d'état* and the creation of the new doctoral degree in 1984 modified the terms of access into the career of higher education teacher. Students completing their thesis in three or four years following the *DEA* are able to sit the competitive examination for lecturer (*maître de conférence*). In order to be admitted as a professor, it is then necessary to secure an authorisation to direct research (*habilitation à diriger les recherches - HDR*) prior to sitting a local or national competitive examination (for the disciplines of law, economics and business administration).

In order to train new teachers in their duties, initial higher education teacher training (*monitorat d'initiation à l'enseignement supérieur*) and centres for such training (*centres d'initiation à l'enseignement supérieur*) were created in 1989. Teaching assistants are recruited for a period of up to three years from among students preparing a thesis and who benefit from a research grant. They provide around two hours of teaching per week under the supervision of a teacher/tutor and undergo ten days of training per year. After their thesis, and whilst awaiting recruitment to a lecturer's post, they may be employed as temporary teaching and research assistants (*attachés temporaires d'enseignement et de recherche - ATER*).

Traditionally, however, higher education teachers consider research-based training to be sufficient vocational training, feeling there is no need for further training. Since their teaching activities are not assessed, they cannot, with some exceptions, serve as a basis for establishing varying levels of career development and thus provide an incentive for further training. Improving teaching skills is considered to be a personal matter for teachers themselves. The few examples of vocational training financed by universities or by the Ministry are related more to research or administrative activities (foreign languages, handling of software or scientific equipment).

The importance attached to research activities in teacher assessment, together with national career management, limit any incentives which the institutions might have to encourage the development of programmes and teaching methods.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

The internationalisation of higher education, which was widespread among universities at their creation in the Middle Ages, had gradually disappeared in French universities. However, it has now returned with a vengeance in the wake of the success of European exchange programmes for students and teachers.

6.1. CATERING FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS

Up until the 1970s, the great majority of foreign students in France came from the former French colonies in sub-Saharan and Northern Africa. In 1985/86, for example, there were more Moroccan students in France (25,800) than in the universities of Morocco. African students were able to enter the first year of the general branches of university study provided that, in their own country, they had obtained a *baccalauréat* or upper secondary school leaving certificate considered to be equivalent to the French *baccalauréat*.

The policy implemented in the 1980s consisted of putting a brake on the intake of such students at the beginning of a degree course and of encouraging them to enter in the second or third cycles. In order to be allowed to enrol in a French university, it was no longer sufficient for a student to prove that they had a *baccalauréat* and possessed sufficient financial means. They also had to prove that the studies that they wished to undertake did not exist in their country of origin. Since most of the general

initial cycles of French-speaking African universities were much like France's initial cycles, this had the effect of deferring the admission of such students to the second cycle.

The total number of foreign students in universities stabilised at around 130,000 from 1985 onwards (which led to a drop in their relative percentage of the overall student population, from 14% in 1985 to 9% in 1995). By that year, Africa was supplying more than half of the contingent, with nearly 80,000 students, 45,000 of whom were from North Africa, spread across all disciplines. European students, for their part, numbered around 20,000, and were enrolled mainly in the arts branches of study.

At the same time, for admission during the course of studies, the former official methods of equivalence were abolished and it was left up to the universities themselves to decide on what equivalence to grant foreign students enrolling for a *licence* (first level university degree), *maîtrise* (second level university degree) or for the 3rd cycle.

Further factors modified the composition of the foreign student population, with the share of third-world students dropping in favour of students from European countries. In 1995, 36,000 of the total of 130,000 foreign students were European, and the number of African students fell by 67,000 (the Moroccan contingent had dropped to only 17,000). European students, who previously had always been enrolled mainly in the arts, were spread more evenly over the various disciplines. In the arts, they more often tend to enrol in the first cycle, whereas for the other disciplines students more often enter the second cycle, except in the case of medicine and science, where they enter at 3rd cycle level.

6.2. DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN EXCHANGES

Such a trend can be explained by the considerable success of the European university exchange programmes, starting at the end of the 1980s. Admittedly, the target of 10% of students visiting another country for a period of a semester at least has never been achieved. At the very most, 6% of French students have attended a foreign university. At the start, such exchanges did not affect students in all disciplines equally. Foreign language students were the first to benefit from exchanges under the inter-university cooperation programmes (ICPs) of the EU Erasmus and Lingua programmes. However, business administration and engineering courses were rapidly able to integrate exchanges into their study programmes, and so make study visits abroad more attractive. The funding provided by the European Commission and by the French Government tailed off as the programmes became more successful. The territorial authorities, and in particular the regions, were called upon to make up this funding in order to enable students to meet the extra cost of studying abroad.

The replacement of the Erasmus programmes by a broader programme, Socrates, has brought about a change in the rules, laying down the principle that national governments must gradually take over Community funding. The reduction in funding for promoting student mobility is a matter of concern for those in charge of international exchanges.

6.3. FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Although foreign language courses exist in all branches of study, few courses are taught in a foreign language in the universities (except for students specialising in foreign language and literature).

In most universities, there are intensive language courses for students taking part in exchanges under the Erasmus/Socrates programmes. Some of the most prestigious colleges of business administration (INSEAD for example) offer foreign language courses (mainly English).

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The French higher education system has undergone far-reaching changes since the mid-1960s, especially in the past ten years or so. Traditional university branches of study and their methods of administering and running them, which for a long time had exerted a remarkable inertia against reforms, have in their turn been affected. However, the system is a long way from having regained a lasting balance. Student numbers appear to be levelling off due to demographic factors and because the rise in the numbers of students continuing into higher education is probably about to come to an end. However, the dismantling of the binary system is not yet over, because the traditional branches of study are expected to be subject to greater controls and made more vocational in character. Although the autonomy of higher education institutions has increased sharply, the central administration is still seeking to maintain or regain its traditional prerogatives. Financing has become less centralised, but the issue of student participation in the cost of studies has not yet been addressed. Even if there were full institutional autonomy in France, major reforms would be required in both the short and medium term.

The most serious problem concerns the social status of students. The current support system had become very costly, whilst being acknowledged as largely inefficient and inequitable. The measures announced in 1998 made the support system even more complex instead of simplifying it. The financial burden on the nation continues to grow, since the plan provides only for new measures, without taking away anything that already exists. This system does not appear to be viable therefore.

Making university studies more vocational in nature is another avenue which should be pursued. However, the measures being advocated (for example, in the Fauroux report) call for organisational and financial means. Redeployment seems possible but it will need to be organised, and courage will be required to implement it. This will not be enough.

Universities now have a real measure of autonomy, but their relationship with the central administration and with the territorial authorities is still ambiguous and, as regards the former, full of contradictions. The path towards fuller and more coherent autonomy will require new measures.

The matter of national diplomas, in particular, cannot be ignored. Indeed, regulatory provisions now affirm the principle that all courses organised on an official basis in accordance with a detailed structure and content for all of the country's higher education institutions, should lead to 'national diplomas', that is, diplomas with the same legal value and allowing access to public sector jobs. Students and trade unions are very attached to this notion. Universities are only able to create new courses leading to university diplomas, which are less prized by students, are not recognised by the State or in collective bargaining agreements, and are not financed by the Ministry. The current trend towards greater autonomy for universities should therefore culminate, if not in the abolition of such national diplomas, at least in a greater number of dispensations and authorisations to enable a specific university to issue a new national diploma.

Education funding will be subject to less upward pressure, because student numbers are levelling out. However, the volume of funding is still below the European average and the measures cited above will require new resources. A balance has not yet been struck between the diverse sources of funding, especially in the new 'liberal' atmosphere. Public funding is still too centralised, and private funding is not sufficient. However, it will be difficult to get backing for such desirable reforms from the general public or from pressure groups inside the system.

Finally, the problem of the duality between universities and *Grandes écoles* is diminishing greatly in practice, and this trend should one day be enshrined in legislation.

However, France is also part of the European Union.

Even if the principle of subsidiarity apparently leaves each government plenty of autonomy, the principle of the free movement of persons will call for greater efforts with respect to the equivalence of diplomas and, inevitably, to the harmonisation of curricula. Even though no official report has yet been published, the work of the Committee presided over by J. Attali seems to point strongly in that direction.

Likewise, it will be considered increasingly unacceptable to leave funding rules to evolve in each country in line with economic vagaries. Harmonisation will doubtless prove necessary, in particular to comply with the principle of equal treatment for students, whatever their nationality.

New changes, more or less far-reaching, may therefore be expected in French higher education in the early 21st century.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>CNE</i>	<i>Comité national d'évaluation</i> (National Evaluation Committee)
<i>CNED</i>	<i>Centre national d'enseignement à distance</i> (National Centre for Distance Learning)
<i>EPSCP</i>	<i>Établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel</i> (Public Scientific, Cultural and Professional Institutions)
<i>DAEU</i>	<i>Diplôme d'accès aux études universitaires</i> (diploma for admission to university studies)
<i>DEA</i>	<i>Diplôme d'études approfondies</i> (third cycle level advanced studies certificate)
<i>DESS</i>	<i>Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées</i> (third cycle level certificates of advanced specialised studies)
<i>DEUG</i>	<i>Diplôme d'études universitaires générales</i> (first cycle level general university studies)
<i>ESEU</i>	<i>Examen spécial d'entrée à l'université</i> (special university entrance examination)
<i>IUFM</i>	<i>Institut universitaire de formation des maîtres</i> (university teacher training institutes)
<i>IUT</i>	<i>Institut universitaire de technologie</i> (university technology institutes)
<i>San ReMo</i>	<i>Système analytique de répartition des moyens</i> (Analytical System for Allocating Resources)
<i>STS</i>	<i>Section de techniciens supérieurs</i> (higher technical section)
<i>UER</i>	<i>Unité d'enseignement et de recherche</i> (education and research unit)

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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
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IRELAND

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IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

The history of Irish higher education is marked by a very early christianisation of the country (which was never a pre-Christian Roman colony) and by the domination of the English who ruled the whole island from 1600. Such ancient history is referred to, because according to Clancy (1993), until recently the religious question had become a major impediment to the development of higher education in Ireland. Clancy (1993) suggests that Trinity College Dublin (TCD), for example, was designed to encourage English culture in Ireland and to promote the Protestant religion rather than the Catholicism of the vast majority of the people. Ireland has maintained tight links with Rome and the Roman Catholic religion and culture rather than with the northern European nation states. Many generations of Catholic clergymen received higher education in Rome's pontifical colleges, in particular during the period of English rule, while a complex blending of geo-political and cultural factors inhibited industrial development in Ireland. It has, until recently, remained behind many other western countries in this respect, an exception among the northern European regions.

Some rapid and important changes began after Ireland joined the European Community in 1973, partly for internal reasons but partly due to the European funds targeted at the less developed areas of the European Union. The Irish Government has received support for major capital development initiatives from the European Structural Funds and stressed the importance of higher education in the Programme for Economic and Social Progress adopted in 1991.

Since 1970, higher education in Ireland has been based on a binary system. In addition to the 7 universities providing academic courses (4 of which are part of a federal system under the National University of Ireland), there are now 14 institutes of technology, including the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), 7 colleges of education (teacher training) and other national institutions including the National College of Art and Design, the College of Ireland, and the Shannon College of Hotel Management. There are also private colleges offering courses in business and accountancy and a number of other private institutions offering education in specific disciplines. The newly established Tipperary Rural and Business Development Institute offers a variety of courses, a number of which are at third level. The Pontifical University of Maynooth (Catholic and theological) is also an old institution of higher education founded in 1898. It is not part of the state-funded system.

The developments in higher education since the early 1970s are an important sign of the changes occurring in Irish society in the last thirty years. From 1965 to 1995, the number of students in higher education grew by more than 600% as evidenced by the Department of Education's Annual Statistical Reports. Clancy (1993) predicted that the increase in demand for places in higher education is likely to continue until the end of this decade and beyond. By 1999, however, the relevant age cohort will begin to decline, reflecting the steep drop in the birth rate during the 1980s. This will not necessarily lead to a drop in student numbers in the near future however, since the Government, in its approval in principle of the recommendations in the *Report of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education*, projected continuing increases in enrolment until 2006/7.

The higher education or third level sector comprises the 7 universities, the 14 institutes of technology, the 7 teacher training colleges and a number of national institutions, as well as some non-state aided private education colleges.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

The National University of Ireland was set up in 1909 by the Irish Universities Act in 1908. Previous to that, there had been 3 Queens Colleges, one in Cork, one in Galway and another in Belfast, as established under the Queen's College Act in 1845. In 1851, the Catholic University of Ireland, modelled on Louvain, was founded by the Irish hierarchy. The University Education (Ireland) Act 1879 provided for the formation of the Royal University of Ireland and the dissolution of the Queen's University within two years of the date of the charter of the Royal University. The 1879 legislation was also enacted to improve the position of Catholic University students to whom recognised university degrees had not hitherto been available. The Catholic University underwent organisational change at this time. The medical school continued as part of the Catholic University of Ireland while the other faculties became University College Dublin (UCD), the administration of which was given to the Jesuit fathers in 1883.

The Irish Universities Act in 1909 dissolved the Royal University and established two new universities, the National University of Ireland (NUI) and Queens University Belfast (QUB). The constituent colleges of the NUI were UCD and the Queens Colleges in Cork and Galway, which were renamed as University College Cork (UCC) and University College Galway (UCG). In 1910, St. Patrick's College Maynooth (SPM) also became a recognised college of the National University. The recent Universities Act (1997) has amended the 1909 Act in such a way that the UCD, UCC, UCG and SPM are now described as constituent universities of the NUI. These colleges have changed their names accordingly, now being known as: University College Dublin-National University of Ireland, Dublin; University College Cork-National University of Ireland, Cork; National University of Ireland, Galway; and National University of Ireland, Maynooth. The National University of Ireland is an umbrella body providing its constituent universities with a forum for coordinating their activities and overseeing their effectiveness. The constituent universities enjoy a large degree of autonomy.

Among the most important reforms of higher education was the development of the non-university sector in the 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, the non-university sector was relatively small in size and consisted mainly of teacher training colleges (Clancy, 1993). The beginning of the process of development of the non-university sector, which remained under the direct control of the Government for many years, was accompanied by a new policy for university autonomy. In 1972, a Higher Education Authority (HEA), intended to have jurisdiction over higher education as a whole, was established on a statutory basis. The HEA arose out of a recommendation of the *Report of the Commission on Higher Education* in 1967 and was set up on an ad hoc basis in 1968, being given statutory powers in the Education Authority Act of 1971. The responsibilities of the HEA were to further the development of higher education and to assist in the coordination of state investment in higher education and the preparation of proposals for such investment. However, although it was given advisory and planning responsibility for the whole of higher education, its executive functions related only to the university sector. For over 25 years the HEA has been the main funding agency for universities and designated institutions. The HEA also advises the Minister on the need or otherwise for the establishment of new institutions of higher education, on the nature and form of these institutions and on the legislative measures required in relation to their establishment. It is also required to maintain a continuous review of the demand and need for higher education. The White Paper *Charting our Education Future* of 1995 proposed the extension of the HEA's executive remit to all higher education institutions.

The *Report of the Commission on Higher Education* also emphasised the unique mission and distinct characteristics of the technological education sector in the following terms:

'It would seem best that the responsibility for technological education and training should be linked with the general responsibility for the development and promotion of technology in the country. This wider responsibility must therefore rest elsewhere than in the university... It does not follow that the university

has no role to play in technological training. The university will retain its basic function of preparing the potential technologist in the relevant fundamental and applied sciences.'

The area of technological training was formerly looked after by the vocational education colleges (VECs), which had strong links with the second level sector. The first regional technical colleges (RTCs) opened in 1970, initially under the auspices of the VECs. It was not until legislation in 1992 that RTCs got a large degree of institutional autonomy. In the 1970s, new RTCs were established. According to Clancy (1993), their main long-term function is to educate students for a broad spectrum of occupations in trade and industry by providing two-year sub-degree-level courses aimed at filling the gaps in the industrial manpower structure.

The initial role of the RTCs was to be the provision of post-compulsory technical education, through the provision of courses for the apprenticeship training and technician training. Since the foundation of the RTCs/DIT the situation has evolved to a great extent and the courses run in the colleges are now mainly certificate, diploma and a growing number of degree courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The growth of the non-university sector in Ireland entailed discussion and decisions on criteria for and validation of all the craft certificates, national certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded by the non-university institutions. A National Council of Educational Awards (1979 NCEA Act) was therefore established on an *ad hoc* basis in 1972 and on a statutory basis in 1979. This body is responsible for the promotion, coordination and development of non-university higher education, for approving and recognising courses, and for awarding national degrees, diplomas and certificates to students who have successfully completed approved courses.

Commencing May 1997 and completed in January 1998, all RTCs were designated 'institutes of technology'. The objective in this regard is to develop a framework for the structured development of institutions in the technological sector to address changing local and national demands, while ensuring the maintenance of the complementary systems of university and technological education. The diversity of institutions and the separate missions of the two broad sectors will be maintained so as to ensure maximum flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of students and to the wide variety of social and economic requirements.

The DIT was established informally by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee in 1978 to bring greater coordination to the work of its 6 third-level colleges. The DIT was given a statutory basis in 1993 and has progressed in building a single integrated institution. A ministerial order was signed in May 1997 assigning the DIT the function of conferring degrees, postgraduate degrees and honorary awards from September 1998. Under a provision in the Universities Act 1997, the Government agreed to the appointment of a body to advise the HEA on whether the DIT should be given the status of university.

The review group recognised the unique role which the DIT plays in higher education in Ireland but advised against immediate university status for the DIT. The group set a number of conditions and challenges and, in its advice to Government, the HEA has called for a further statutory review.

In the 1970s, another type of non-university institution was created: the National Institute of Higher Education (NIHE), of which there were two. These were intended to combine vocational degree courses with extensive lower level certificate and diploma courses. The NIHEs had both regional and national status and in the following years began offering courses at a higher level, including postgraduate courses and doctoral degrees. According to Clancy (1993) this trend was a result of 'academic drift' which drove these institutes, originally aimed at higher vocational and technical training, away from providing for the vocational needs of society. They simultaneously grew in prestige in the eyes of students and their families.

In 1989, the Government decided to award university status to the two NIHEs and they became the University of Limerick and Dublin City University. Subsequently, the adjacent colleges of education, Mary Immaculate College of Education, Limerick and St Patrick's College, Dublin, were linked by agreement to the two new universities. The creation of these two new universities followed the recommendations of an international study group, which expressed the view that the standards of scholarship at the NIHEs were as high as those of the universities (Clancy, 1993).

The National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) was launched on an *ad hoc* basis in 1991 for the certification and assessment of vocational training programmes provided in the education sector outside the third level system. The awards concerned are designed to provide access to employment and progression to further education and training.

In 1992, the Irish Government produced one of the most important strategic documents of recent times on education in general and higher education in particular. The 1992 Irish Green Paper on Education for a Changing World proposed new admission procedures, modularisation of curricula, credit accumulation and transfer, raised the issue of introducing quality assurance at post-secondary level (Council of Europe, 1992), and proposed that under the aegis of the HEA, there should be a single funding body for higher education (Neave, 1994). The Government also suggested the development of a unified computerised information system for the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) and the NCVA. However, this system is still not fully implemented.

Following the discussion on the Green Paper, a National Education Convention was held in October 1993 to facilitate an open and democratic consultation on educational issues. It led to another step forward in the reform process, the long-awaited White Paper on Education, *Charting our Education Future*, published by the Minister of Education in 1995 (Morrissey, 1996). The White Paper represented a new approach to education by including all educational provision within continuing education, from school to higher education, and by proposing a legal framework for the many links that had been and are being developed in Irish society between the community, industry and education. The main proposals of the White Paper in relation to higher education and which have subsequently been incorporated into legislation (Universities Act 1997) include policies in relation to accountability (financial and academic), governance and autonomy, transparency, quality assurance, equality and funding of institutions.

The policy of development of RTCs continued into the 1990s with the creation of the RTC in Tallaght, in September 1992 and the re-structuring of RTCs with the Regional Technical Colleges Act of 1992. This act gave legislative statutory recognition to the development and expanding role of the RTCs and the DIT since their initial establishment. Blanchardstown Institute of Technology admitted its first students in October 1999.

The higher education sector has made an important contribution to the overall developments which have taken place in Irish society since the 1960s. Four key initiatives, the introduction of the Higher Education Grants Scheme in 1968, the Vocational Education Scholarship Scheme in 1972, the European Social Fund Training Grants Scheme in the mid 1970s and the abolition of student fees in 1995/96 mark significant policy decisions on the provision of financial assistance for students in higher education. In the 1995 budget, the Government abolished undergraduate tuition fees in publicly funded third-level institutions so that, in the academic year 1995/96, undergraduate students paid half fees and from 1996/97 they do not have to pay any tuition fees.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

The Department of Education and Science is the government department with overall responsibility for the administration of higher education, and the various authorities are instruments and channels for

governmental policy and funding. This does not mean, however, that it is the State which confers legal validity on higher education degrees, as in many countries in continental Europe. During the last few years in particular, the function of the validating authorities has been to ensure quality control of standards and output, rather than imposing uniformity of curricula, courses and bureaucratic procedures.

As said before, the trend towards relative autonomy for higher education institutions in Ireland began in the early 1970s, when overall responsibility for planning and control was given to the HEA and it continued in the early 1980s when the right to validate higher education awards outside the universities was devolved to the NCEA. The HEA is a statutory body under the aegis of the Minister for Education and Science. In summary, its functions are as follows:

- To further the development of higher education.
- To maintain a continuous review of the demand and need for higher education.
- To assist in the coordination of state investment in higher education and make proposals for such investment.
- To review proposals from universities for capital and recurrent funding.
- To allocate grants approved by the Government to these institutions.
- To encourage an appreciation of the value of higher education and research.
- To advise the Minister on the need for new higher education institutions, on the nature and form of such institutions and on legislative matters related to higher education institutions.
- To promote the attainment of equality of opportunity in higher education and the democratisation of its structures.

Under the Higher Education Authority Act (1971), the HEA has the statutory functions of coordinating state investment in higher education by allocating resources to the universities and of advising the Minister on general policy issues arising in the area of higher education. It therefore has developmental and funding roles. While the funding role is provided for in some detail in the 1971 Act, the developmental and support functions are expressed in a more general way.

The Universities Act 1997 redresses the balance by setting out a number of areas where the HEA and the universities may work together in the interest of the university sector. The functions conferred on the HEA in the Universities Act may be considered under three categories: advisory functions, reporting and review functions and functions relating to consistency in the format of annual reports and accounts.

The normal management structure in higher education institutions is headed by a governing body which has overall responsibility for control and management and a president or director who reports to the governing body.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Most third level education in Ireland is provided in institutions which are substantially supported by the State. Until recently, both universities, technological colleges and most teacher training colleges received between 60% and 70% of their income from the Department of Education and Science with another 30% coming from student fees, which have been abolished from the academic year 1996/97. A short-term increase in State funding is a likely consequence of this reform. Additional funding is allocated to these institutions to make up for the loss of student fees.

Following membership of the EEC in 1973, the Department of Education applied for aid from the European Structural Funds for a number of small-scale projects providing vocational training in non-

university third-level colleges. The aim of such interventions was to enhance the employment prospects of participants whose skills were inadequate for the labour market, while supporting the supply of middle level technician skills for the labour market. The level of support was increased gradually from IEP 569,000 of aid in 1973, with a large-scale increase to just under IEP 9m in 1982/83. During the mid-1980s, with rapidly rising unemployment levels, support from EU Structural Funds increased dramatically. The 1989-93 Community Support Framework moved from a project-based approach to one which supported national strategic programmes for providing training in key areas of growth and for combating deficiencies in areas where weaknesses in industrial performance had been identified. At present, as part of the Community Support Framework 1994-99, some IEP 65m annually is received in European Social Fund aid towards third-level vocational education and training programmes, and an estimated IEP 25m in aid for infrastructure investment from the European Regional Development Fund. EU investment has played a critical role in meeting the rapidly increasing demand for third-level places, in providing a high quality workforce to meet skills needs, and in forging enhanced quality and research and development capacity within colleges to support industry needs.

Private higher education institutions are financed and managed by their own organisations. Universities have developed what are known as campus Companies. These are companies established by the academic staff with the aim of marketing the results of university research or selling particular university services (McBrierty, 1993).

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

From its inception, the HEA has always had the task of evaluating all aspects of university education and giving advice to the various institutions accordingly. However, in the university sector, quality assurance to date has been effected largely through a system of external examiners and the accreditation of professional bodies. A two-year pilot programme set up under the Committee of Heads of Irish Universities commenced in 1995/96 with the objective of developing a quality improvement/quality assurance process. The 1997 University Act sets out the position on quality assurance, placing the primary responsibility on universities themselves for putting procedures in place. The procedures must include evaluation of all departments and all faculties of the university not less than once every ten years. Evaluation is carried out by university staff in the first instance and by persons from outside the university who are competent to make national and international comparisons on quality issues at university level. In addition, there is assessment by those who use the teaching, research and other services provided by the university, including students. The universities are required to implement the findings of evaluations where it is practical to do so. The HEA has a review and reporting role.

The NCEA was established as a statutory authority in 1979 whose function was to validate courses and award qualifications to those who successfully completed degree and other courses in the non-university sector of higher education. It has also been given a role in the evaluation of courses in technological colleges and has set up special Boards of Assessors for this purpose. These boards, in cooperation with the Boards of Studies, evaluate the content of courses, the level of students, the organisation of the institutes, and so on. The NCEA appoints external examiners every year to monitor the examination performance of students on NCEA-validated diploma courses.

Teastas, the Irish National Certification Authority, was established on an *ad hoc* basis in 1995 to develop, implement, regulate and supervise the certification of all extra-university third-level and all further and continuing education and training programmes. *Teastas* enables the formal involvement of industry and the social partners in the development and assessment of education and training programmes. This ensures the continuing relevance of these programmes at this time of rapid change in the labour market. *Teastas*, in its consultative phase, is working closely with all partners to ensure that the framework which is developing will facilitate access and progression through a structured system of graded education/training qualifications.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Irish higher education access policy is characterised by a number of key points. On the one hand, students entering higher education in Ireland are among the youngest in Europe (aged between 17 and 18), not only because a child can start primary school at 4 in Ireland, but also for social and cultural reasons which facilitate early achievement by Irish students. The influence of demographic factors and the low proportion of mature students are also factors. On the other hand, (if further education, such as post-leaving certificate courses are excluded) the number of young people who gain access to degree-level programmes in higher education is still below the average in other EU countries (*Education at a Glance*, OECD 1998) and this difference is not related to lack of demand, but rather to a lack of available places. Competition to enter higher education is still quite strong with, on average, about 1.9 applicants for every place accepted. However, this ratio varies greatly from one discipline to the next: there are at least 6 first preference applicants for every place accepted in pharmacy, and there are between 4 and 9 applicants for each place in medicine, physiotherapy, law and dentistry (Annual Report, Central Applications Office, 1998).

The minimum entry requirement for higher education is grade D at ordinary level in 5 subjects in the leaving certificate taken in year five or six of second-level education. However this is not enough to ensure a place at a higher education institution, because of the *numerus clausus* policy and the strict entrance requirements set by the academic authorities in response to this policy. A student's choice of course and institution is influenced by his or her ability as shown by the points gained in the leaving certificate examination, by the availability of places on the course the student wishes to follow and by ability to at least partially meet the financial costs involved. Access to third-level education is very competitive in Ireland. In January of each year students complete application forms ranking their course and institution preferences. When the examination results are processed, points are allocated to subjects on the basis of the level at which the subject is taken (higher or ordinary level) and on the grade awarded. A total point score based on a maximum of six subjects is used to determine the order in which places can be allocated. The points requirements for courses are subject to the level of supply and demand for places in any particular discipline and the high status of certain areas of study has the effect of raising the points requirements almost to the maximum attainable.

The 1992 Green Paper acknowledged the anxieties associated with the points system but argued that the system was fair since it rewarded achievement in the leaving certificate examination without reference to social position, school attended or other extraneous factors. It described some of the improvements which were being introduced. These included the adoption, in 1992, of a joint Central Applications Office/Central Admission Service (CAO/CAS) admissions system within which offers for all courses in all the institutions would be issued on the same day (The Stationery Office, 1992). The Minister for Education and Science set up the Points Commission in October 1997 to review the present system for entry into third level education. The terms of reference of the Commission are wide ranging and are based on the need to ensure a transparent, impartial and efficient system. In its review, the Commission has been asked to have particular regard to the effect of the system on the personal development of students and its impact at second level on the teaching, learning and assessment techniques and on the curriculum.

Other measures have been taken to help students cope with the selection procedures and to try to increase the number of students who enrol for higher education. The decision to abolish tuition fees in 1995/96 was based on the perception that such a move would promote equality of access by removing important financial and psychological barriers to participation. In order to improve access to higher education for students from lower socio-economic groups, the HEA provided IEP 260,000 in 1996 and IEP 475,000 in 1997 and, in 1998, the sum of IEP 695,000 was provided for initiatives in a number of colleges specifically relating to disadvantaged students. These initiatives involve links with second level schools and local communities. The programmes will assist some students to meet the points

requirement for courses, enabling them to obtain a college place through the standard central admissions entry procedure. The other aspect of the programmes is the special entry arrangements through which more flexible entry criteria are applied and various supports put in place for students entering by this method.

The Department of Education and Science also funds three access initiatives involving Dublin City University, University of Limerick and Trinity College to improve participation of pupils from disadvantaged areas at third level. The initiatives involve linkages between colleges and local second-level schools and incorporate supervised study facilities, extra tuition for pupils, information and advice for parents and pupils, including seminars, monitoring and support teaching in key subject areas.

Following the recommendations of the Green Paper for stronger links between higher education institutions and secondary schools, universities now organise open days for secondary school pupils to show them the facilities available and provide guidance for new students on how to use libraries, language laboratories etc.

A wider access policy for adults resulted from the National Education Convention's recognition that one of the central problems in adult education was the lack of a coherent policy, duplication of scarce resources and constant frustration as groups seek access to these limited resources. Very recently, provision has been made for adult candidates without the necessary qualifications to be admitted to a higher education course on the basis of their age (which must be over 23) and their experience. The main criteria for admission in such cases is the likelihood of the candidate successfully completing his or her studies. In addition, a NCVA qualification at level 2 provides access for a specified and limited number of students to Higher Education at designated certificate and diploma levels through the Higher Education Links Scheme, initiated in 1995. Some institutes reserve a certain number of places for adult students, who currently represent 4-5% of the student population.

Courses designed to help adult returners are now offered by some higher education institutions. The National College of Ireland in Ranelagh, Dublin, offers access and foundation courses for mature students who wish to enter higher education and the DIT provides part-time evening courses.

Some criticism has been directed at the fact that adult, part-time students still have to pay tuition fees despite their abolition for undergraduates from 1996/7 (Morrissey, 1996). However, the flexibility and curricular facilities being introduced in many higher education courses are seen as a positive policy for adult returners. The 1995 HEA's *Interim Report of the Technical Working Group of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education* stressed 'the importance and flexibility of modular course structures and related transfer arrangements (...) to facilitate access and enable mature students to study for qualifications while remaining in full-time employment'.

Given the high demand, for higher education qualifications, dropout is an important problem in Irish higher education. Problems of under-achievement do exist and measures have been taken to fight against failure and cases of non-completion. All university students are assigned to a tutor, who has the task of following their academic progress and of helping them with any problems that arise. The majority of third level colleges and universities provide professional guidance and counselling services for their students.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

The most radical change within Irish higher education may be the exemption of Irish students and all EU nationals from the payment of higher education tuition fees from 1995/96. This measure applies to full-time undergraduate students. Non-EU nationals will continue to pay tuition fees, as will students attending postgraduate courses and part-time courses. Previously, the financial burden on students and

their families was alleviated to some extent by the introduction of a covenant scheme whereby income payments made to a student could be treated as income of the student, with certain tax advantages accruing to the donor. Tax relief on covenants was removed at the same time as tuition fees were abolished to improve tax equity.

In 1992, the system for financial aid to students was reformed to reduce the barriers which were making access to higher education more difficult for less well-off students. The maximum income above which students are not entitled to a grant was raised by 40% and the new rules contain specific provisions for the funding of mature students and to discourage failure or delay in completing a course. If students fail to obtain satisfactory results, their grants may be lowered or even cancelled. The grant systems applying to students at different types of third level institutions were harmonised in 1992.

According to Eurydice (1996), in 1993, approximately 56% of all new entrants to higher education were grant-aided, including 42% of university students. Some 33% of students were in receipt of European Social Fund awards for diploma and certificate courses at institutes of technology. An additional 24% of students were awarded local authority grants for university and other degree courses.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Given the large variety of institutions and courses which characterise Irish higher education, it is difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the relationship between the different curricula and, within the curricula, between academic and vocational education.

The existence of a clear division between university and non-university higher education institutions encourages and maintains more scientific and academic curricula within universities and more technologically oriented curricula in the other institutions. However, Clancy (1993) argues that higher education policy in Ireland since 1980 has been characterised by a strong emphasis on technology and vocational relevance and that this has had an influence on the university sector. He points out that this was reflected in the increase in the number of university students studying engineering, science and business studies during this period. McBrierty (1993) suggests that the older universities were more resistant to change but the more recent transformation of NIHEs into universities and the process of merging different institutions into one has been both the effect and the cause of a rapid and widespread diversification of curricula and learning opportunities in the newer institutions.

A number of institutions have introduced modular course structures with universities like the University of Limerick and Dublin City University having a long tradition in this area. It is a development that is expected to grow in other institutions.

Modularisation is expected to have a positive effect on quality in so far as it can:

- Facilitate inter-faculty study (e.g. hybrid degrees to meet market needs).
- Facilitate students' learning at their own pace (important for second chance and mature students).
- Facilitate study in different institutions (especially important in the context of EU mobility).
- Enhance the economic use of facilities via sharing teaching across courses.
- Allow for earlier feedback to students.
- Facilitate the flexible design of courses.

In the modular system, courses are split into modules and units. These can be assembled in different ways according to the needs of the student and the demands of the job-market and they lead to the award of an NCEA-approved diploma or certificate through the accumulation of several subject certificates.

Modules can also be taken at different institutes to obtain a combined studies diploma, or in various subject areas to obtain a diploma in inter-disciplinary studies (e.g. national diploma in inter-disciplinary studies). The modular credit system is moulded on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) 60-credit year, with the aim of facilitating student mobility within the country and in Europe as a whole.

As discussed above, the growing link with the labour market and changes in the economic situation of the country have considerably influenced higher education both at university and non-university level. According to Hughes and O'Connell (1995), Ireland suffered from acute and persistent labour market problems throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s and yet the number of qualified graduates was well above the needs of the labour market. This was primarily due to high unemployment, including high unemployment of graduates, which led to heavy emigration. There was an excess of graduates in the 1980s in most fields of study. However, the position since 1992/93 has been quite different, with improved job prospects for graduates and a major shortage of graduates in some disciplines due to the strong growth of the economy. In the early 1990s IT graduates were in short supply for a period of time. There have been renewed shortages from 1995 to date. Action to alleviate these shortages includes the provision of extra places, the commencement of new courses in areas of particular demand and the inclusion of an IT element in the curricula of many courses.

Furthermore, the ties between higher education and businesses have been strengthened since the beginning of the 1980s due to the activities of the National Board for Science and Technology (NBST) and its successors *Eolas* and *Forbairt*. Many courses, diplomas and degrees involve work-placement in Ireland and/or in another European country. These work placements integrate the student's academic study with closely supervised work experience, based on the abilities of the student. The student thereby develops an understanding of the professional, practical world of industry. Many colleges also provide information and advice on career opportunities as part of their student services.

As part of their adjustment to social and economic influences, Irish universities and colleges are introducing more flexible higher education programmes with an increasing variety of teaching methods. Besides traditional lectures and tutorial sessions, which are more characteristic of university teaching, the use of computer-based and multi-media training is becoming more frequent within a limited number of study areas: technical study, business studies and foreign languages.

Open and distance learning is also being introduced as a routine facility within some higher education courses. The National Distance Education Centre (NDEC) located in Dublin City University began delivering diploma and degree courses through distance education in 1986/87 within the fields of information technology and humanities. Trinity College Dublin has provided distance study for school management training in a number of teachers' centres in Ireland since 1991. The Institute of Public Administration also provides a wide range of distance study courses.

At present, these innovations have not called into question the quality of the traditional teaching skills of academic and college staff. However, improvements in the skills of teaching staff are considered necessary by the Government's advisers. The 1994 *Report on the National Educational Convention* pointed out that 'a necessary complement to the process of evaluation of quality is the need for a development programme which will assist third-level staff in improving their teaching skills.' It emphasised that quality teaching is no less an imperative at third-level than it is at first and second-level (Morrissey, 1996).

Students are assessed in a variety of ways, using end of term examinations, continuous assessment, project work, work placement and oral interviews. As regards the examination process, many higher education colleges are moving towards a system of semesterisation whereby examinations take place at the end of each semester.

6. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

According to Hughes and O'Connell (1995), the quality of the average Irish student does not mask the fact that even at the beginning of the 1990s there was persistent social inequality in the rates of admission to higher education and social stratification still affects both Irish society and the higher education output of the country. In his 1995 report *Access to College: Patterns of Continuity and Change*, Clancy found that children of unemployed parents were significantly under-represented in higher education. In addition, his study found large disparities by socio-economic group in access to higher education. 38% of higher education entrants came from the four highest socio-economic groups although these groups constituted less than 21% of the relevant population. In contrast, the five lowest socio-economic groups were seriously under-represented, 35% of entrants come from these groups although they constituted almost 56% of the relevant age cohort. The study also found that the more prestigious the sector (university or non-university) and field of study, the greater the social inequality in participation levels. In addition, the higher the social class, the higher the participation rate. Another finding was that 5 of the 25 districts in the capital Dublin had admission rates in excess of 50% in contrast to three other districts which had admission rates of less than 10%.

The findings of a recent school leavers survey (1998) in respect of school leavers in 1994 indicate that a person's socio-economic status continues to exert a strong influence on educational participation at third level. While the factors underlying this phenomenon go beyond the educational system, there are a range of measures in place to further the promotion of equality of access to higher education. The need for a holistic approach to equality rather than policies focused only on the third-level sector and on the transition from second to third level, is well established. In this regard, fuller participation at third level depends on measures to ensure access to and retention of students in full-time education at the first and second levels.

The great expansion of higher education must not only be considered as an effect of the growing demand of the market for a highly qualified workforce, but also a result of a strategy for social justice. According to Morrissey (1996), the White Paper's commitment to principles of equality, partnership, pluralism, accountability and quality in education should underpin the formulation, evaluation and future of Irish education.

Ireland is active in creating positive and fruitful links between industry, business and education. The organisations linking business and education were founded by the universities themselves to reflect the greater emphasis on skills shortages and the need for higher education and industrial cooperation. They comprise the Industrial Liaison Offices, the first of which was established at the University College Galway in 1973, the Business Advisory Councils and the Innovation Centres which evolved during the 1980s and 1990s. They help universities to add commercial value to their research and services.

Ireland has become one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. In fact, at the time of writing, the EU had confirmed that Ireland was among the best economic performers in 1997. The existence of a young, highly educated and adaptable workforce is seen to have played a major role in facilitating this period of economic growth. One of the ongoing functions of the education system will be to continue to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge and skills to sustain and build on this economic development. The following are among the key policy objectives at third level as stated in the 1995 White Paper on education, *Charting Our Education Future*:

- To maintain and enhance education and training opportunities.
- To direct resources to meet the priorities for sectoral economic development.
- To enhance the capacity of colleges to support industry.
- The development by each college of explicit policies for interaction with the economy.
- To promote the distinct role of research in contributing to technological advancement.

The Government fully recognises the importance of third-level education and this is reflected in a number of recent initiatives, including the programme for the expansion of third-level places and the capital investment programme which is supported by the European Social Fund. The *Report of the Steering Committee on the Future Development of Higher Education*, which was published in June 1995, sets out the parameters in the growth in higher education. This report was accepted by the Government of the time as a benchmark for the future planning of the sector subject to regular review. The first such review is currently being carried out by a study group. The study group's remit is to advise on the appropriate level of provision of education and training places for school leavers and others. The group's report will be available in the near future.

More recent developments include the provision of additional places at degree and technician level and technology courses at national certificate level to meet the needs of the economy. The Government has also announced the setting up of an Education Technology Fund.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

DIT	Dublin Institute of Technology
HEA	Higher Education Authority
NDEC	National Distance Education Centre
NCEA	National Council for Educational Awards
NCVA	National Council for Vocational Awards
RTC	regional technical college
NIHE	National Institute of Higher Education

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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

ITALY

National description

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ITALY

INTRODUCTION

History and context

Some of the oldest universities in Italy date from the Middle Ages, the era of the communes, when groups of citizens would organise themselves into corporations or 'universities' related to the specific economic or professional activity they performed. The first university institutions were born as corporations of scholars (*universitates doctorum*). This is true, for example, of the University of Bologna, which celebrated its 900th anniversary in 1990. It was probably the first university in Europe and the world. Individual popes and emperors founded other universities in other cities.

Although they had arisen spontaneously as free entities, the universities gradually fell subject to the meddling of the State, until in the end they were incorporated directly into the organisation of the State itself in the Casati Law of 1859 and thus became part of the state administration. This law also subjected university governance to a rector dependent on a minister.

The idealistic and liberal Gentile reform of 1923 gave university studies a primarily scientific character and regulated them, while recognising universities' limited administrative and regulatory autonomy and students' right to develop their own study plan. This reform also made state examinations the qualification for exercising a profession, having given the *laurea* (university degree) a purely academic character.

According to the consolidated law on higher education (Royal Decree no. 1592 of 1933), universities are the place where higher education is provided with the goal of 'promoting scientific progress and providing the scientific training required to perform an office or profession'.

After the years marked by fascism, during which prestigious scholars abandoned them in the wake of the Racial Laws in particular, universities underwent a few innovations in the area of autonomy, such as the recognition of individual universities' right to elect a rector and heads of faculty.

The Italian Constitution of 1947 espoused the principle that 'art and science are free and the teaching of them is also free'. It also established that 'institutions of higher education, universities and academies, have the right to establish autonomous regulations within the limits established by the laws of the State' (Art. 33).

During the years that followed and the 20 years between 1960 and 1980 in particular, successive governments were all an expression of the political party with the relative majority, the Christian Democrats, of which almost all the successive ministers of education during this long period were members. In fact, schools have always been the scene of conflicts between lay and Catholic thinkers in Italy, and the latter have enjoyed a sort of monopoly of power over schools all these years.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, when the country was enjoying full economic growth and a veritable demographic boom, the number of students (who had previously belonged almost exclusively to the upper classes) rapidly increased. Thus, Italian universities progressively became 'mass' universities. In addition, Law n° 910 of 1969 gave the students the right to enter any university department from any upper secondary school. On the whole, the university system was not able to adjust its own structures and resources to satisfy this massive increase in registrations, and consequently faced many problems.

At the same time, the student protests of 1968/69 forced many departments to deal with the need for a new form of teaching. Teaching could no longer depend exclusively on a frontal approach (lectures) and would have to provide other types of activity which would involve students more actively (such as seminars and exercises). Law no. 910 of 1969 thus again liberalised study plans and increased the flexibility of university curricula.

In this way, the Italian university system addressed two very strong social demands and revised two legacies of its past: the rigidity of access resulting from the Gentile reforms and the rigidity of its curricula imposed by fascism.

Law no. 766 of 1973 and 28 of 1980 (implemented by Decree no. 382) reconfirmed this innovative trend. They addressed the increase in the number of university teachers and reorganised them in order to deal with the increasing demand for university education. Nonetheless, we can describe the laws of the 1970s and 1980s as stop-go measures, as they did not attempt comprehensive and systematic reforms at this level of education.

The lack of significant provisions for the university system during these years can be linked to the atmosphere of economic and financial crisis that characterised the country. Public debt climbed to dizzy heights. The resources provided to universities were scarce and for the most part administered inefficiently.

Universities were still in a very critical condition at the beginning of the 1990s. Italy occupied last place among the industrialised nations in terms of the proportion of gross domestic product invested in this level of education, at 0.5% compared with an average of 1.5% for the OECD countries.

Moreover, the 'productivity' of the university system as a whole was also low. The ratio of the number of graduates each year to the total number of registered students came to only 6% and was among the lowest in Europe. Approximately 30% of the registrations were *fuori corso* (students who had exceeded their course time limits). And it was not even possible to quantify research productivity as no control mechanisms had been established. At the same time, it was no longer possible to put off measures adjusting the system to meet international university standards.

The period of reforms therefore began at the beginning of the 1990s and arose in the context of profound crisis in the university system. At the same time, the political, economic and social problems present in Italian society gave rise to the crisis of the traditional political parties which had governed Italy since the end of the Second World War. New political alliances arose, favoured by a new electoral law, which transformed the primarily proportional system into a primarily majority one.

The current centre-left government coalition following the elections of 21 April 1996 set two basic objectives, which constitute the framework within which any reform must operate. First of all, it would continue the process of restructuring public finances in order to enable Italy to achieve the parameters established by the Maastricht Treaty and secondly, it would thoroughly decentralise the state administration and promote Parliament's reform of the second part of the Constitution involving the regulations of the Republic. We may consider the first objective to have been essentially achieved as the Government, by means of a rigid policy of containing spending, has succeeded in reducing inflation, lowering interest rates, and shrinking the budget deficit to 3% of gross domestic product in accordance with the parameters established by the Maastricht Treaty.

Financial restructuring is opening the door to a new phase of economic policy based on the adoption of structural measures designed specifically to reorganise the so-called 'welfare state', increase consumption and combat long-term unemployment.

With respect to the second objective, the Government has already obtained parliamentary approval for measures to decentralise the Government and has already issued or is currently issuing the relevant decrees. Furthermore, the Government counts education - including the university level - among its highest priorities.

Role and structure of higher education

The structure of higher education in Italy is, in fact, rather peculiar in comparison with the other Member States of the European Union. In particular, in Italy higher education is identified almost exclusively with university education, and, until the mid-1990s, no significant attention was paid to non-university post-secondary education despite the incredible growth of the student population, which numbered less than 300,000 in 1960 and had reached 1,200,000 at the end of the 1980s.

A recent document by the Minister of Education recognises that 'Italy is the only country in the world that offers - as higher education (...) - the university as practically the only type of training (...) characterised by the transmission of a body of knowledge that is almost exclusively academic and in which little attention is paid (...) to practical and professional skills 'and that' the system's efforts to resist change are typical of the academic world'.

The system of tertiary or higher education is divided into

- Non-university higher education (various types of higher education institutions),
- Higher education in universities (with various levels).

In fact, until recently non-university higher education was offered only for very specialised sectors: artistic education in the academies, in the *conservatori di musica* (music conservatories) and in the *istituti superiori per le industrie artistiche* (colleges of industrial arts), and physical training in the *istituti superiori di educazione fisica* (higher institutes of physical education) The highly specific nature of art schools gives them a particular status that is not attributable either to secondary education or to higher education and a reform is underway. At the same time, the physical training institutions have been included in university education.

In 1997, university education was provided in 67 institutions¹, comprising

- 45 state universities located throughout the entire national territory;
- 3 polytechnic institutes;
- 6 free universities;
- 3 state university institutes;
- 5 free university institutes;
- 2 universities for foreigners: Perugia and Siena;
- 3 higher schools.

Free universities are independent, but they agree to conform with the curricula of state universities so that the certificates awarded to their students can be legally recognised. They also agree that the Ministry of University Studies should supervise their administrative management and the organisation of their courses to make sure they are in compliance with the norms currently adopted by state institutions of a comparable nature.

¹ In the academic year 1998/99, the university education was provided in 72 institutions.

The State can give contributions to those private universities and institutes of higher education that have obtained the authorisation to issue legally recognised certificates. These contributions are decided on the basis of the number of students enrolled, the degree courses in operation, the number of teachers and members of the technical-administrative staff, and financial conditions.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Decree of the President of the Republic (DPR) no. 382 of 11 July 1980; Reform of university teaching

DPR no. 382 of 1980 initiated the slow process of reform in the Italian university system. This reform has had an effect on three sectors: the recruitment and career path of university personnel; organisational and teaching activities; and research activities and their coordination. With respect to the first sector, the reform establishes the categories of first level or ordinary professor, second level or associate professor, and researcher. Furthermore, it defines professors' status as full-time or part-time professor, or contract professor for temporary appointments.

An even more significant change is the creation of the university department as the organisation of one or more research sectors sharing common goals or methods and related courses which may belong to one or more faculties. To coordinate research activities, departments have an independent structure and enjoy financial and administrative autonomy. DPR 382 calls on universities to experiment with departments as organisational and teaching units and gives teachers the option of whether or not to belong to the departments that would be created.

While academic power was left to the faculties, new collegiate bodies were created by this DPR. These were the *Consigli dei corsi di laurea* (councils for university degree courses), which coordinate all course work and students' study plans and oversee teaching activities. This reform also introduces the *dottorato di ricerca* (research doctorate) which essentially became the only level after the *laurea* degree in most disciplines; but the limited number of available positions and the system employed to recruit students for the doctorate has made it very difficult to pursue university studies beyond the *laurea*. Finally, the reform includes arrangements for the award of scholarships to students attending *scuole di specializzazione or perfezionamento* (specialisation schools) after receiving a *laurea* in Italy or abroad.

This reform was the first real response to the various problems which had been present in Italian universities for decades. These can be summarised as: the lack of teaching staff proportionate to the number of students, which increased significantly (see introduction), ageing teaching methods that depend on 'monographic' courses taught by ageing professors, and a lack of research coordination. In any case, many observers have commented that this reform has had only a limited impact on university life.

Law no. 168 of 1989 establishing the *Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica* (Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research)

This reform establishes the *Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica* - MURST (Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research) and attributes the following functions to it: design and promotion of scientific and technological research; drafting of triennial development plans for universities; arrangements for the financing of these plans; coordination of universities' and other research institutes' participation in international programmes; distribution of allocations included in the Ministry's budget and allocation of resources to universities on the basis of objective criteria defined by law.

It greatly increases universities' autonomy in institutional, administrative and cultural terms. The law also states for the first time that universities' statutes, which are the principal documents governing each university, may establish rules different from previous ministerial regulations. This law clearly upholds the constitutional principle of autonomy. Nonetheless, despite this normative law, elements of rigidity and centralisation remain in university administration.

Law no. 245 of 7 August 1990; Norms governing universities' triennial development plans

This normative law focuses on equitable university planning and proper development. It takes into account and seeks to avoid imbalances between North and South in founding new departments and universities, paying special attention to local needs.

However, the expectations invested in this law have yet to be fulfilled completely. Triennial development plans were in fact in most cases the source of the indiscriminate proliferation of often poorly justified university installations rather than a planning tool. The result has been an even greater imbalance between super-congested mega-universities on the one hand, and small undersized institutions on the other, which has left 80% of the students concentrated in about ten universities.

Law no. 341 of 19 November 1990; Reorganisation of university teaching

The traditional organisation of university curricula was based almost exclusively on a single level of diploma, the *laurea*, which was awarded at the end of courses of study which varied in length depending on the subject area, from four up to six years (medicine). Further courses were provided specifically for the professions in *scuole dirette a fini speciali* (special professional training schools). These were shorter than the *laurea* courses and were available for a rather limited number of professional qualifications, such as those for social workers. So-called *scuole di specializzazione* (specialisation schools) also provided postgraduate courses, but these were limited almost exclusively to the faculty of medicine. This left the *dottorato di ricerca* (see above, in discussion of DPR no. 382) as the only postgraduate degree in the majority of subject areas.

Act no. 341 of 19 November 1990 allowed universities to award legally valid degrees at three levels: the *diploma universitario di primo livello* (first level university degree) at the end of courses lasting two or three years; the *diploma di secondo livello* (the second level university degree); also called the *diploma di laurea* and the *diploma di terzo livello* (the third level university degree), defined as a *diploma di specializzazione*. It gave the faculties, the *Consigli di corso di laurea e di diploma* (Councils for courses leading to a *laurea* or *diploma*) and the *scuole di specializzazione* a degree of autonomy in determining the internal structure of their courses. However, ministerial decrees, to which are attached tables of courses (*tabelle*) for the *laurea*, or the *scuole di specializzazione*, define which courses must be taught. These tables are more or less rigid in the sense that individual councils have the autonomy to choose which courses to provide, but they must choose among the ones included in the table.

Among other innovations, this law introduced university training for teachers in *scuole materne* and *primarie* (kindergarten and primary school), for whom a four-year course is provided for the *laurea* degree. It calls for the creation of a postgraduate *scuola di specializzazione* lasting two years for secondary school teachers. However, as the Government only issued Decrees no. 470 and 471 with the tables showing the subject areas to be included in *laurea* and *specializzazione* courses in July 1996, and further changes were imposed by law 127 of 1997, this reform was implemented for the first time during 1998.

The innovative character of this reform extended to first level courses, which are not considered an introduction to or as initial preparation for more advanced academic studies, but rather as a more direct

path to the labour market. The courses are more oriented towards vocational training than the more advanced courses provided by universities. Individuals wishing to continue their studies beyond the *diploma di primo livello* will find, however, that only some of the examinations they have passed are recognised at this point.

Law 341 of 1990 also allows universities a certain amount of didactic autonomy in determining the subjects to be included in each course while always in keeping with national guidelines established in the relevant tables.

Law no. 390 of 1991; Norms governing the right to study (*Diritto allo studio*)

DPR 616 of 1977 for the first time transfers responsibilities from the State to the regions in the area of the right to study as well. Law no. 390 of 1991 outlines the way these guidelines should be followed and has become the framework law on the right to study. It was issued in an attempt to remove the economic and social obstacles, which were in fact limiting equal access to higher education for all citizens.

It defines the authority of the State, the regions and the universities in this question, confirms the regions' role in administering scholarships and providing services to students (such as cafeterias and accommodation), and reaffirms the State's role as coordinator. It also allows individual universities to grant students exemptions from general fees and tuition fees.

The general guidelines Parliament established for the regional councils attribute equal importance to selection criteria associated with merit and income. Indeed, as the norms governing the right to study developed and parts of the university system became mass universities, a significant imbalance had been created between different parts of the country with respect both to the level of the grants and to the means of applying for this type of financial aid. This form of assistance had become more widely available, but at the same time not very consistent as it was awarded to students of 'average achievement levels and average income.' The law therefore redefines the concept of the right to higher education itself, transforming it from what had gradually become essentially a welfare programme over the years into one focused on students' abilities and merit, linked to their family income (but see also the later normative law on the right to study, described below).

Law no. 537 of 1993; Measures to rationalise public finances

This is the so-called Budget Law, which is enacted each year in Italy and deals with numerous sectors. Internal evaluation centres were established in each university (see section 4.2.).

Ministerial Decree of 22 February 1996; Assessment of the university system

This decree created the *Osservatorio per la valutazione del sistema universitario* (Observatory for the evaluation of the university system) as one of the institutions to evaluate the university system. The Observatory is an institutional instrument of the *Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica* (Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research), which has the task of evaluating results reflecting the efficiency and effectiveness of university activities, checking the development plans and analysing the status of the university system. It interacts autonomously with the universities and the Ministry and reports to responsible parliamentary committees. The Observatory is composed of five members, experts with proven professional qualifications, nominated by decree of the Minister of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research, who chooses its president. It has a technical and administrative staff and an appropriate line in the Ministry budget, and can appoint groups of experts and specialist bodies and associations to carry out research and studies.

Law no. 662 of 1996; Measures to rationalise public finances

Like Law 537 of 1993 (see before), this is the so-called Budget Law. One of the most serious problems facing the Italian university system has always been the extreme overcrowding of certain universities, the so-called *megatenei* (mega-universities). Article 1 (sub-sections 89-95 in particular) deals with the problem of the gradual structural division of a university, which must take place when the number of students and teaching staff becomes greater than a figure to be established by ministerial decree for each university. It has led to an agreement with the largest state universities to create new campuses and divide some faculties.

This law therefore provides an opportunity to improve the balance between North and South in terms of the territorial distribution of the university system and to break up the mega-universities. This will improve the quality of the university system and of the services it provides and bring them closer to European standards. The goal is to put an end to the indiscriminate expansion of the university sector by giving it quality-enhancing development planning goals.

Law no. 59 of 15 March 1997; Government authority to transfer functions and tasks to the regions and local bodies in order to reform the public administration and simplify administrative procedures

Law no. 127 of 15 May 1997; Urgent measures to facilitate administrative activities and decision-making and supervisory procedures

One of the most important goals of the centre-left government, which emerged from the 1996 elections, was to facilitate public administration. In 1997, the Government issued these two laws, the so-called 'Bassanini Laws' named after the Minister for Public Affairs, which, under provisions concerning all public sectors, grant universities total autonomy in the context of the process of radically simplifying and deregulating the administration. The strategic goal was to make universities financially and didactically autonomous.

These two laws have also affected the way reform measures are applied. In fact, the process of simplifying and deregulating university regulations was adopted because this made it possible to create the government tools needed to implement immediate innovative measures and was a necessary condition for the transition to complete university autonomy.

This normative law entitles the Minister for Universities, through powers delegated to the Government, to make reforms in some areas, of which the most important are the following:

- procedures for the 'physical division' of the mega-universities;
- scientific and technological research and research institutions;
- development and planning of the university system;
- assessment of the university system;
- national and local collegiate representative bodies and the coordination of the university system: composition and functions;
- creation of the *Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari - CNSU* (National University Student Council) which will be elected directly by the entire student population;
- the right to university studies;
- university fees.

These laws also contain operational norms designed to allow universities to achieve didactic autonomy. Universities must tend to reorganise and revise the courses they offer and thereby restructure university study programmes.

Students enter into a contract with the university to personalise their own study plan and establish the length of their training programme. Flexibility in the curricula is envisaged. Training credits will subsequently be introduced, which students will also be able to use in the labour market.

These normative laws now make it possible to upgrade the *istituti superiori di educazione fisica* (higher institutes of physical education) from non-university education to university level.

They also authorise the Government to restructure the national research system, invest additional state resources, involve universities' own resources and, above all, mobilise the national and international scientific communities to evaluate research projects.

Finally, they: 1) reform the *Consiglio Universitario Nazionale*, or *CUN*, (National University Council), modifying the number of its members and the form of their representation; and 2) reorganise the *Comitati regionali di coordinamento universitario* (Regional committees on university coordination) to achieve efficient and uniform planning of the education programmes offered throughout the country. These measures tend to render representation of the components, cultures and interests of the complex world of the university more balanced and efficient. (See section 4 for more details of these bodies.)

Right to study: Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 13 April 1994

Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 30 April 1997

Ministerial Decree of 24 July 1997

Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 28 July 1997 and associated executive rulings

These normative regulations were needed to implement what had been legislated in Law no. 390 of 1991 and then developed in the 'Bassanini Laws' (all described above). They adopt measures involving new controls to ensure uniform treatment both in awarding grants and in assessing the amount of fees to be paid by students. They correct an earlier situation, which had created disparities in the way students were treated in terms of the criteria adopted by individual regions. The application of these new norms, along with the allocation of ITL 80 billion for this purpose in the 1997 Budget Law, made it possible to award 75,000 grants and grant 120,000 exemptions from tuition and fees in academic year 1997/98, an achievement unmatched in the past 50 years.

These regulations demonstrate the difficulties involved in implementing the 'right to study'. The possibility of directly enacting ministerial decrees and regulations accelerates the implementation of such norms. They confirm the right of individual universities and regions to establish autonomously the criteria for the services and measures that do not affect the entire student body (such as scholarships, *prestiti d'onore* or guaranteed loans, housing services and tuition).

Ministerial Decree no. 245 of 21 July 1997; Regulation governing access and related guidance activities

This regulation governs the problem of university access. It states that universities may limit the number of students admitted to the departments of medicine and surgery, veterinary medicine and architecture, to degree courses which require work-based training as part of the study programme, and to specialisation courses (*corsi di specializzazione*). In addition, the Minister may at the universities' request declare access to be limited to specific courses, which lack sufficient structures or teaching equipment, or to courses that are specialised or prepare students directly for a profession.

At the same time, it introduces a systematic project involving both universities and upper secondary schools to provide guidance in university studies. The most innovative aspect of this project is university pre-enrolment to allow universities to adjust both their educational programmes and entry-level courses in university education. These measures are designed primarily to reduce extremely high drop-out rates in university studies and to assist in the planning of educational programmes (see the section on 'Access and Wastage').

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Although the need to give universities increased autonomy had been a theme of reforms in Italian higher education since the establishment of the *MURST* in 1989, the process is not yet complete. Completion of the process of granting autonomy to universities, after granting statutory and regulatory financial autonomy (Law no. 168/1989 and Law no. 537/1993), and autonomy in hiring teaching and research staff by decentralising the management of competitive examinations to the universities (Law no. 210/1998) has to be concluded. This requires teaching autonomy, which is being implemented under the deregulatory norms contained in Law no. 127/1997, recently integrated under Law no. 4/1999.

In the meantime, the role, functions, practices and administrative culture of the *MURST* have been undergoing a radical transformation. A Ministry with a bureaucratic and centralising management structure, which once sought to take the place of universities, is becoming one that is 'authorised to govern' a system of autonomous institutions and thus has primarily guidance, monitoring, coordinating and security functions. It therefore can no longer issue circulars prescribing minute details, and must limit itself to 'guidance acts' (following the example of those already issued concerning such things as statutory autonomy, study plans, examination tests and research contracts) and 'programme agreements' with the universities. In addition, resources are distributed on the basis of goals and parameters established according to rules of competition and comparative evaluation.

The transition to a fully autonomous system involves the parallel process of creating a national evaluation system. Positive experiences initiated with the establishment (in March 1996) of the *Osservatorio per la valutazione del sistema universitario*, are being broadened and generalised and the still early experience with university evaluation centres is being addressed and defined. Evaluation must take into account all aspects of the system (teaching, research and administration) at all levels (from the *MURST* to the universities to the various teaching structures). And it must become the normal incentive force governing the distribution of resources (as in agreements between the programmes of the *MURST* and the universities; the 'portion to create balance' in the transfer of State resources to the universities, comparisons of the standard cost of each university to the standard cost of the university system; and 'incentive bonuses' in teachers' salaries).

One of the greatest innovations instituted by Laws nos. 59 and 127 of 1997 was the opportunity granted to the Government and the *MURST* to issue ministerial decrees and regulations to deal with the areas indicated, by-passing the normal parliamentary legislative path which is much longer and more complex. For example, the Minister issued the regulation governing university fees that modified what was stated in Article 5 of Law no. 537 of 1993. This article, although a first step towards the simplification and rationalisation of this area, was difficult to interpret and introduced unnecessary complications. It called in fact for university tuition fees to vary according to a variety of different criteria, which resulted in extreme administrative complications for both universities and students. In addition, it established an absolute limit to the total amount of tuition fees that did not take either universities' financial situation (and thus their autonomy) or students' subjective needs into account.

The new regulation issued by the Minister leaves university tuition fees variable on the basis of the particular university's needs and students' particular circumstances. At the same time, it sets a limit to

the total amount of tuition fees to be paid by all students in a particular university: that amount must not exceed 20% of the ordinary financing from the State.

The laws also reformed or created a number of consultative bodies intended to allow the views of the different actors in the university sector to be taken into account by the Minister:

- The *CUN* is an elective body made up of three members representing the teaching staff for each homogeneous area in the scientific subject areas to a maximum total of 45, eight students, three members elected by the *CRUI* (Permanent Council of Italian University Rectors) and four representatives of the technical and administrative staff. This body consults with the Minister with regard to university coordination, the nomination and legal status of professors and researchers, distribution of research funds, university system and triennial university development plan.
- The *CNSU* is the students' new representative body, composed of 28 members elected by students enrolled in courses leading to a *laurea* degree and *scuole dirette a fini speciali* (special professional training schools), one member elected by students enrolled in *corsi di specializzazione* (specialisation courses) and one member elected by students enrolled for a *dottorato di ricerca* (research doctorate). Presidential Decree no. 491 of 2 December 1997 issued this regulation. This council formulates opinions for the Minister on: a) projects prepared by the Minister to reform the university system; b) ministerial decrees to establish general criteria regulating teaching ordinances for university courses and the means and instruments provided for student guidance and mobility; and c) criteria governing the use of the portion of funds intended to bring universities' ordinary financing into balance. In addition: a) it elects student representatives to the *CUN* from among its own members; b) formulates proposals on other subjects of general interest to the university; c) presents a report on the condition of the student body in the context of the university system to the Minister within two years of taking office; d) refers questions regarding facts or events of national relevance involving teaching and the condition of the students to the Minister, to which the Minister must respond within 60 days.
- Presidential Decree no. 25 of 27 January 1998 created the *Comitati Regionali di Coordinamento* (Regional Committees on University Coordination) made up of the university rectors located in the particular region; the president of the *giunta regionale* (regional government); and one, two or three student representatives depending on the number of university campuses in the region, elected by the student members of the academic senates and administrative councils of the universities in the region. These committees, which are supposed to work together with the other institutions planning the university system, have to coordinate initiatives involving planning for access to university education, guidance, the right to higher education, advanced professional training, continuing and renewed training, the use of university buildings, and coordination with the school system, regional training institutions and territorial economic and social offices.

The main bodies responsible for direction and administrative management of universities are:

- The Academic Senate, *Senato accademico*: this is an assembly (*organo collegiale*) with decision-making powers over educational and scientific issues of general interest. It is also consulted about any issue requiring technical evaluation and relating to more than one faculty. It is chaired by the rector and is composed in all cases of the *presidi di facoltà* (deans of the faculties) and the director of administration who acts as a secretary and has an advisory role, and by other members (though usually not more than the *presidi*) as set out in the statute.
- The rector: University rectors are elected from among full-time *professori ordinari* (full professors), by an electoral body made up of *professori ordinari*, *professori associati* (associate professors) and by representatives of researchers on the *Consigli di facoltà* (Faculty Boards). The rector remains in office

for three years and may be re-elected. He is the legal representative of the university, has disciplinary authority over all grades of personnel employed by the university and implements the resolutions of the *Senato accademico* and of the Board of management.

- Board of Management, *Consiglio di Amministrazione*: it is chaired by the rector and consists of the vice-rector, the director of administration and representatives of all grades of professors, researchers, technical and administrative staff, students, as well as local, regional and national authorities. Article 115 of D.P.R. 11 July 1980, no. 382 also allows bodies and individuals to appoint their own representatives to the Board of Management when they pay an annual contribution to the university, the amount of which is fixed by ministerial decree. The Board of Management is responsible for the administrative, economic and financial management of the university: it approves budget and final accounts, contracts and conventions and supervises the maintenance of the tangible and intangible assets of the university. It remains in office for two academic years.

As yet it is too early to attempt to assess university autonomy objectively. Such assessments must be closely linked to quantitative and qualitative analyses both within and outside the university that will only be possible once the university evaluation system has begun to function fully.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Financing of university institutions remained more or less unchanged from 1980 to 1993. The State provided almost all the regular funding. In 1990, 88% of funding came from the public sector, 7.6% from student tuition fees and contributions and 4.4% from private sources and other earnings (26th *Censis Report* 1992).

Thus until 1993, universities were financed almost entirely by the State and enrolment fees constituted a relatively small portion of the university budget. Resources were distributed to individual universities in a piecemeal fashion and their use was bound by rigid criteria. Government financial policy in recent years has sought to reduce spending at university level in particular by altering the allocation of available resources.

Financial autonomy (Law no. 537/93) consists above all of the ability to make direct use of comprehensive financing which is not bound to rigid budgetary categories. Furthermore, efforts were undertaken to make it easier for universities to finance themselves. New regulations governing university tuition fees ensure that individuals who use a service help to cover its costs. In an attempt to make this shared participation in the expenses more equitable, a mechanism was introduced to classify students by income category. Having established a minimum fee level, each university can alter what it charges according to students' income category as determined by their nuclear family's actual status and income. For the first time in Italy, general and uniform criteria have been established for the entire national territory to identify students' real economic status. These criteria take into account tangible and intangible assets as well as income. These same criteria form the basis of the new norms governing the right to financial aid for higher education students (see section 4).

University departments may also raise funds from external sources by hosting research conventions on public and private themes and creating a constantly expanding range of continuing education courses, vocational training, and advanced study courses. The university administration usually withholds a percentage of the financing the departments receive for these external activities, but the method used to resolve these problems varies greatly from one institution to the next.

There is a tension between the need for reform and the difficult economic situation in Italy. While state financing to universities has been reduced, they have been allowed to collect enrolment fees directly

and may administer them autonomously. However, observers interpret this fundamental change differently. Some analyses see this opportunity as increasing individual universities' resources, while others view the decrease in the transfer of funds from the State to individual universities negatively.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The evaluation of universities has been increasingly systematised over the last 8 years. Law 168/89, which created the *MURST*, dealt with the topic of evaluation in universities for the first time in a normative context. Art. 7 clearly stated that university administrative, financial and accounting regulations also govern contractual procedures, the form which internal efficiency control takes, the overall administration of the university as well as individual expenditure entries, and administration of endowments.

Legislative Decree no. 29 of 1993 subsequently called for public bodies to create evaluation centres to provide internal control. Law no. 537 of 1993 then introduced evaluation centres expressly for universities and defined their main tasks. Although universities had already begun to address the problem of internal evaluation and the creation of centres before Law no. 537/93, this law marked an acceleration of the procedures and the final creation of the internal evaluation centres.

Law no. 537 of 1993 (Measures to rationalise public finances) established evaluation centres in the universities that use comparative cost-benefit analyses to oversee the correct administration of public resources, research and teaching productivity, and the impartiality and smooth operation of the administration. The centres themselves establish the reference parameters for the evaluation partly based on indicators from the general management bodies, which they describe in a special report at least once a year. Their analysis of the administration focuses on the:

- creation and implementation of each university's statutes;
- work assigned to the central administration;
- work assigned to decentralised administrative units;
- definition of the university's physical organisation;
- staff training;
- implementation of norms;
- costs and accounts for each university;
- costs and accounts for each cost centre; and
- students' economic status.

The resulting report must be attached to individual universities' annual accounts and be sent to the *MURST*, the *CUN*, the Permanent Conference of Rectors, the State Audit Court and provincial committees of public administration for an evaluation of the results. This concerns the efficiency and productivity of research and teaching activities and of the plans to develop and balance the university system as a basis for allocating future resources.

At the end of 1996, not all universities had yet arranged to create an internal evaluation centre and 1994-95 was spent primarily identifying standards and indicators that will make the evaluation reports on individual universities comparable at national level.

Since 1996, the *Osservatorio per la valutazione* (Evaluation Observatory) established on 22 February 1996 by ministerial decree has carried out the evaluation of the system. It must present an annual report based in part on reports presented by the evaluation centres in each university.

Its 1998 work plan lists the following thematic areas which this observatory intends to address:

- Evaluation of the university system (review of reports and visits to selected institutions).
- Report on the implementation of the 'right to university studies' or student financing (based on the results of two research studies).
- Report on the status of university education (statistical and documentary support to the *MURST*).
- University development plans (evaluation of information).
- Plan for university course provision (give opinion).
- Status and development of non-State universities and institutes (surveys).
- Allocation criteria for the balancing fund for regular financing (preparation of new criteria for funding based on 'production costs' of various subject areas).

The Observatory also fosters and supervises research to investigate issues relevant to its activities.

The *CRUI* had also begun to examine the problem of evaluation during the preceding years and created a working group on evaluation that included delegates from the rectors for internal evaluation and a tight group of rectoral delegates charged with preparing a document on the organisation of evaluation and the composition and tasks of the internal evaluation centres. Many universities turned to information provided by *CRUI* for guidance in actually creating the centres.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Access to Italian universities is open to all young people who graduate from upper secondary schools. Anyone who holds a certificate from an upper secondary school of five years' duration can enrol in any university department. Free access was introduced as a temporary and experimental measure in 1969, but is still in force.

Nevertheless, in the last decade, some universities have limited access to certain faculties including architecture, medicine and medical surgery, veterinary medicine and dentistry and have begun to implement selective entrance examinations.

This issue became so controversial that it was necessary to impose a comprehensive regulation on access. This led to the Regulation of 21 July 1997 issued by the *MURST*. However, in 1998, this was declared partly unconstitutional and so a specific law (no. 264, 2 August 1999) was finally adopted to readdress the whole issue. Law 264 sets out the general criteria and indicates which courses are to have restricted access nation-wide:

- medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, architecture;
- *diplomi universitari* (university diplomas) for non-medical staff;
- teacher education and related postgraduate specialisations;
- medical and legal postgraduate specialisations;
- all newly established courses.

In addition, universities themselves may request restriction of access for certain courses such as those which require high-tech equipment or involve external apprenticeship.

A measure governing guidance activities at university level was issued in 1997. To make it possible to plan for education provision adequately, students enrolled in their final year of upper secondary school must apply to be pre-enrolled at university.

Pre-enrolment means that pupils must already indicate the faculties in which they plan to enrol in the following year during their final year of upper secondary school. This will allow them to carry out guidance activities and help universities to plan educational provision appropriately.

As a rule, universities organise guidance and teaching activities centring on one or more *laurea* courses before the official beginning of courses. The content of such activities is characteristic of the courses, and they provide general and background knowledge, the types of teaching and assistance available to students and self-assessment tests. These activities conclude with a final assessment that is not a pre-requisite for enrolment. Instead, students are selected for admission to limited access *laurea* courses in proportion to the number of places available in a particular year and faculty on the basis of an assessment examination in addition to the aforementioned activities. Universities may allow students who request admission to limited access courses to enrol on an experimental basis in courses also included in the curricula of other faculties (such as subject areas common to both medicine and biology). In this way, students are only selected after the first year and those who prove qualified to enter limited access faculties (such as medicine) after the examination but cannot enrol because the available number of places makes this impossible do not lose a year of studies, as they can be enrolled in the second year of the free access faculty (such as biology) in which they have already taken first-year courses.

These measures have been introduced in an attempt to address one of the most serious problems facing the Italian university system: the high rate of wastage. Indeed, only a little more than 30% of students who enrol in a course of study complete it and obtain the corresponding degree. Furthermore, many students take much longer than the legally defined time limit to complete a course of studies leading to a degree (these students are described as *fuori corso*), in part because the number of years a student may remain enrolled in a university is not restricted.

A university course may last either an entire academic year or six months (depending on the teaching regulations of individual faculties). Departments have only determined in their own regulations the maximum number of years a student may remain enrolled in a course of study for a *laurea* or *diploma* degree since the academic year 1994/95. The maximum number of years cannot be less than three times the legal duration of the course.

The causes of the high drop-out rate and delays in completing courses of study can be partly attributed to the wide range and varying quality of upper secondary school curricula and also to the rigidity of the curricula and teaching methods employed at university, which have not adapted to the growing demand for mass education.

Measures undertaken up till now to combat the drop-out problem have focused primarily on the use of guidance initiatives to create closer ties between higher education institutions and secondary schools. In the context of reducing university wastage, Law 341 of 1990 in particular requires universities to include in their statutes guidance courses for students - even ones who already hold a *laurea* degree - who plan to enrol at a university.

The same law requires universities to guarantee students tutoring with guidance and assistance throughout their studies, either through group activities or through initiatives responding to the needs of individual students. Implementation of these measures has improved gradually over time, but remains uneven across the country. Numerous universities already provide university guidance services and formal ties with upper secondary schools, but in most cases there are still no truly joint university orientation courses.

It has proved even more difficult to alter the current policy of admitting adults to higher education. Adults who do not hold an upper secondary school leaving certificate cannot attend university directly but must

pass - as 'private students' - the upper secondary state school leaving examination required of all students. In fact, the subjects they have to study are currently much more than those for 'internal' candidates because, in the absence of a regular school career, they have to pass a greater number of tests which cover a broader range of subjects.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

To make additional funds available, a regional enrolment tax was created in the academic year 1996/97, to be used to promote the right to higher education. The amount of this tax varies between ITL 120,000 and ITL 200,000 (most regions charge ITL160,000). Combined with 'ad hoc' funds of the regions, this tax is used for grants, loans and other services for students, according to their study results and income. Under the same criteria, universities can totally or partially exempt students from the payment of fees. Furthermore, universities provide grants to attend postgraduate courses and specialisation courses.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Traditionally, study programmes in the Italian university system have followed a predominantly academic structure. In this context, the greatest innovation since 1980 has been the introduction of short cycle courses leading to a *diploma* degree (Law no. 341/1990). Since then, an increasing number of courses of different kinds have been created, but they are distributed unevenly among departments and subject areas. The largest number of new courses can be found in the fields of technology and economics, while the number in the humanistic departments is rather limited. There are financial explanations for this phenomenon. On the one hand, *diploma* degrees were designed to provide more direct access to the labour market and seem to reflect the increased demand for intermediate qualifications that currently exists in the technological and commercial sectors in Italy, while other sectors involving cultural and social services in particular do not offer many employment opportunities or require higher qualifications. On the other hand, financial constraints have often required universities to create new courses with financial assistance from external sponsors, who are primarily interested in a short-term professional return.

Act no. 341 of 19 November 1990 allowed universities to award legally valid degrees at three levels: the *diploma universitario di primo livello* at the end of courses lasting two or three years; the *diploma di secondo livello*, also called the *diploma di laurea*, at the end of courses lasting four, five or six years, and the *diploma di terzo livello*, defined as a *diploma di specializzazione*, at the end of courses lasting from two up to five years. It gave the Faculties, the *Consigli di corso di laurea e di diploma* (Councils for courses leading to a laurea or diploma) and the *scuole di specializzazione* a degree of autonomy in determining the internal structure of their courses. However, ministerial decrees, to which are attached tables of courses (*tabelle*) for the *laurea*, or the *scuole di specializzazione*, define which courses must be taught. These tables are more or less rigid in the sense that individual councils have the autonomy to choose which courses to provide, but they must choose among the ones included in the table.

The *diploma universitario* (first level university degree) is designed to provide students with an adequate understanding of methods and cultural and scientific aspects of specific sectors so as to achieve the level of competence required by particular professions. Among the curricula leading to *diploma* degrees, a few of them derive from the absorption of *scuole dirette a fini speciali* (special professional training schools), previously designed, for a very limited number of sectors, to provide students with cultural and professional training at university level so as to train specialised experts.

The second university cycle includes courses leading to a degree (*diploma di laurea*) and is designed to provide students with a higher level of understanding of the methods and cultural and scientific aspects of their field.

Scuole di specializzazione issue a tertiary education diploma that allows holders, in the exercise of their profession, to qualify themselves as specialists. The diploma of specialisation is issued at the end of a course of study of not less than two years (Decree of the President of the Republic no. 162 of 1982).

Doctoral courses are part of the third cycle offered by university institutions and are activated as a result of motivated proposals made by the individual universities. They are of variable duration, but not less than three years. Until 1998, their number was determined annually by the Ministry. The title of *dottorato di ricerca* (doctor of research), issued by the national disciplinary commission, was an academic title that could be evaluated only in the sphere of scientific research. Substantial changes have been introduced by Law 210/1998: planning is entirely devoted to individual universities, and the title is valued for highly qualified positions in the work market.

Universities can offer further education courses lasting not more than one year, following agreements with the state, local authorities and public and private bodies. Anyone in possession of a university-level degree can register for these courses. At the conclusion of further education courses, those students who, in the opinion of the course council, have fulfilled the requirements are issued an attendance certificate that is not applicable to the exercise of offices and occupations or in the sphere of scientific research.

Law no. 341 of 1990 states that the councils in the teaching structures of each university must define in their own teaching regulations the structure of the study programmes and the number, type and order of the courses (including whether or not they are compulsory) students must attend to receive a degree at the three university levels. It is impossible to provide a general outline of the programmes and content of each course as they differ greatly in terms of the fields they cover and the decisions the academic authorities of each university take when they establish each course.

One of the most important incentives for changing the relationship between academic and vocational preparation may come from the organisation of university training for pre-primary and primary school teachers (beginning in the academic year 1998/99), the requirement that secondary school teachers attend a theoretical and practical postgraduate course (beginning in the academic year 1999/2000), and the creation of a *scuola di specializzazione* for access to employment in the judiciary and forensic professions.

No independent institutions provide professional training, for example, for future doctors or lawyers. Internships, which students can do either during or after they have finished their university studies, combined with professional qualification examinations are provided in two different forms. The first is institutional, which means that it is established explicitly in the teaching regulations governing each course, and the second is freer and based on employment opportunities available to students and teachers. Depending on the university, there are two kinds of work-based training. A 'protected internship' is work-based training provided inside the university itself or in a structure or body dependent on the university (such as a university farm, polytechnic clinic or laboratory). 'External internships' are provided by firms in the primary, secondary or tertiary sectors, public bodies or administrative offices, or outside laboratories or research centres that do not belong to the university.

The *scuole di specializzazione* in medicine lead to a *diploma universitario di terzo livello* (third level university degree). To receive this degree, students must study all forms of medical activity including relief work. Activities undertaken by students specialising in the national social and health system of relevance to their specialisation are recognised (even if undertaken in foreign or developing countries).

This course reform was a response to three needs: for training courses adapted to students' different levels of preparation, for a reduction in the drop out rate, and for the creation of new professional models that reflect a labour market which is constantly changing. This reform of the university system has also

been a response to guidelines put forward by the EEC to increase the integration of the education system at European level.

The freedom to choose their own teaching method is a right guaranteed to teachers by the Constitution. Most Italian university teachers and departments employ traditional teaching methods based on lectures by professors and oral examinations. In most departments, attendance is not compulsory and many students prepare at home using a certain number of books and only go to the university to sit examinations.

It should also be noted that the professor-student ratio has worsened steadily over the past 20 years. From a general average of 7 students per professor in 1960/61, the ratio increased to 22 students per professor at the end of the 1980s and reached approximately 28 students per professor in the academic year 1995/96. This general average still does not provide an adequate impression, however. There are very significant differences between departments and institutions. In some first year courses, a professor teaches (or is supposed to teach) 700 students or more, while in others there is a professor for only five students. To this we should add that adequate buildings are often lacking.

During the past 20 years, we have also seen an increase in the number of 'seminars' to complement lectures from professors in the delivery of courses. In these, a limited number of students carry out advanced work and research under the direction of a teacher on one of the themes discussed in the lecture course. Such seminars are not regulated by any specific norms, and teachers are free to set their own criteria in creating, teaching and assessing them.

Nevertheless, things are gradually changing. The traditional model of university teaching based on academic year-long courses consisting of lectures, each lasting for an average of 50 to 60 hours between November and May is being changed by Law no. 341 of 1990 to make the organisation of the academic year conform more closely to other European models. The number of semester courses is increasing, for example. This implies not only that courses have a different duration and that there are a different number of courses, but also that new teaching methods and assessment techniques are being introduced.

Law no. 341 of 1990 also introduced the position of tutor. This position has had little impact on student life, however, even in the departments which had already created it because of the very poor teacher student ratio mentioned above. Many departments today organise teaching activities around official, single subject or integrated, semester and/or year-long courses. Integrated courses are made up of coordinated modules, which may be taught by different teachers. Taken together, teaching activities involve a certain number of contact hours established by the regulations for each course. Some of these (in some teaching courses) may be used for work-based training, laboratory work and/or directed study such as, for example, seminars.

Each department's teaching regulations define the number of year-long courses each student must attend, the number of hours in each course, and the specific form of the examinations (such as written or oral examinations or aptitude tests) and their frequency during an academic year.

There have been no changes in the way students are assessed since 1980, and these methods have been transferred to the first-level courses created in 1990. Attendance of any course included in the study plan implies that the student has passed what are known as *esami di profitto* (achievement examinations). These examinations consist of written, practical and/or oral tests. Examining boards usually consist of three members nominated by the department chair: the teacher responsible for the subject area, who chairs the board; a teacher responsible for a related subject; an expert in the subject, who may not even be a member of the university teaching staff. Each examiner should assess the candidate's examination on a scale of 0 to 10 points with 6 being the minimum required to pass. Each candidate's final mark should be reached by adding the partial scores assigned by the examiners. The

resulting global assessment scale runs from 0 to 30 in which 18 is the minimum required to pass the examination and 30 is the maximum. All this is theory however and, in practice, the board discusses together whether to award a fail or a mark between 18 and 30. By unanimous consent, the board may add *con lode* (with honours) to the maximum mark as a special distinction. With the professor's consent, a student may reject the mark proposed by the board and sit the examination again.

When they have passed all the achievement examinations and written a thesis, which is a work of research on a topic agreed with the teacher, students must pass a final examination called an *esame di diploma* (*diploma examination*) at the first level; an *esame di laurea* (*laurea examination*) at the second level; and an *esame di specializzazione* or *di dottorato di ricerca* (*specialisation examination or research doctorate examination*) at the third level. The corresponding diplomas are awarded on the basis of the achievement examinations and the written thesis.

Candidates for the first and second level are examined before a board consisting of 11 members. Taking into account the average of the marks the candidate received on earlier achievement examinations, the quality of the candidate's thesis and competence as revealed in the discussion of the thesis, the board determines the mark to be assigned on a scale from 0 to 110 (each member of the board can theoretically assign a mark between 0 and 10) and whether or not to award the relevant diploma. Students receive a diploma if their mark is above the minimum of 66/110. The maximum possible mark is 110. The board is entitled to add a mention of honours to the maximum mark to emphasise the candidate's special merits. Honours must be approved unanimously. For specialisation examinations, the board consists of seven members and the maximum score is therefore 70. The assessment procedures are otherwise analogous to the examinations described above.

The Erasmus programme and experimentation with the ECTS scheme have made many universities consider introducing some kind of mechanism to transfer study credits. Therefore, many universities have already considered using an overall system of credits for Italian and foreign students.

Methods based on work-placement and open and distance learning are almost unknown in regular university courses, but interesting experiments and innovations are in progress for courses at the first level and for some advanced postgraduate courses. This does not mean that Italian universities have not already invested a significant amount of resources in audio-visual equipment and new technologies. It simply means that there are no specific norms in Italy to govern work-placement and open and distance learning in higher education. At the same time, many universities have an audio-visual learning centre, now sometimes called a 'distance learning' or 'multimedia' centre (also used for language learning). In the absence of a normative basis, however, everything is left to the initiative of individual universities and in any case no solution has yet been provided for the problem of the 'culture' of users, who very often do not yet make use of equipment that is already available.

Training for the teaching staff in higher education has not been regulated at national level and there have been no changes in this respect since 1980.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

No comprehensive law governs the internationalisation of university education. Nonetheless, this dimension has been developing constantly. It has been included in numerous normative acts, which targeted other aspects of the academic world.

The reform of university regulations carried out by Law no. 341 of 1990 was already enacted 'in keeping with relevant [European] Community norms', as stated in article 9. And these new regulations are in fact based on the need to adapt the Italian university system to the other European systems.

Law no. 290 of 1991 (articles 12 and 14) states that universities may participate in European Community exchange programmes, may promote student exchanges with Italian and foreign universities and other similar institutions, and are required to provide intensive language courses for foreign students.

The decree which deals with uniform treatment with regard to the right to university studies (*D.P.C.M.*, 30 April 1997) calls on universities to award grants to supplement scholarships received by university students who participate in study programmes involving international mobility. Universities and regions can also offer organisational and logistical support to Italian students who study abroad and to foreign students in Italy.

Law no. 127 of 1997 requires universities to support student mobility, to provide useful guidance information dealing with the European dimension using, among other media, computer and telematic technologies, and above all, to formulate projects (in particular research projects) together with foreign universities. Given their special bilingual character, article 98 authorises the Valle d'Aosta and Friuli-Venezia Giulia regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano to enter into agreements with foreign universities in French-, Slovenian-, and German-speaking countries respectively in order to regulate combined curricula, financing methods and the award of university degrees.

As a result, contact with foreign institutions of higher education and colleagues abroad (in EU Member States in particular) is exercising a decisive influence on the reform of the Italian system of higher education. After initial difficulties during the first few years the inclusion of Italian universities in the cooperation programmes of the European Union is beginning to yield its first fruits and is having a positive influence on the style and working methods used to handle not only teaching and research problems, but also the financial administration and overall management of institutions.

Relevant examples of this new attitude are the agreements signed by some Italian universities with institutions abroad for common curricula leading to degrees recognised in the respective countries. These new programmes have involved, amongst other institutions, the Polytechnic of Torino with French and British partners, and the University of Trento with German universities. From a research point of view, Italy is also an active player in the international arena and Italian researchers are present in the most important research institutions within and outside Europe.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

It is always very difficult to draw a clear line between what has been reformed and what remains unchanged in Italy. This is true in part because primary normative laws call for enacting decrees and regulations to be issued later which are often only issued after extremely long delays. Thus, very often, the paradox arises that although a valid law exists to cover the question, it is not actually enacted for a long time or is only enacted very gradually over a very long period of time.

In spite of this, it may be said that the reform process, already underway for some years, has been progressing based on the strategic axis of three key concepts: autonomy, evaluation and planning.

Future reforms, mainly to implement the 'Bassanini Laws' (1997), are already at an advanced stage of preparation and will develop areas already addressed in previous reforms in the following sectors:

1. Reorganisation of the whole section of **vocational education** as well as of **life-long, permanent and in-service training**. The reorganisation provides financially supported internships lasting a maximum of 12 months and an integration of branches of study also at university.
2. Implementation of a new kind of post-secondary education (**Formazione superiore integrata - FIS** - Integrated Higher Education), aimed at specific occupations, which is parallel and alternative to the university courses.
3. **Didactic autonomy** of universities and reorganisation of university courses leading to certification at three levels:
 - 1st level - aimed at the university degree (*laurea*) after three-year courses;
 - 2nd level - aimed at the degree certificate (*laurea specialistica*) after further two-year courses, implying a higher level of specialisation;
 - 3rd level - aimed at the doctoral certificate (*dottorato di ricerca*) after further two or three years of training. Curricula are going to be more and more characterised by flexibility, a credit organisation, and an increase in extra-mural activities.
4. Relaunching of **educational guidance** policies for higher education studies, providing for the *preiscrizione* (pre-registration) at university.
5. **Right to university studies**: a national system for the evaluation of the financial conditions of the students (*riccometro universitario*) should be implemented; it should allow them to benefit from the aid provided under the right to study and from the grading of contributions from themselves; it also foresees the creation of a national fund supposed to integrate grants and *prestiti d'onore* (loans given by banks to students who fulfil academic requirements), an increase in the grant amount, its diversification according to types of students as well as the tripling of the number of grants effectively awarded.
6. General reorganisation of (basic and targeted) **university research** and the whole section of research institutions.
7. A new definition of the aims and procedures of **university planning** according to the improvement criteria of the quality system.
8. Extension of the **accordi di programma** (planning agreements) between the Ministry and each university as a means to achieve specific goals in the field of teaching innovation, research and services, to create places for teaching and research as well as to decongest overcrowded universities on the basis of projects and plans devised by each university and the Ministry.
9. Creation of a **national assessment system** of university teaching and research, services efficiency and administrative management of universities.
10. Support for **cooperation among universities** and for the **mobility** of students, teachers and researchers; creation of inter-governmental agreements on specific objectives (for example, *dottorato di ricerca* supported by Italy and France and an agreement on a French-Italian university).

The above mentioned points basically make up the *quadro nazionale* (national framework) of higher education reform in Italy. As far as the European Community contribution is concerned, the aim - which is mature from the historical and cultural point of view - is the progressive harmonisation of the European

higher educational systems, starting with university courses and diplomas (The Sorbonne Declaration, signed by France, Germany, England and Italy on 25 May 1998).

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

DPR	Decree of the President of the Republic
CNSU	<i>Consiglio Nazionale degli Studenti Universitari</i> (National University Student Council)
CRUI	<i>Conferenza Permanente dei Rettori delle Università Italiane</i> (Permanent Council of Italian University Rectors)
CUN	<i>Consiglio Universitario Nazionale</i> (National University Council)
MURST	<i>Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca Scientifica e Tecnologica</i> (Ministry of Universities and Scientific and Technological Research)

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Eurydice
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

LUXEMBOURG

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INTRODUCTION

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is the smallest Member State in the European Union. It currently has a population of nearly 400,000 inhabitants living within a surface area of 2,586 square kilometres. Situated at the crossroads of several cultures, Luxembourg has hosted numerous European institutions since the early stages of the integration process. Located between France and Germany, Luxembourg is a trilingual country - adding French and German to its own language, *Letzeburgesch*. This situation has been confirmed since 1984 in a law governing the use of the languages (Act of 24 February 1994). Luxembourg has thus had three official languages since that date (*Letzeburgesch*, German and French).

Luxembourg has never had a full university, and the current network of non-university higher education institutions is relatively recent. The absence of a full structure of university or non-university higher education has fostered the tradition that young Luxembourgers pursue post-secondary education abroad. Among the countries in which students from Luxembourg most frequently choose to pursue higher education should be mentioned the Grand Duchy's three neighbouring countries (Germany, Belgium and France) in particular. However, a significant number of young Luxembourgers also attend Austrian, British and Swiss universities.

The post-secondary education system in Luxembourg currently includes:

- university courses providing education at the level of first-year university studies geared to the programmes of universities in neighbouring countries;
- a four-year cycle of studies (from 1997) in the field of technology;
- two three-year cycles of studies in the field of training for advanced educational child care staff and teachers;
- a two-year cycle of vocational training in the economic sector;
- a two-year vocational training course at post-secondary level for specialisations in the tertiary sector and an artistic field leading to the award of an advanced technical training certificate (*brevet de technicien supérieur - BTS*);
- the International University Institute of Luxembourg (*Institut universitaire international de Luxembourg*), which offers short courses of seminars at the third level of university studies.

The issue of equivalence of degrees and certificates, which is particularly crucial in a country where the majority of students pursue study abroad, has been resolved by the signing of bilateral agreements between Luxembourg and its neighbouring countries and by assigning a transfer value to certificates awarded in Luxembourg in order to allow young Luxembourgers to pursue their education abroad.

Luxembourg currently has two university institutes: the Luxembourg University Centre (*Centre universitaire de Luxembourg - CUNLUX*), which also organises a short course of studies in higher management studies, and the International University Institute of Luxembourg. There are three further higher education institutes: the Higher Institute of Technology (*Institut supérieur de technologie - IST*), which now offers a training cycle at university level; the Higher Institute for Pedagogical Studies and Research (*Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques - ISERP*), which replaced the Pedagogical Institute (*Institut pédagogique*) in 1983 in the context of the reform of training for pre-school and primary school teachers; and the Institute for Educational and Social Studies (*Institut d'études éducatives et sociales - IEES*), which replaced the Training Institute for Educational Child Care Staff and Instructors (*Institut de formation pour éducateurs et moniteurs - IFEM*) in 1990.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

The foundations of the current higher education system in Luxembourg date back to the early 1970s and legislation and regulations concerning the Luxembourg University Centre and criteria for recognising higher education qualifications obtained abroad (Act of 18 June 1969).

In response to the demand for vocational training at a higher level, the Luxembourg University Centre created a short (two-year) course in management studies within the law and economics department during the 1983/84 academic year. At the same time, the duration of training for pre-school and primary school teachers was increased from two to three years with the creation of *ISERP*, which offers both teacher training and educational and pedagogical research.

Public research activities in the Grand Duchy are implemented on the basis of the Act of 9 March 1987, which organises technological research and development in the public sector and technology transfers and scientific and technical cooperation between firms and the public sector. Three public research centres, (*centres de recherches publics - CRP*) currently organise technology transfers and scientific cooperation (on the basis of joint research projects) with businesses:

- the University Centre *CRP*, attached to the Luxembourg University Centre;
- the Henri Tudor *CRP*, attached to the Higher Institute of Technology;
- the Health *CRP*, attached to the National Health Laboratory (*Laboratoire national de santé*).

Public research centres concentrate their activities primarily in fields that have proved to be of economic interest at national level. The University Centre and Higher Institute of Technology carry out most of the research projects. Most projects carried out by the University Centre involve human and social sciences. Other projects carried out by the University Centre involve subjects in the exact and natural sciences. The Higher Institute of Technology performs research exclusively on projects involving technology and industrial production. The projects at the Health *CRP* relate to the fields of immunology, molecular biology and toxicology.

The public research centres are legal entities. Integrated into other public establishments, the *CRPs* enjoy academic and financial autonomy to a large extent. In particular, they have access to the following resources:

- an annual financial contribution from the state budget;
- co-payments from firms or other national or international bodies in the context of research and development projects;
- donations, bequests or revenue generated by the *CRPs* themselves.

The Act of 6 August 1990 created the latest of the higher education institutions, known as the Institute for Educational and Social Studies (*Institut d'études éducatives et sociales - IEES*). This institute provides training primarily for advanced educational childcare staff working in the education and social sector.

The Act of 4 September 1990 concerning the reform of technical secondary education called for the implementation of post-secondary training with a vocational orientation leading to an advanced technical training certificate after two years of training. Four specialised branches exist at the present time (three in the tertiary sector and one in an artistic field). These courses are offered in two technical *lycées* (upper secondary schools) in the capital. The Grand-Ducal Regulation of 29 November 1991 decides the details of the organisation of training courses leading to the *BTS* (advanced technical training certificate).

During the period under review, the debate focused on the question of whether or not Luxembourg should or could provide for a structure approaching a full university. Proponents of extending the university institution argued that it would be useful for Luxembourg to have its own (even partial) university structures and insisted on the benefits with respect to academic research and to independence from foreign university institutions (especially in the context of continual changes in student admissions criteria). Opponents of a full university argued that the cost of such a project would be high, that an insufficient number of academic staff were available, that it was important for Luxembourg students to pursue higher education abroad and that this had consequences they considered positive for the country and that full universities existed in the regions neighbouring the Grand Duchy. Student organisations, in particular, shared this opinion.

The legislature appears ultimately to have taken a certain number of arguments from each side into account to develop a project which, while it does not establish a full university, gives the relevant authorities (most notably the University Centre) an opportunity to create additional courses that go beyond the first year of studies available at the present time, while recommending close collaboration with university institutions in the Grande Region (Lorraine-Saar-Rhine-Palatinate).

No serious controversy existed with regard to the extension of the duration of studies at the Higher Institute of Technology. The legislature wished to allow it to compete on an equal footing with foreign institutions (for example, *instituts industriels* in Belgium and *Fachhochschulen* in Germany). In addition, the employment market and economic sector were expected to see positive benefits.

This discussion took place in the general context of major reforms carried out in the Luxembourg education system as a whole since 1989. Important reforms affected general and technical secondary education (technical and vocational training) in particular.

As the pros and cons of extending the University Centre had already been discussed for years without resulting in concrete projects, the Minister of National Education of the time (Marc Fischbach of the *PSC*, Christian Socialist Party) considered that the time had come to make a definite break. However, it was only under his successor (of the same political party), Mrs Hennicot-Schoepges, that the draft of a definitive act was presented to the Chamber of Deputies and passed in 1996.

The Act of 11 August 1996 consolidated the existing structure of higher education and opened the door to new developments. The law was designed to:

- outline the framework of public higher education in the Grand Duchy;
- confer a new status on the University Centre and Higher Institute of Technology;
- redefine the two institutions' mission.

The Government reorganised all of higher education within one and the same legal structure. This structure defined higher education as it is provided in Luxembourg and the establishments that organise it. It established a Higher Council for National Education (*Conseil supérieur de l'éducation nationale*) comprising representatives of all the establishments and gave the Luxembourg University Centre and Higher Institute of Technology the status of legally autonomous public establishments subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

The Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training oversees the entire Luxembourg education system centrally. Professional associations share this function in the field of vocational training.

Grand-ducal and ministerial regulations establish general objectives, courses in compulsory and optional subjects, examination procedures and the rules for assessing the validity of degrees and certificates in school and higher education.

The 1996 Act introduced the notion of financial, administrative, pedagogical and scientific autonomy for the principal higher education establishments, the *CUNLUX* and *IST*. As described above, it also created a consultative body: the National Council of Higher Education. This council is made up of representatives of higher education establishments, public research centres and persons selected primarily on the basis of their qualifications.

The purpose of this body is to:

- submit an annual, global evaluation of the activities of public higher education to the Minister of National Education;
- provide its opinion on questions submitted by the Minister of National Education;
- present to the Minister on its own initiative any proposals, suggestions or information relevant to the problems of higher education and any legislative reforms or innovations it considers necessary;
- coordinate the provision of services in the area of third-cycle education and continuing training at higher education level.

The 1996 act reforming higher education made the University Centre and Higher Institute of Technology into public establishments with a legal personality. These establishments enjoy financial, administrative, pedagogical and scientific autonomy. They are administered under private law. Nonetheless, the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training is responsible for supervising them.

Each of the two institutions mentioned above has a board of governors, a scientific council and departmental councils. The board of governors defines the establishment's general policy and has responsibility for managing the institution it represents both in legal and non-legal matters. The Minister of National Education supervises the activities of the two establishments. All decisions of the board of governors are communicated directly to the Minister, who takes decisions regarding the issues subject to his approval. The Minister also appoints a government commissioner to supervise the activities of the establishments.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Until 1996, all higher education institutions were completely financed by the State.

In granting the University Centre and the Higher Institute of Technology a new legal status, the Act of 11 August 1996 reforming higher education gives these two institutions financial and administrative autonomy. This means that in future the resources of these institutions can be made up of an annual financial contribution from the State's budget of revenue and expenditure, income from the institutions' own teaching and research activities, donations and bequests, and revenue from the management of their own assets.

The overall budget that Luxembourg allocates to education is among the largest in Europe.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The Ministry of National Education oversees higher education and produces a global evaluation of the quality and activities of higher education institutions.

At the present time, there is no real evaluation process. The reform of higher education has in fact only led to the extension of the duration of education at the Higher Institute of Technology and the establishment of new administrative structures at this Institute and the University Centre.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Until the early 1980s (when the first pupils received a technical secondary school leaving certificate), only pupils holding a general school-leaving certificate were admitted to higher education institutions in Luxembourg. Following the reform of technical secondary education, access was extended to holders of a technician's certificate (*diplôme de technicien*), although in a rather limited fashion. At present, graduates of Luxembourg schools and foreign schools recognised as equivalent have access to all branches at the University Centre, Higher Institute for Pedagogical Studies and Research, Institute for Educational and Social Studies and the two short cycles of education. Students holding a technician's certificate are only admitted to the lower division of engineering studies in the science department of the University Centre. In addition, they may be admitted to the Higher Institute of Technology and to the short courses mentioned above. However, the different types of technician's certificates only grant access to higher education in the specialisation pursued during technical secondary education.

Students are only admitted to courses and seminars at the International University Institute on presentation of final second cycle university diploma in economics, law or political science.

Students are admitted to *ISERP* on the basis of their results in the secondary or technical secondary school leaving examination. Candidates must also sit a test to assess their knowledge of the German, French and *Letzeburgesch* languages. Students must then pass a competitive examination to be admitted to the profession as a pre-school or primary school teacher.

Secondary school teachers, in turn, must hold a second-cycle university diploma awarded by a foreign university in the field they wish to teach before they can sit the competitive examination for admission to teacher training.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Attendance of higher education establishments in Luxembourg is free of charge with the exception of courses and seminars at the International University Institute.

The Act of 1977 introduced a new financial aid system for students. This assistance could take the form of a grant or a loan with or without interest depending on the institution. The Act of 13 March 1992 amended this system. It replaced interest-free loans with low-interest loans (2%) and introduced a supplementary grant to be awarded solely to students who complete their two first years of study in a maximum of three years in order to encourage students to finish their studies quickly.

The following are entitled to receive financial assistance for higher education from the State:

- students with Luxembourg nationality and citizens of other Member States of the European Union resident in Luxembourg;

- foreign students who are not citizens of a Member State of the European Union who are domiciled in the Grand Duchy and hold a school-leaving certificate awarded by the European School in Luxembourg or another Luxembourg school.

The reform of the 1977 Act on financial assistance for higher education studies is part of a vast programme to reform the Luxembourg education system as a whole. The objective was to promote young people's pursuit of higher education in Luxembourg by awarding them more favourable assistance. Part of this financial assistance may consist of a non-refundable grant and/or an interest-bearing loan. Grants are awarded on the basis of the economic circumstances (taxable income, other aid already awarded) of students and/or their parents. The State guarantees loans awarded by financial institutions. It also arranges for students to receive very favourable interest rates (2%) and pays the difference between this and the market rate.

Certain higher education institutions such as the International University Institute award a certain number of grants to students who provide a recommendation from a university establishment or a superior, if they are already employed, along with their application.

No financial assistance is awarded to citizens of foreign countries who are not domiciled in Luxembourg and whose parents do not pay taxes in the country.

It should be noted that the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training also makes grants available to students for post-university studies, as well as research training (the latter type of grant was created on the basis of the Act of 9 March 1987 on the organisation of public research in Luxembourg).

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The higher education reforms carried out during the 1980s and early 1990s made it possible to create courses oriented primarily towards professional practice (for example the short course in higher management studies' at the University Centre). The reform of teacher training for the pre-school and primary levels and for advanced educational child care staff has not diminished the importance of its practical orientation.

At present, secondary school teachers receive practical training in a teaching placement lasting three years. During this period, teacher trainees are already assigned to *lycées* or technical *lycées* where they teach a certain number of lessons while they take theoretical training courses and seminars and prepare a final thesis.

Training for teaching staff in pre-school and primary education lasting three years also includes several practical training periods in schools.

Finally, additional training courses provided at the University Centre at post-university level for future lawyers and company auditors focus primarily on professional practice.

Note also that training leading to the *BTS* (advanced technical training certificate) created on the basis of the Act on the reform of technical secondary education of 4 September 1990 combines theoretical courses and practical work and training placements.

The Act reforming higher education did not aim to modify existing data at the level of the training courses mentioned above.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

There have been no reforms designed solely to modify teaching methods in higher education. Courses are provided *ex cathedra* at *CUNLUX*, whereas at *IST*, they involve practical placements. As a result, teachers enjoy complete autonomy and thus are free to choose their own teaching methods. As mentioned above, practical placements and professional experience in the field constitute an important aspect of advanced studies leading to the professions of teacher, lawyer and technician.

Of the teaching methods employed, *ex cathedra* courses, practical examinations and work placements in companies should be mentioned. The implementation of advanced technical training (*BTS*) at post-secondary level, which was conceived from the beginning as combining theory and practice, has had a strong influence on teaching methods in these courses.

Luxembourg still does not provide national distance learning at the present time. Individuals interested in this type of teaching generally have to turn to foreign institutions operating in this field.

Given the Grand Duchy's particular situation in the field of higher education, it does not currently possess a structured or even organised teaching body similar to those in neighbouring countries for the training of teachers in higher education. As a result, there is no specific training for teachers providing courses in the various post-secondary teaching institutions. However, as most higher education teachers in Luxembourg also provide courses at secondary level, they have received very intensive and in-depth teacher training.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

As it lacks a full higher education structure, the phenomenon of internationalisation is rather different in Luxembourg. In fact, the majority of students in Luxembourg are obliged to take courses or pursue higher education abroad. Statistically speaking, students most often attend higher education institutions in the neighbouring countries (Belgium, France and Germany). As the Luxembourg University Centre currently only offers the first year of university education in a limited number of fields of study, numerous equivalency agreements have been concluded between the University Centre and foreign universities to allow students who graduate from the University Centre to be admitted to the second year of study.

In addition, the University Centre frequently carries out academic exchanges and participates in research projects with partner universities. Some professors from partner universities also provide courses at the University Centre. The Higher Institute of Technology, the Higher Institute for Pedagogical Study and Research and the Institute for Educational and Social Studies all cultivate partnerships with similar institutions abroad. Luxembourg's peculiar situation with respect to higher education and its geographical and cultural situation generally have always led it to be very open to foreign influences.

Nonetheless, unlike other countries in the European Union, only a small percentage of foreign students attend higher education institutions in Luxembourg. This percentage includes those students who, while not Luxembourgers by nationality, are residents of the Grand Duchy.

Given Luxembourg's peculiar linguistic situation, higher education courses are usually held in French or even German (at the Higher Institute of Technology). Preparatory language courses for foreign students

are not currently offered, however. For this reason, knowledge of French, German or English depending on the case is an automatic requirement, although there is no language test at the beginning of training or studies.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Luxembourg is a relatively rich country which depends primarily on the service sector (commerce and banking). Recently, however, it has been necessary to temper the image of Luxembourg as a privileged society. The number of young people studying in Luxembourg and abroad continues to increase, but, despite the creation of numerous new positions, Luxembourg has to contend with increasing unemployment among university graduates. This is due to the fact that the labour market extends across national borders and creates competition with graduates in the border regions.

The Act of 1996 did not aim to create a full university in Luxembourg. Instead, it was designed to extend higher education's mission in the different subject areas as a whole.

As a result, the doors have been opened and future developments could lead, if not to a full university, at least to a higher education system that is more complete than it is now.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>BTS</i>	<i>Brevet de technicien supérieur</i> (advanced technical training certificate)
<i>CUNLUX</i>	<i>Centre universitaire de Luxembourg</i> (Luxembourg University Centre)
<i>IST</i>	<i>Institut supérieur de technologie</i> (Higher Institute of Technology)
<i>ISERP</i>	<i>Institut supérieur d'études et de recherches pédagogiques</i> (Higher Institute for Pedagogical Studies and Research)
<i>IEES</i>	<i>Institut d'études éducatives et sociales</i> (Institute for Educational and Social Studies)
<i>IFEM</i>	<i>Institut de formation pour éducateurs et moniteurs</i> (Training Institute for Educational Child Care Staff and Instructors)
<i>CRP</i>	<i>Centres de recherches publics</i> (public research centres)

Bibliography

Legislation on education

Act of 18 June 1969 on higher education and the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

Grand-Ducal Regulation of 7 July 1969 on the academic organisation of university courses

Act of 11 February 1974 on the status of the University Centre

Act of 8 December 1977 on state financial assistance for higher education studies

Act of 21 May 1979 on the creation of the Higher Institute of Technology

Act of 6 September 1983 on the creation of the Higher Institute for Pedagogical Study and Research

Grand-Ducal Regulation of 25 October 1984 on the organisation of a university 'short course in higher management studies' within the law and economics faculty

Act of 9 March 1987 on the organisation of public research in Luxembourg

Act of 7 September 1987 on the extension of the University Centre

Act of 6 August 1990 on the organisation of training educational child care staff

Grand-Ducal Regulation of 29 November 1991 on the organisation of training leading to an advanced technical training certificate

Act of 11 August 1996 reforming higher education



Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

NETHERLANDS

National description

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THE NETHERLANDS

INTRODUCTION

The Dutch higher education system consists of university education (*Wetenschappelijk onderwijs - WO*), higher professional education (*Hoger beroepsonderwijs - HBO*) and distance learning at higher education level. In 1996/97, it comprised 13 universities¹, 62 institutions for higher professional education (*HBO* institutions or *hogescholen*) and the Open University (*Open Universiteit*). These are the institutions which are funded by the national government. There are also a further eight university institutions and 30 *HBO* institutions which are 'appointed'. Appointed institutions are not funded by the government, but they offer courses leading to a diploma which is equivalent to a diploma issued by a funded institution. Funded and appointed institutions both have to comply with the same rules with regard to the provision, organisation and assured quality of their courses. Students on these courses have equal rights in relation to student grants.

These publicly funded institutions are usually organised as private institutions². When speaking of the public/private aspect, it is therefore necessary to distinguish between the method of financing and the organisational form of the institutions. In the Netherlands, there are different dividing lines between public and private depending on whether one considers financing or organisational form.

The Government spends about NLG 5 billion on university education and about NLG 2.5 billion on higher professional education. Universities also make a further NLG 1 billion each year from their own research and development activities.

In 1996, there were some 165,400 students registered at universities (including the Agricultural University) and about 272,200 at *HBO* institutions (including Higher Agricultural Education institutions), making a total of 436,600 or around 2.8% of the population of the Netherlands. There were also some 60,000 students registered with the Open University. (Source: key data from *OcenW*, stat. info agrar. onderwijs (LNV, internet)).

Although higher education has been regulated since 1993 by a single law, the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW*), the system explicitly assumes that higher education falls into two separate parts, each with its own aims. Universities provide academic education and conduct scientific research. *HBO* institutions provide higher professional education and may conduct research in so far as it is related to their educational activities. (*WHW*, art. 1.3). There are a large number of identical rules which apply to both types of institution. There is a separate Chapter 13 in the *WHW* for scientific research institutions, regulating their administration and structure.

Under the *WHW*, the institutions have a considerable degree of autonomy. Everything which is not regulated or only broadly regulated by law can be determined freely by the institutions themselves. On the other hand, there is a strict obligation of accountability. This is considered in detail in the following sections.

Looking back at the past 20 years, one can see that government policy aimed at encouraging the higher education system to develop into a flexible, differentiated, efficient and cost-conscious system is beginning to bear fruit. Institutions have been given more freedom to make their own decisions, and as

¹ Including the Wageningen Agricultural University, which is not financed by the Ministry for Education, Culture and Science but by the Ministry for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries.

² In the Netherlands the term 'special institutions' is used for these.

a result they can respond more efficiently and flexibly. A quality control system has been introduced, which has enhanced performance. A more differentiated system is also beginning to emerge, whereby students are given more opportunities to take a higher education course which fits in with their own specific situation and interests and also with the needs of society.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

In this summary of key legislation and policy documents in the field of higher education and research since 1980, those in the area of university education will be considered first. This will be followed by looking at the area of higher professional education, which was still part of the secondary education sector at the beginning of the period under review, and then at the Open University, which was not founded until 1984. Since the *WHW* came into force in August 1993, the latter two parts have been included in the general legal framework governing higher education.

University education

The beginning of the period under review is marked by the Memorandum *Higher Education for the Many* (*Hoger onderwijs voor velen*) which was debated in the Lower House at the end of 1978. This Memorandum set out a number of principles for higher education:

- everyone who is entitled to do so and has the appropriate aptitude and interest, should be put in a position to pursue a course of higher education;
- attempts will be made to create a two-phase structure for university education;
- the length of the course up to degree examinations must not exceed four years;
- the period of enrolment can only exceed the course length by one year, i.e. a total of five years;
- after the degree examination, selection will take place for a second phase (lasting one or two years) in which researchers and teachers are trained, and specific vocational courses also take place.

The Memorandum responded to the increasing demand in society for people educated to a higher level, which was seen as essential for economic growth. At the same time, there was considerable concern during this period about the poor performance of universities: high student wastage rates and long actual periods of study. There was also a need for greater differentiation in university education. Not every student had the ambition or talent to become an academic researcher. Furthermore, there was a need in society for people with different types of higher education.

In 1981, the Two-Phase-Structure Act (*Wet Twee-Fasenstructuur*) was passed. This law structured university education into two phases. The first phase had a nominal duration of four years, beginning with a preliminary year and ending with the degree examination. The second phase, lasting two years, was intended for specific vocational courses (such as medical or pharmaceutical training), specific training for scientific researchers and teacher training.

The task of structuring this second phase of education, except for the existing specific vocational training courses, which fitted into the new structure relatively easily, was left to the universities. At the same time, the Academic Statute (*Academisch Statuut*) was amended. This statute comprised rules for the structure and content of university examinations along with a summary of all study programmes and rules for adding study programmes.

The introduction of the Two-Phase-Structure Act on 1 Sept 1982 forced universities to take a careful look at their study programmes and structure them in such a way that students could complete their courses within the prescribed four-year period.

The university system also did not escape the need to take a careful look at its own structure. A rigorous rationalisation requirement described in a 1982 White Paper amounting to about 7% (NLG 258 million) of the universities' total budget (referred to as Division of Tasks and Concentration, *Taakverdeling en concentratie - TVC*) obliged universities to delineate and harmonise their tasks. In this, the Government's philosophy of control, which is to give the institutions autonomy and responsibility, already becomes evident. The Minister determined the framework terms and conditions, and the institutions themselves were able to decide whether they wanted to make savings through regional cooperation, concentration of specific courses in specific universities, exchanging tasks or disposing of specific parts of the university.

In 1986, this was followed by a similar second rationalisation operation, known as the Selective Contraction and Expansion (*Selectieve Krimp en Groei - SKG*) operation based on a second White Paper. In this, however, the Minister himself, on the basis of recommendations from experts, determined the measures which would be used, such as the closure of the dental courses in Groningen and Utrecht. Both operations indirectly led to universities becoming more distinct from each other.

In 1985, the 1981 University Education Act (*Wet op het wetenschappelijk onderwijs - WWO 1981*) was passed after a change in government. The main aim of this law was to increase the effectiveness of university administration. This law can be seen as an intermediate step along the road that would ultimately lead to the *WHW*.

It was about this time that the relationship between the Government and higher education institutions changed. It was recognised that the Government was not capable of becoming involved with the way the institutions worked on a detailed level without seriously hampering their development. The policy Memorandum *Higher Education, Autonomy and Quality (Hoger onderwijs, Autonomie en Kwaliteit - HOAK)* which was published in 1985 contained a new philosophy of government control, which was now based on 'control at a distance', globally and on a macro level, and also on 'self-management'. The autonomy that the institutions were given as a result was intended to lead to increased flexibility in higher education. From that time onwards, the accountability of institutions (with regard to the way they spend government funds) was based on a system of (external) quality control. This was mainly to be carried out by the higher education system itself, under the responsibility of the universities' organisation the Association of Dutch Universities (*Vereniging van samenwerkende nederlandse universiteiten - VSNU*). The Minister was only to be obliquely involved in the process, in the sense that the Higher Education Inspectorate was responsible for evaluating the quality of the quality control system itself (a form of meta-evaluation).

The changed philosophy of control also required a different approach to policy planning and development, both for the Government and for institutions. A two-year planning cycle therefore came into effect from 1987 onwards. Once every two years, the Government issues a so-called draft Higher Education and Research Plan (*Hoger onderwijs en onderzoek plan - HOOP*), presenting the Government's ideas and perspectives on the development of higher education over the subsequent four years. After discussion with the parties involved, the adapted plan is then established by Parliament. The *HOOP* also always includes an estimate of the financing of the institutions' activities described over the stated period of four years.

Legislation also had to be adapted in line with the new philosophy of control, and since it was also considered to be applicable to higher professional education, a law was drafted for the whole system, the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act, (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek - WHW*), which was passed in 1992 and came into force in August 1993. This law replaced some 17 other laws and regulations.

The *WHW* is emphatically based on a system whereby university education and higher professional education are two similar but distinct types of education. This is already clear from the difference in aims, and also from the fact that the law includes separate Chapters on the administrative organisation of universities (Chapter 9) and institutions for higher professional education (Chapter 10). It is also established that the content of a course must be defined either as a university education course or as a higher professional education course. Most of the regulations are identical, however.

The Open University, which was founded in 1984, was also brought under the *WHW* regime, as were various institutions in the field of research, such as the Royal Dutch Academy of Science (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen - KNAW*).

The *WHW* assumes that the institutions are independent, but does not say so in as many words. Everything which is not regulated or only broadly regulated by the law can automatically be freely determined by the institutions themselves. This is countered by a special responsibility, which takes the form of various accountability obligations, such as an institutional plan, budget, reporting, etc.

More details of the general regulations in the *WHW* can be found in the *WHW* Executive Decision (*Uitvoeringsbesluit WHW*, OJ 1993, 487) which, for example, defines the rules governing the Central Register of Higher Education Courses (*Centraal register opleidingen hoger onderwijs - CROHO*) and in the *WHW* Funding Decision (*Bekostigingsbesluit WHW*), described in section 2.1, which sets out how the national contribution to the institutions is distributed.

More recently the independence of the institutions has been further enhanced, for example by the Housing and Expenditure Decentralisation Act (OJ 1994, 880), the Working Conditions Regulation Decentralisation Act (OJ 1994, 942), and the laws on policy organisation and co-determination which are discussed below.

Higher Professional Education

Higher professional education came into being in 1968 as a special type of education when the Secondary Education Act (*Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs*) was introduced. This law (known as the Mammoth Act) regulated all forms of education from primary to tertiary education. A very large number of institutions, which were very small in comparison with the universities, each provided courses in a specific vocational sector, such as the higher technical school (*hogere technische school - HTS*), but their continued development was severely hampered by the detailed regulation which was characteristic of secondary education at the time. Rapid growth during the 1970s and early 1980s gave rise to a debate on the internal structure of higher professional education (*HBO*) and its relationship with the university. The internal structure was dealt with by the Memorandum on increases in scope, distribution of tasks and concentration in higher professional education (*Schaalvergroting, taakverdeling en concentratie in het hoger beroepsonderwijs - STC*), in which it was proposed to create medium-sized multidisciplinary institutions through mergers. This was successful. In mid-1987, more than 350 institutions had been merged into 85, of which 45 were large or very large institutions. In 1985, the Higher Professional Education Act (*Wet op het hoger beroepsonderwijs - WHBO*) took higher professional education out of the secondary education sector and transferred it to higher education as a distinct type of education. At the same time, the philosophy of government control based on the autonomy of the institution, which was already in place in the university education sector, was introduced. Practical aspects were regulated by the *WHBO* Implementation Act (*Invoeringswet WHBO*), which was passed in 1986. Higher professional education institutions became *hogescholen* (*HBO* institutions), which until then had been the name of the mono-sectoral (technical and agricultural) university institutions. These were renamed universities. In 1992, the *WHW* was passed by Parliament, bringing higher professional education, university education and higher education through distance learning together within a single legal framework.

The Open University

The Open University was founded in 1984 as an (alternative) form of higher education and as part of the adult education system (second chance education). The *WHW* of 1992 also brought this into a single legal framework alongside university education and higher professional education. Since then, the Open University has also been given a role (as a service provider) in the area of educational renewal (educational material and the use of new media) within the higher education sector as a whole.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Situation in 1996/97

As described above, the guiding principles in the relationship between the Government and higher institutions are those of government control at a distance, and institutional autonomy and self-management. The Government's responsibility mainly relates to a concern for effectiveness on a macro-level, the quality of the higher education system and, for example, rules governing the legal position of staff. The institutions' responsibility now more or less involves defining the range of courses, planning and organising scientific research, carrying out contract activities, checking the quality of education and research, the way in which government funds are spent (block grant), personnel policy, working conditions policy, housing policy, structuring the administrative organisation and co-determination.

These increased responsibilities require greater administrative efficiency, which is why the administrative organisation of universities, *HBO* institutions and the Open University and the principles and details of the co-determination system were considerably altered in 1996 and 1997. The differences which still existed when the *WHW* was introduced have been lessened as a result.

For public universities, the implications of the University Administrative Organisation Modernisation Act (*Wet modernisering universitaire bestuursorganisatie - MUB, 1977*) are largely that administration of the institution is controlled by an Administration Board (*College van bestuur*) and a Supervisory Board (*Raad van toezicht*). The Supervisory Board appoints and dismisses the members of the Administration Board, has a general supervisory role in relation to the administration and management of the institution and has a right of approval, for example over the budget. The Supervisory Board is accountable to the Minister, and its members are appointed and dismissed by him. There are also some members from the business sector. The Administration Board is responsible for the day-to-day management of the institution. It appoints the deans (see below) and staff, and determines the regulations governing management and administration and the budget. The Board is accountable to the Supervisory Board, and is appointed and dismissed by it.

For the **special** (private) **universities**, the Board of the Foundation or Association acts as a kind of supervisory board. Otherwise, the administration and structure of the special institutions must, wherever possible, comply with the legal requirements for the public universities.

Management of the faculty is the responsibility of a dean (professor) or a faculty board comprising several individuals including the dean. The dean is responsible for the general leadership of the faculty, and is accountable to the Administration Board. Tasks in the areas of management and administration can be delegated to him by the Administration Board. He sets down the educational and examination regulations and also the annual research programme, and supervises their implementation. He is also either directly or indirectly responsible for the organisation of every course which is run within the faculty.

The new model of administration is based on the principles of co-determination. Staff and students are represented on a half-and-half basis in a council which may, depending on the issue involved, provide

advice or approve decisions which are taken by the administration of the institution. In contrast to the *HBO* institutions, the allocation of competence at both central and decentralised level is stipulated by law. There are separate stipulations for the university council, faculty council and research institutes and research schools. The areas for which co-determination of the university council applies, include the institution plan, the structure of the quality assurance system and the status of students.

The administration board can also choose to declare that the Works Councils Act (*Wet op de ondernemingsraden - WOR*) (1950, last major revision 1990) applies to the university instead of the co-determination system stipulated in the law. This choice is applicable for a minimum of five years. This *WOR* is a general co-determination arrangement for the personnel within a company. In such a case, the college itself must establish a co-determination system for students which is at least equal to the one stipulated by law.

This practical aspect is an expression of the 'enterprising university' philosophy which has become much more influential during the past decade, at the expense of the 'democratic university' dating from the 1970s.

For **HBO institutions**, the regulations in relation to administrative organisation and co-determination were amended in early 1996. Under these, institutions are free to regulate their own internal structure. It has to be determined in the administrative regulations which (legal) tasks and authorities are delegated to the Administration Board by the institutional administration, and also which tasks are then sub-delegated, for example to a faculty administration. The statutory tasks of the institutional administration include providing quality assurance and defining an institution plan, budget etc.

It is stipulated that there is a co-determination board linked to each college, with half its members taken from the staff and the other half from the students. If there are faculties or other units, these must also have a sub-council with a corresponding composition. There is also a legal distribution of the powers of advice and approval of the council or part of the council. The matters for which the right of advice and approval applies correspond to those in the universities.

For the **Open University** a change in the stipulations in relation to the administrative organisation took place in 1997 (OJ 1997, 284). With this, the administration has been modernised and adjusted to fit the specific tasks of the Open University, on the basis of the *MUB* which applies to universities. A Supervisory Board and an Administration Board are also distinguished, and these are in a similar relationship to each other.

With regard to co-determination, the Works Councils Act applies to the staff of the Open University. For students, a Students' Council is set up with a maximum of nine members. Its powers are comparable to those of the other universities and *HBO* institutions.

1.1. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

In view of the different historical development of university education and higher professional education (and the Open University), the history of the administrative organisation and co-determination is described separately here.

University education

The administrative organisation of the universities was, until recently (1997) regulated according to what can be described as a participation model. That model was based on the principle of representation of students, academic and non-academic staff on the institution's administrative bodies. The interested

parties participated directly in the general administration of the institution, because they were members of the administrative bodies. This model of administration was introduced in 1970, after the student demonstrations of the late 1960s, through the University Administrative Reforms Act (*Wet universitaire bestuursorganisatie - WUB*) and it was subsequently also included in the 1981 *WVO*, which was finally passed in 1985, and in the 1992 *WHW*. The desire to strengthen the administrative ability of the institutions led to the change described above based on the principle of co-determination. For the Open University, these principles of co-determination were applicable from its foundation, and for the higher professional education institutions they applied from the time when they were incorporated into the higher education system in 1986. This change strengthened the position of personnel, which is expressed in the option open to the Administration Board to declare that the Works Councils Act is applicable to the university. The influence of students, however, is limited to those areas which directly affect them.

Higher professional education

Developments in the administrative organisation of higher professional education are inseparably linked to the increase in scale which has taken place in this sector since 1980. In about 1980 there were some 400 fairly small schools. Now, after a wave of mergers and other changes, there are about 60, including a few very large institutions (with up to 40,000 students). It goes without saying that this rapid growth has imposed new requirements on the administrative organisation. In the *WHBO*, therefore, alongside the traditional central management, the possibility of forming an Administrative Board is also introduced, more along the lines of what was usual in the university education sector. But the institutions are free to regulate their own internal structure.

HBO institutions have had co-determination councils since they were formed in 1986. Staff and elected student representatives both had seats on these. In early 1996 (OJ 1996, 125), the rules were modernised. The facilities for members of the sub-councils were enhanced. Dispute resolution and the procedural position of the various councils were also improved. There is also a legal distribution of the powers of advice and approval of the council or part of the council. The staff has been put in a stronger position. This development corresponds to what has taken place in the rest of the higher education system.

The Open University

When the Open University was founded, its administration consisted of an Administration Board, which was responsible for managing the institution, and an Administrative Council (with 21 members) which was responsible among other things for setting the budget, the development plan and the educational programme.

The Open University also had a co-determination council, with half the seats allocated to staff and the other half to students. In 1997, the relevant regulations were amended.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

2.1.1. Situation in 1996/97

The funding of education (at *HBO* institutions and universities) and research (at universities only) comes from the national contribution, which is fixed annually by the Minister in accordance with the national budget. This national contribution is (apart from the division of tasks into education and research) made freely available to the institutions (as a block grant).

With regard to the funding of education, only those courses which are registered in the *CROHO* are funded. The registration of courses is subject to a number of specific legal conditions. A registration can

also be withdrawn. The *HOOP* includes an estimate of the financing of the institutions' activities as described over the period of four years.

The national contribution to higher education does not cover the fulfilment of all the institutions' statutory tasks. Hence, there are two other money flows in addition to this national contribution, which is known as the first money flow.

The second money flow mainly relates to financing of research in universities by the Dutch Scientific Research Organisation (*Nederlandse organisatie voor wetenschappelijk onderzoek - NWO*). The third money flow comprises the income that the institutions derive from contract activities in the areas of both education and research, commissioned by external funders. The institutions also receive money from the tuition fees that they collect. This also goes for the *HBO* institutions.

In 1995/96, the financing of the universities (covered by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (*OCenW*)) amounted to about NLG 7.14 billion, divided up as follows: first money flow, 5 billion, of which 1.63 billion was for education and 3.37 billion for research; second money flow, 350 million; third money flow, 1.42 billion and tuition fees, 370 million.

In 1995, more than NLG 246 million were spent on education by the Agricultural University of Wageningen. About NLG 70 million were spent by the Open University.

For the *HBO* institutions, *OCenW* financing provided NLG 3.276 billion, subdivided as follows: general national contribution, NLG 2.279 billion, income from tuition fees, NLG 549 million, and other income, NLG 448 million. Almost NLG 124 million was spent on higher agricultural education in 1995.

The method of distributing the national contribution is worked out in the *WHW* Funding Decision (*Bekostigingsbesluit WHW*, OJ 1993, 715). This was originally done for the universities according to the *HOBEK* model, which was introduced in 1993. This allocation model indicated how the available budget (first money flow) should be distributed between the institutions. It consisted of three components: education (23%), research (64%) and a component associated with the link between education and research (13%). There were also contributions for legal benefits (retainers) and investments (in accommodation, etc.) In 1997, this model was replaced by a model under which financing was less dependent on the number of students, the so-called *STABEK* model, and further developments are under discussion.

In the *HOBEK* model, there was an educational component based on the number of registered students and the number of successfully completed courses. Also taken into account was that students in the sciences and on medical, technical and agricultural courses cost more than students in other subject areas (e.g. languages and social sciences). The distribution ratio that was determined in this way was applied to the budget available for education. In the new model the educational component has been made less dependent on student numbers and the number of degrees. This is to make the financing of education less dependent on student numbers as they fall due to demographic changes. The institutions also get to keep the tuition fees paid by their students.

The research component consists of four elements, a basic payment, a payment (again dependent on the sector and type) for certain doctorates and certificates for designers³, a payment for research schools and the rest for strategic considerations.

³ The Dutch higher education system includes two-year postgraduate courses for industrial designers.

The third component is based on the realisation that university education is more expensive than college education, which is clearly due to the scientific character of university education. The relationship between education and research increases the costs of the university, hence the extra payment. In the new plans, this is added to the educational component. The level of the contributions and, for example, the payments for degrees, etc. is determined in the Higher Education Funding Regulations.

The financing of *HBO* institutions is more clearly defined. The available budget is distributed on the basis of the *WHW* Funding Decision and the Higher Education Funding Regulation which is based upon it. The funding model pays out on the basis of graduate numbers and dropout numbers in each department and each institution. The better the performance, the higher the contribution.

Until 1997, the Open University was financed from a national contribution consisting of a basic component, a component that depends on the production of course units, an investment component and a legal benefits component.

2.1.2. Historical summary

University education

In 1980, the budget for the universities was defined as a basic amount plus an amount related to the number of students (standardised). In 1983, this financing model was replaced by the so-called Places-Money Model (*Plaatsen-Geld-Model - PGM*). The aim of this was to make 'research' independent of student numbers. It was a fairly complex model⁴ and there were no 'incentives'. One element which, although fairly small, turned out to be most important in view of later developments was the introduction of conditionally financed research. With this, for the first time in the Dutch education and research sector, a system of quality assessment by peers was linked to financing. In 1993, the *HOBEEK* financing model already described above was introduced for universities.

Higher professional education

Before 1986, higher professional education was financed on the basis of cost. After the introduction of the 1986 *WHBO*, a national contribution was provided within the context of the greater financial autonomy given to institutions. This amounts to about 90% of the institutions' income.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION⁵

As already stated above, guaranteeing the quality of education and research is one of the central factors in the current relationship between the Government and higher education institutions. The Government provides finance, but it demands quality in return. That does not mean that the Government checks on quality itself, but that the Government has issued regulations intended to enhance quality. Hence, each institution has to have set rules for monitoring and determining the quality of education and research. A system has also been set up by umbrella organisations for universities (*VSNU*) and *HBO* institutions (*HBO Council*) to investigate the quality of education on a comparative basis through so-called visitation committees approximately once every five years for universities and every seven for *HBO* institutions. In this system, self-evaluation and evaluation through visitation both play a part. The standards, methods and criteria which apply here are set out in a protocol defined by the *VSNU* and *HBO Council* umbrella organisations. It is intended that these evaluations should lead to measures to further improve the quality of education.

⁴ See Koelman, 1988, for a description.

⁵ For this component, no distinction is made between the current situation and the historical situation.

The role of the Government, which is implemented by the Higher Education Inspectorate, consists of monitoring this quality control system and checking, for example, whether anything is done with the results of this process. This process is seen as a meta-evaluation. The Minister is also entitled to stop government financing of any course whose quality is persistently unsatisfactory.

Explicit quality control of education through visitation committees began in 1989 in the university education sector. It was a continuation of the method of assessing the performance of researchers which had been used previously, where 'peer review' had always been an important element. In 1990, it was also introduced in higher professional education, with the emphasis on review from the world of work.

Another important element of the quality control system is the study progress check, which was agreed in 1990 and has now become a legal requirement. As well as the opportunity to call individual students to account about their study progress, this also makes it possible to analyse and assess education and the educational programme in a structural way. Since the efficiency of courses has a part to play in the financing of institutions, this element also has some significance.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

3.1. SITUATION IN 1996/97

Access to higher education is guaranteed to those who have the required prior education. For university education, this is at least an academic secondary education certificate (*Voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs - VWO*). For higher professional education, either senior general secondary education (*Hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs - HAVO*), *VWO* or senior secondary vocational education (*Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs - MBO*) must have been successfully completed. For some *HBO* courses (particularly in arts subjects), additional requirements in relation to specific skills or qualities may be imposed. For many courses, the person's previous education must include certain subjects. A maximum of two subjects can be required as compulsory for each course. There are usually ways of making up for these deficiencies. There is a central national applications procedure. This only applies to government-funded institutions, and not for the so-called 'appointed' institutions (see Introduction). An annual *numerus fixus* can be determined for certain courses on the basis of capacity problems in institutions (responsibility of the institutions) or labour market expectations (responsibility of the Government) in relation to these courses. In that case, a weighted draw procedure⁶ is used to determine who will be given access to the course. For the Open University there is only a minimum age of 18.

People over 20 who do not meet the formal prior education requirements can be exempted from them on the basis of an alternative admission procedure (*Colloquium doctum*).

Only an efficient education system will be capable of allowing large groups of students to reach the finishing post without unnecessary delay. Students cannot be expected to gain a degree in four years if the university or *HBO* institution structures courses poorly, fails to mark papers in time, etc. In addition to the measures taken within the context of student finance, such as the performance grant, measures have therefore been taken which should improve 'completability' and reduce wastage. To this end, the Quality and Completability Act (*Wet Kwaliteit en studeerbaarheid*) was introduced in 1996 on the basis of consultation with universities, *HBO* institutions and student organisations. It introduces a temporary (1997-99) fund of NLG 500 million for improving education and also gives regulations for an institutional plan for quality management. Ongoing consultation on this subject will also take place between institutions, student organisations and the Minister.

⁶ Important changes are in preparation.

3.2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

At the beginning of the period under review, the higher education system in the Netherlands only consisted of university education. Today's 'higher professional education' was still governed by the Secondary Education Act. The Open University did not yet exist. It was not founded until 1984.

Before 1992

For **university education** at the eight universities (multiple faculties) which existed in 1980 and five *hogescholen* (only one faculty), the principle applied that everyone who had successfully gained a certificate from a university education preparatory school was entitled to be admitted to the course of their choice.

On the grounds of the 1972 Student Registration Authorisation Act (*Machtigingswet inschrijving studenten*), capacity problems (where the institutions could not cope with the influx), were the only reason allowed for imposing a *numerus fixus* for certain courses (mostly in medicine). Admission to these courses took place through a system of weighted draws. The Authorisation Act was originally valid for two years, but it was extended a number of times, and in 1984 an Authorisation Act for higher professional education was also passed. In the same year, the situation in the labour market (social prospects of a course) became another criterion for setting a *numerus fixus* for specific courses in both sectors.

For certain courses (e.g. theology and medicine), there was an additional requirement that certain subjects (such as Greek and Latin, physics and chemistry) had to be included in the student's prior education.

For **higher professional education**, the introduction of the *WHBO* and the associated *WHBO* Implementation Act in late 1985 stipulated that admission to courses would take place in a similar way to university education. Everyone who had at least a certificate of higher general secondary education (five years) would be admitted. Since the regulations were not all completed in time, the old system was temporarily allowed to continue, whereby the competent authority in the institution decides who is admitted to the course. The regulations which were stipulated were finally incorporated in the *WHW*. From that time onwards, higher professional education institutions could no longer select students, except for a number of specific courses, particularly in the area of the arts, etc. The validity of the two Authorisation Acts was extended in 1986 (OJ 640) and 1990 (OJ 578).

After 1992

When the *WHW* was introduced in 1992 and replaced the laws on university education and professional vocational education, little changed for the universities with regard to accessibility. The two Authorisation Acts, which created the possibility of a *numerus fixus*, were incorporated into the *WHW*. In order to retain a perspective on the development of student numbers, a Central Registration Procedure was introduced for all funded institutions. From then onwards this had to take place through an administrative organisation, the *Informatie Beheer Groep* (Information Management Group).

The higher professional education sector, which had until then been able to decide who would be admitted to its courses, lost part of that freedom. For them the rule also applied that in general they had to admit everyone with an adequate certificate of secondary education.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

4.1. SITUATION IN 1996/97

Student financing is regulated by the Student Finance Act (*Wet op de studiefinanciering - WSF*), which originally dates from 1986 but has been amended several times since then. Students in (full-time) higher education are entitled to student finance in certain forms up to the age of 27⁷. Thereafter they can only obtain student finance in the form of a loan to complete their studies. For such students (since 1996/97) there is no longer a minimum age.

The level of student finance is determined by the monthly budget. This is made up of the cost of living including travelling costs, books and study resources, tuition fees and medical expenses. The cost of living is different depending on whether students live independently or at home.

The monthly budget is made available in the form of a loan. Interest is charged from the month after it is granted. If a student gains 50% of the available credits in the first year (a complete year of study comprises 40 credits), repayment of (part of) the loan for that year is cancelled. If the final diploma is gained within the number of years allowed for the course (usually four) plus two years, repayment of (part of) the loan is cancelled for the later years of the course excluding the first year. This is called the performance grant: if the student performs well, the original loan is (partly) converted into a grant.

4.2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Originally the system of student financial support was based on a combination of three components: grants and interest-free advances, multiple child benefit and tax deductions. At the end of 1984, a bill entitled *Outline of a New Student Finance System* was presented to the Lower House. The principle was that everyone between the ages of 18 and 27 who studied in recognised educational establishments should be entitled to a basic grant. There were also supplementary grants and interest-bearing loans, the level of which was dependent on the type of education and the income of the student or his parents. This finance would go directly to the student. In 1986, these proposals were introduced as the *WSF*, with one small adaptation: the age limit (for beginning a course) was raised from 27 to 30. This age limit was later again reduced to 27.

As stated above, the level of student finance was based on the monthly budget. This monthly budget was paid out as a basic grant, loan and supplementary grant. The basic grant was different for students living away from home and those living at home. The loan was interest-free during the course, and repayments had to begin two years after completing the course (depending on ability to pay). This repayment period extended to a maximum of 15 years. Any residual debt was cancelled. The benefit could be reduced on the basis of the income of the student's parents, his/her partner or the student's own income. The basic grant was independent of these.

Over the years, the monthly budget was adjusted several times (i.e. lowered) to absorb various cost-cutting requirements. In 1991, the travelling expenses element was altered. Every student was given a general public transport card, the *OV* student card. Due to its great popularity, the general character of the card was slightly restricted. From 1994 onwards, students have had to choose either a weekday card or a weekend card.

⁷ Important changes are in preparation.

The loan that was available to students was originally interest-free during the period of study. In 1990, it was investigated as to whether student loans could be made independent, but this was not done because it would have led to an excessively high interest rate for students. Since 1992, the loans have been in accordance with the market: a cost-covering interest rate is also charged during the course.

From 1995 onwards, all students can borrow up to the monthly budget, regardless of their parents' income. This is a result of the Student Independence Act (*Wet student op eigen benen*) which aimed among other things to increase the autonomy of students. The scope for additional earnings was also widened. From the academic year 1996/97, the lower age limit of 18 was abandoned. Students under the age of 18 are now also eligible for student finance.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. SITUATION IN 1996/97

Initial education is provided in the form of courses⁸, full-time, part-time and 'dual'. In principle, a distinction is made between courses at university institutions and courses at higher professional education institutions. A course belongs to one or other of these categories.

Courses are subdivided into (a number of related) course units. There is an examination linked to each course, and an interim examination linked to each course unit. The study load required for each course and each course unit has to be expressed in credits, where one credit corresponds to 40 hours of study. A complete year of study comprises 42 credit points or 1,680 hours. For most full-time courses at general universities and *HBO* institutions, 168 credits have to be earned, which corresponds to four years of study. For many courses at technical universities and the Agricultural University, the course duration is 210 credits, i.e. five years, and for most university courses in medicine the number of credits is 252, i.e. six years.

The courses themselves are structured into course units with a specific study load, expressed in credits. Once a course unit has been successfully completed, the student receives the relevant credits. After gaining 42 credits from the first year the student is awarded the preliminary certificate. Once students have earned all the credits for the course and have completed the final exams, they are awarded the *baccalaureus* degree (*HBO*) or the *doctorandus* degree (university).

In principle, institutions are free to start up new courses. These are only eligible for government funding, however, if they are registered in the *CROHO*. Similarly, students can only obtain student finance for registered (full-time) courses. Registration only takes place if certain quality standards are met and if it is established that 'the way the course is provided can be considered effective, in view of all the facilities available in the higher education sector'. This means that the course really has to offer something new and must also fit into the effective distribution of tasks between institutions on a national level. An independent Education Supply Advisory Committee (*Adviescommissie Onderwijsaanbod - ACO*) assesses these applications and advises the Minister on them.

The Open University gives courses both in the field of university education and in higher professional education.

⁸ With the introduction of the *WHW* the term *opleiding* has replaced the older term *studierichting* (both translated as 'course').

Due to the desire to achieve greater differentiation, a few experiments began in 1995 with dual pathways (learning/working) in higher professional education, while other forms were also considered. See the section on future developments.

The details of the education provided are the responsibility of the competent authority for the institution. The Government only determines the educational framework within which the institutions have to operate.

The institutions are obliged to organise the study programme in such a way that the student can reasonably reach the pre-set study progress standards and can therefore meet the requirements which are imposed for student finance. The need to increase the efficiency of courses has drawn attention to four factors which play a part in this:

- the link between secondary education and higher education;
- the educational methods which are used at universities and *HBO* institutions;
- the structure of education there;
- the quality of teaching staff.

On the first point, attempts have been made in recent years to create a better link between the first phase of higher education and students' experience. This means more guidance, clearer learning goals and improved harmonisation between curricula in secondary education and higher education.

Secondly, attempts have been made to improve education in universities and *HBO* institutions. This effort is encouraged by the Government by awarding some of the institutions' financing on the basis of performance figures.

In the structuring of teaching, measures are taken to ensure that the educational load on students is maintained at an equal level, to enhance performance and prevent premature wastage. In recent years, a great deal of attention has been paid to this, partly after the investigation by the Wijnen Committee entitled *To do or not to do* in 1992 and the follow-up report by the Inspectorate entitled *Done or not done* in 1995, which observed that in many cases the student's study load is still distributed unevenly across the year.

In a gradual process over some decades the importance of the performance of education, even linking it to institutions' financing, has led to a clear emphasis on the educational qualifications of lecturers at universities. For many years, they were recruited on the basis of their quality as researchers. That determined their status within the university. During the last few years, various universities have introduced compulsory teacher training for their lecturers.

This is less of a problem in the *HBO* institutions, since the provision of education has always been their most important activity. Lecturers at *HBO* institutions are appointed on the basis of an *HBO* qualification and need a teaching qualification (to be obtained by following in-service didactical training).

Every institution is obliged to have a set of educational and examination regulations which define the procedures relating to education and assessment. The institution must also have a study monitoring system which makes it possible to follow the student's study progress. This makes it possible to identify the students who are having problems with studying at an early stage. They can then receive guidance, but at the end of the first year they may also be given a (binding) recommendation to stop studying or to transfer to a different course.

The transition between secondary education and higher education is expected to improve when the first intake of students from schools which have begun the renewed second phase of secondary education in August 1998 move on into higher education.

5.2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

University education

The greatest change in university education was no doubt caused by the requirement in the Two-Phase-Structure Act for courses (and the course units which make them up) to be expressed in terms of study load and credits. This forced the universities to place more emphasis on the harmonisation and weighting of all the elements in a course. There was also an incentive effect due to the link between the efficiency of institutions and the financing they receive. Thirdly, there was pressure from students, who have to meet the requirements for student finance supported by the Ministry, to make courses sufficiently 'completable'.

Higher professional education

Higher professional education has developed rapidly since the early 1980s and, in 1985, it was transferred from the secondary education sector to the higher education sector. The wave of mergers that went along with this resulted in a number of very large institutions, in some cases actually larger than universities.

According to the *WHBO*, which governed higher professional education from 1986, every institution had to draft an institutional plan justifying and describing the education given by that institution. With the introduction of the *WHW*, this stipulation has been replaced by a requirement for the institution to determine educational and examination regulations for each course or group of courses provided. This must include a description of the content of the course and the associated examination, the qualities in terms of knowledge, insight and skills that a student must have acquired on completion of the course, the structuring of the course into a preliminary phase, main phase, differentiation, course units for each phase and the study load for each phase and per unit, as well as setting out the study progress policy.

The obligation to describe the study programme in terms of study load and to express the programme in credits was new to the *HBO* sector, but had already existed in the university education sector since 1982. It was seen as one way of gaining an insight into, and eliminating, the obstacles which can hinder a student's study progress.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Before 1987, internationalisation in higher education was mainly significant within the context of development cooperation. As early as 1952, universities had jointly set up an organisation, the Dutch Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (*Nederlandse organisatie voor internationale samenwerking in het hoger onderwijs - Nuffic*), to structure cooperation with universities in developing countries, and many universities set up a *Bureau Buitenland* (Office of Foreign Affairs) to coordinate these relations. In later years, this organisation provided information on study in the Netherlands (to foreigners) and information on study abroad (for Dutch nationals).

In 1987, the process of internationalisation accelerated. In parallel with the developments which led to the introduction of the Erasmus programme, the draft Ministerial Note on Internationalisation for Education and Research was also published, making funds available to encourage the process of internationalisation in higher education. This took shape as the Internationalisation Incentive Programme (*Stimuleringsprogramma Internationalisering - STIR*), from 1988 to 1997, which was mainly intended to

promote an international orientation among students, to encourage institutions to give their courses an international dimension, to encourage foreign study and placements and to develop facilities to host foreign students. One important aspect of this programme was the attention that was paid to developing structural exchange links. The focus of this *STIR* programme was mainly in the area of education. The implementation of this programme, which was applicable to the whole higher education system, was also the responsibility of the *Nuffic*, which was appointed as the national implementation body for the Erasmus programme. The *Nuffic* changed its structure so that higher professional education also came to be represented in the organisation.

In 1991, *Pushing Back the Borders (Grenzen verleggen)*, Memorandum on the internationalisation of education, was presented to the Lower House. This Memorandum related to the whole educational sector. One important factor was the so-called border regions policy (*Grenslandenbeleid*). This means educational cooperation, particularly in the area of higher education, with North-Rhine Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Bremen and Flanders. The aim of the policy is to create an 'open higher education area' in these regions where there are no longer any obstacles to the choice of education throughout the area. In this context, it was agreed as early as 1992 by Flanders and the Netherlands that students from each region could take their student finance with them to the other region. In 1995, the Ministers for Education of these neighbouring areas signed the brief in which the joint principles of this cooperation were set out. On the basis of the *Pushing Back the Borders* Memorandum, the Cross-Border Regional Educational Cooperation for Border Regions Programme (*Grensoverschrijdende regionale onderwijssamenwerking voor de grensgebieden - GROS*) was started up in 1992, part of which (*GROS-HO*) related to higher education. In 1997, this part was merged with other activities in the same context, such as the 1997-2000 Incentive Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation in Higher Education to stimulate cross-border institutional cooperation, development of common joint-degree study programmes and student/staff mobility.

Other tools which were introduced at the end of 1996 to replace the *STIR* programme include a mobility fund for students and a fund for the development of structural international cooperation frameworks (consortia) between *HBO* institutions within Europe. These consortia are intended to work towards developing curricula for joint courses, regulating mutual recognition of course units and exchanges of lecturers, administrators and students.

In April 1997, the discussion paper *Unlimited Talent* or '*Onbegrensd talent*' (for the period from 1997-2000) was published, which continues along the same lines already mentioned above.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Dutch (higher) education is constantly adapting itself to developments inside and outside the field of education. Since 1996/97, the end of the period under review, already much has changed, for instance on the subject of student access, student finance and the financing of higher education institutions. To keep in touch with these developments, readers are advised to consult the electronic bulletin *Dutch Education News* on the Internet website of the Ministry at <http://www.minocw.nl/english/>.

In the foregoing text, reference is made only to fundamental changes. It goes without saying that continuous development is taking place all the time.

Management and control

The 1996 *HOOP* sets out the intention of adapting the funding system for universities in order to reach a type of capacity funding where financing depends less on student numbers and more on performance. This is called the *STABEK* model (Stable Funding) and is applicable to the 1997 budget.

Since then, further developments have been under discussion. Also, some changes were made in the funding of the Open University (more output funding).

Financial support for students

Important changes in the system of student finance are underway. The proposals concern, among other things, an extension of the age limit from 27 to 30, an extension of the period within which the student must gain the final diploma from 6 to 10 years, and other measures to adapt the system to the growing need for flexibility during the study period.

Access and wastage

Changes have now been introduced in the system of draws for courses with a set *numerus fixus*. Applicants with an average final grade of eight for their final examinations are given places directly and no longer have to go into the draw. The bill has not yet gone through Parliament.

Attention is still being paid to reducing wastage, partly through measures to enhance the 'completeness' of courses (Completeness Fund, *Studeerbaarheidsfonds*) and partly through measures in the areas of study progress monitoring and study guidance (which may also lead to early recommendations to terminate studies).

There are also high expectations in relation to educational renewal in the second phase of secondary education, which will begin in August 1998, and which allows students to do their work independently and at their own pace ('study house' or *studiehuis*). By reducing the contrast between the working method in 'school type', secondary education and higher education, and by standardising the subject ranges, it is hoped that wastage in higher education will be reduced considerably.

Curriculum and teaching

In this area differentiation, with regard to both course duration and the educational pathway, is still an important theme. A number of measures are being introduced from September 1998, such as the possibility (not yet taken up) of offering a three-year university course which leads to an intermediate qualification (*kandidaat*) and pathways which lead from senior secondary vocational education, *MBO*, into *HBO*.

In order to encourage combinations of learning and working (dual courses), fiscal rewards are given to employers who take on students from these courses. This has already been done for the *HBO*, but it will be extended to university education.

To increase the influx into technical courses, a joint action plan has been started up by employers, educational bodies (in all sectors) and the Ministers for Education, Culture and Science and Economic Affairs. One important perspective here is the negative image of these types of courses.

In the area of teaching, most attention is being focused on experiments and projects in information and communication technology.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>CROHO</i>	<i>Centraal register opleidingen hoger onderwijs</i> (Central Register of Higher Education Courses)
<i>HBO</i>	<i>Hoger beroepsonderwijs</i> (higher professional education)
<i>HOOP</i>	<i>Hoger onderwijs en onderzoek plan</i> (Higher Education and Research Plan)

<i>MUB</i>	<i>Wet modernisering universitaire bestuursorganisatie</i> (University Administrative Organisation Modernisation Act)
<i>NUFFIC</i>	<i>Nederlandse organisatie voor internationale samenwerking in het hoger onderwijs</i> (Dutch Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education)
<i>VSNU</i>	<i>Vereniging van universiteiten</i> (Association of Dutch Universities)
<i>WO</i>	<i>Wetenschappelijk onderwijs</i> (university education)
<i>WHW</i>	<i>Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek</i> (Higher Education and Scientific Research Act)
<i>WVO</i>	<i>Wet op het wetenschappelijk onderwijs</i> (University Education Act)
<i>WHBO</i>	<i>Wet op het hoger beroepsonderwijs</i> (Higher Professional Education Act)

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TWO DECADES OF REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS

AUSTRIA

National description

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INTRODUCTION

Austria has a total of 18 universities in six locations, six of which are universities of art and music. Besides three universities offering a full range of courses (in Vienna, Innsbruck and Graz), three more recently established ones with a smaller range of study programmes (in Salzburg, Linz and Klagenfurt) and two technical universities (in Vienna and Graz), there are also four specialised universities which are not divided into faculties (University of Economics and Business Administration, University of Agricultural Sciences, University of Veterinary Medicine, and the University of Leoben concentrating on mining and metallurgy). With four universities and three universities of art and music, Vienna offers the most extensive range of studies.

A distinguishing feature of the higher education system until the mid-1990s was the remarkably high degree of uniformity within it. Unlike many other industrialised countries, the expansion of the higher education system was not accompanied by extending non-university alternatives at degree level. In the Austrian understanding of educational policy, 'higher education' was equated with research universities. Endeavours to diversify the post-secondary sector, which had a long tradition, eventually found expression in the Federal Government's 1990 working programme, which formed the basis for establishing the *Fachhochschule* sector. Other programmes offered by the post-secondary sector (colleges for teacher training, colleges for social work, courses for medical technician service) are not classified as being part of the higher education system either with regard to their qualifications or their administration.

In the academic year 1996/97, the total number of students enrolled in degree programmes was 196,852. 3,648 of them were enrolled in *Fachhochschule* programmes and 4,343 in art studies. Another 17,485 students were studying at non-degree post-secondary institutions.

Political and economic background

Austria is an export-oriented industrialised country with an ever-growing service sector. In 1996, exactly two-thirds of the value added was generated by the service sector of which the share of all economic activity rose from 56% to 66% between 1976 and 1996. Over the same period, the share of the primary sector (agriculture and forestry, mining) fell from 5% to 2%, that of the secondary sector (manufacturing, energy and construction) from 39% to 32%. Industry and commerce registered a high percentage of small and medium-sized enterprises. In 1996, Austria's economic growth of 1.6% corresponded to the EU average.

First attempts to reduce public spending were made in the early 1980s. In 1986, the federal budget deficit was 5% of GNP. Up to 1991, the process of fiscal consolidation was successful due to favourable economic conditions. However, the recession between 1992 and 1995 led to increased public expenditure and brought the budget deficit up again to 5% of GNP in 1995. When Austria became a member of the European Union in 1995, the new consolidation policy was also driven by the aim of meeting the Maastricht criteria. In 1994 and 1995, two austerity packages were adopted which, for the first time, also affected the education sector. Even though the increasing expenditure for higher education had not matched the growing student numbers since the late 1970s, real growth in expenditure was only stopped in 1996 and 1997. The share of public spending on higher education rose from 3.1% to 3.9% in the period 1990-95, and amounted to 4% for the years 1996 and 1997 respectively.

The decades of continuously growing expenditure on education found broad political approval. The economic policy argument in this regard was: 'Investment in education and science furthers economic growth' and 'Mobilisation of reserves of talent', while the social policy maxim was: 'Equal opportunities through access to higher education'.

In 1983, a 13-year continuous one-party government by the Social Democrats (*SPÖ*) ended. Afterwards the *SPÖ* formed a 'small coalition' with the Austria Freedom Party (*FPÖ*), and then in 1987 switched to a 'grand coalition', sharing government with the Christian Democratic Austria People's Party (*ÖVP*), a coalition which was still in place in 1999. During the 1983-87 period and from the end of 1994 till the present (1999), the Minister of Science with responsibility for the higher education system came from the *SPÖ*, between 1987 and 1994 from the *ÖVP*. The most significant impulse for reforms in the higher education sector came from the 1990 coalition agreement, which provided for the organisational reform of the universities as well as the establishment of the *Fachhochschule* sector and the founding of the Danube University Krems.

Historical overview

In the second half of the 18th century universities, which until then had been under the influence of the Church, were reorganised and transformed into state institutions. Several reforms of the university landscape followed in the 19th century. With the revolution of 1848, the universities obtained a certain degree of autonomy: the guarantee of academic freedom in research and teaching and a modest amount of autonomous self-administration. The introduction of the higher secondary school (*Gymnasium*) with the appropriate leaving certificate (*Matura*) changed the university access. These reforms were accompanied by a huge expansion of the universities in terms of subject areas, staffing and funding. The second half of the 19th century was characterised by the establishment of higher education institutions, designed to meet the specialised needs of agriculture, commerce and industry. In response to regional demand in the 1960s, the university foundations brought higher education institutions into regions previously without universities.

In Austria, universities of art and music have a variety of origins but were mostly private foundations in the 19th century. The majority of them were artistic schools until they became 'academies' after World War II. It was only in 1970 that the status of universities was granted to academies. In historical terms, the school-like organisation of artistic training commenced relatively late. Elements of the very individually structured learning under acknowledged 'masters' have been maintained in universities of art and music up to the present day.

Until the end of the 19th century, Austrian universities were an exclusively male domain. In 1897, the first women were allowed to enrol in the University of Vienna's Faculty of Philosophy. In 1907, the first woman qualified for a university teaching position as professor by completing her *Habilitation* thesis. As of this year women could also assume junior faculty positions as university assistants.

Until the University Organisation Act of 1955, universities were subject to a large number of laws dating from the 19th century which were not very transparent statutes. For the first time, the new law laid down a uniform legal framework for all higher education institutions, though without any substantial material reforms of the organisational structure. The result was that the higher education organisation of the 19th century remained, in part, unchanged until the reorganisation of the universities in the 1970s. This reform led to the involvement of the whole university teaching staff, students and administrative personnel in the decision-making processes of the self-governing bodies, as well as in the reorganisation of academic departments. In 1972, study fees were abolished. The basis for the representation of students within the universities was provided by the National Student Union Act of 1973. With the introduction of *Fachhochschule* programmes in 1993, a first step towards setting up a new segment in the higher education system was taken.

Non-university post-secondary higher education institutions

Besides the *Fachhochschule* programmes, the following institutions exist in the non-university higher education sector. Teacher training colleges have their legal basis mainly in the School Organisation Act of 1962. Teacher training for general education compulsory schools - *Volksschule* (basic primary and secondary), *Hauptschule* (lower secondary), *Sonderschule* (special needs school) and *Polytechnische Schule* (polytechnic school) - takes place at colleges of education. For the training of teachers of religion (Roman-Catholic and Protestant) there are courses at colleges of religious education. Vocational school teachers for particular areas of intermediate and higher vocational training are trained at colleges of vocational training.

The College of Agricultural and Forestry Education has its legal basis in its own law of 1966 and comprises four-semester courses for graduates of higher-level educational establishments for the agricultural and forestry sector, as well as one-semester courses for graduates of the University of Agricultural Sciences.

The post-secondary sector provides training for social work and for the health sector. Colleges of social work train students to practise a professional occupation in the field of social work.

Colleges for medical technicians offer training in the field of professional medical technician services covering seven subject areas: psychotherapy, technical medical laboratory, technical radiology, dietary and dietetics advisory services, ergotherapy, speech therapy and orthoptics. The legal basis is provided by the Regulation of Professional Technical Medical Services of 1992. Midwifery training takes place in appropriate colleges, which were newly regulated in 1994. The Psychotherapy Law of 1991 sets out the provisions governing the training of psychotherapists. This concerns academic training by qualified staff and sets high university-level standards for admission.

Training courses for *Volksschule* and vocational school teachers were extended from two to three years in 1987, so that all teacher training courses now have a length of three years. The courses offered by the colleges of social work, colleges for medical technicians and colleges of midwifery have the same duration, since 1987, 1992 and 1994 respectively (although those in employment doing social work study for 4 years.) The last two post-secondary institutions became colleges at the beginning of the 1990s.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

University organisation reform

Since the early 1970s, growing student numbers and demographic developments have led to a pronounced expansion of the higher education system. Study opportunities have risen by 60% through the establishment of new study programmes and additional sites over the last three decades. The number of students and graduates has almost doubled since 1980, the university budget more than tripled and permanent posts for academic staff have risen by almost a third. The development of universities from small, transparent institutions into huge and complex ones had not been accompanied by the adaptation of their formal organisational structure or the restructuring of their relationship with the competent authorities of the federal administration.

Criticism focused on:

- the lack of clear decision-making structures within the university and between the university and the Federal Ministry,

- the gulf between decision-makers and those bearing responsibility as well as inefficient negotiation processes,
- too many and too detailed regulations at statutory level,
- insufficient flexibility with respect to personnel because of the law on civil servants and with respect to finance because of over-formalised and centralised federal budget law provisions.

By the end of the 1980s, it was clear that single measures would not suffice to remedy the weaknesses of the system. Instead, a complex, long-term approach to reform was chosen, which complied with the objectives of the working agreement of the coalition government of 1990. With the aim of strengthening the 'responsibility', 'independence' and 'efficiency' of the universities, the *Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten* (University Organisation Act), or 1993 *UOG* paved the way for institutional autonomy, which should bring about business management and service-oriented conduct at universities.

Under the Austrian legislative tradition, representative bodies of those groups most affected are involved in the formulation of draft statutory regulations. The preparatory work was especially thorough in the case of the reform of the universities. Both higher education teaching staff and students were involved in the structuring of the fundamental statutory principles in all phases of the 2 1/2-year reform discussion process. The government bill submitted to the National Assembly (*Nationalrat*) could not be considered a 'ministerial draft' as it was based on the conclusions of many working groups. Approximately 300 position documents were submitted within the so-called assessment procedure alone, which entails gathering views from employers' associations, employee representative bodies, federal ministries, regional governments, as well as statutory representative bodies, including those of the Austrian Association of Students (*Österreichische Hochschülerschaft*). The interim and final results of the debate were made public by the Ministry.

The 1993 *UOG* provides for strengthening the autonomy of universities through substantial decentralisation and delegation of decision-making powers and deregulation. This applies to all 12 universities in Austria. The most important provisions are:

- Universities remain state institutions (with partial legal capacity) which are granted the right to look after their affairs autonomously within the framework of the relevant statutes and regulations. Universities now have the statutory right to determine their own segmentation (type and number of institutes and service units). However, universities are subject to supervision by the Federal Minister of Science and Transport and to monitoring by the Court of Auditors (*Rechnungshof*). Funding of the universities remains the duty of the Federal Government. Universities have greater decision-making powers in personnel and budgetary matters, taking decisions on, for example, the appointment of staff, and with regard to the allocated budget and internal organisation. This opens up the possibility of competition between universities, because of the opportunity to create individual institutional profiles.
- The universities are managed at different levels by collegial bodies as well as monocratic organs. This mixed system offers the advantage of fast and efficient decision-making within established guidelines, monitored by democratically constituted self-governing bodies.
- The parity between the various university groups in the collegial bodies remains unchanged from the 1975 *UOG* with one exception. In the University Assembly, which elects the rector, non-academic staff are also represented.
- The National University Board was established to serve as an advisory body in university affairs. The eight members - four experts from the university sector and four from outside - are appointed by the Federal Minister of Science and Transport.

The 1993 *UOG* provides for a three-phase implementation of the new regulations on organisation. The first group of universities (the smaller ones) started implementation in October 1994, the second group

in 1995 and the last group (the universities with medical faculties) in 1996. Implementation became difficult in 1995/1996 with budget restrictions. A combination of budgetary cutbacks and new duties arising from the reform statutes, which were non-existent in formal terms but perceived as such in real terms, was criticised by those in the higher education sector. Intensive discussions were conducted at a number of universities with regard to suspending implementation. However, by the end of the academic year 1996/97, seven universities were already organised according to the 1993 *UOG*. Progress varied among other universities. As the reorganisation can take more than two years, it is likely that all universities will have fully implemented the reforms by the end of 1999.

Establishment of the *Fachhochschule* sector

The 1990 Government working agreement also provided for the setting-up of a non-university post-secondary sector which was modelled on vocational institutions of higher education in Europe. The following educational policy objectives were covered:

- diversification of the uniform higher education system at that time,
- action in favour of balanced geographical distribution of higher education course offers in the regions,
- increased permeability within the educational system, particularly for those who have either completed the 'dual training system' or have a demand for continuing education and retraining.

The Federal Act on *Fachhochschule* Programmes (*FHStG*) of 1993 represents a movement away from past Austrian educational policy, where the State has a monopoly as provider and exclusive financer of higher education offers. The *FHStG* does not contain any detailed provisions but rather predominantly procedural regulations concerning recognition of *Fachhochschule* programmes. The application for the recognition of a *Fachhochschule* programme has to be submitted to a body of accreditation established for this purpose, the *Fachhochschule* Council, which consists of 16 members appointed by the Federal Minister of Science and Transport. Four members are proposed by the Advisory Board on Economic and Social Policy and 12 are appointed in accordance with the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs. The Council examines the quality of the study programme and, if applicable, approves it by decree. Thus, important parts of the application, such as regulations on admission, examinations and studies become legally binding.

The development of *Fachhochschule* course offers in the regions is characterised by a bottom-up approach to reflect local demand for specific qualifications and also the needs of less well educated groups.

The first 10 *Fachhochschule* programmes were offered in the academic year 1994/95, followed by 10 in 1995/96 and a further 12 in 1996/97. Thus, three years after the *FHStG* came into force, there were 32 programmes on offer in the new sector with approximately 3,900 study places. The current plan for the development and financing of the *Fachhochschule* sector which lasts until the year 2000, aims to create 10,000 study places.

Reform of studies

Decentralisation and deregulation are also the cornerstones for far-reaching study reform. *The Bundesgesetz über die Studien an den wissenschaftlichen Hochschulen*, or *AHStG* (General Studies Act for Higher Education) of 1966 signified the beginning of a period of study reform with the aim of standardising the organisation of teaching and examinations. It also aimed to increase legal security for students and to facilitate modernisation of studies. The result was a very complex legal system with 10 higher education study laws for individual specialised fields of studies, more than 100 decrees by the Federal Minister and around 350 university curricular committee decrees. At the end of the 1970s, the

need for reforms grew considerably. There was a lack of a structure and organisation of studies that could guarantee adequate response to changing labour market requirements and the rapidly changing world of work, as well as to the educational and training expectations of those interested in studying. This resulted in a further reform phase within the *AHStG*.

At the beginning of the 1990s, a working group was finally set up to examine possibilities for deregulation. Its mandate was to work out a new legal framework ensuring more efficient and target-oriented organisation of teaching and studies. This would enable universities to respond to demand for qualifications more quickly and flexibly and with a more appropriate range of studies, as well as to remain internationally competitive. It has therefore been considered necessary to strengthen the self-governing authority and contact with external partners of universities. The 1997 *Bundesgesetz über die Studien an Universitäten* (University Studies Act), or *UniStG*, replaced the *AHStG*. It is a set of flexible legal instruments designed to make studying more demand-oriented and the universities' overall range of studies more cost-effective. The actual duration of studies is also to be shortened. The most significant reform is decentralisation in the formulation of the curricula, which is now the responsibility of the university curricular committees according to the procedural provisions.

The *UniStG* provides for a transition period up to 2002. By this date, at the latest, all the curricular committees must have issued curricula based on the new study law. Only a small number of study programmes have so far come into effect. According to the legal regulations, the curricular committees will, in any case, have to hear the representatives of the employment system every 10 years on the subject of the study programmes.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

2.1. MAIN PLAYERS AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

With the Federal Constitution of 1929 all Austrian universities became state institutions and subject to federal legislation and enforcement. Freedom of research and teaching as well as of the arts is constitutionally guaranteed. University locations as well as matters concerning their organisation, management and staffing structures, and personnel recruitment are subject to the federal law. At the moment two organisational laws are in force: the University Organisation Acts of 1993 and 1975. The latter will expire after the full implementation of the 1993 *UOG* at the end of 1999. The organisational structure of the universities of art and music, which essentially dates back to the years 1970 and 1988, is currently being restructured according to the objectives of the 1993 *UOG*. The study programmes offered by all universities are subject to the University Studies Act of 1997 (*UniStG*) and the Studies Act for Universities of Art and Music (*KHStG*) of 1983, which will also be replaced by a new law in the same vein as the *UniStG*.

The Federal Act on *Fachhochschule* Programmes of 1993 (*FHStG*) established the prerequisites and the procedures for the recognition of *Fachhochschule* programmes as well as the conditions for awarding the institutional designation *Fachhochschule*. The execution of the law is the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport. Agreement has to be reached on specific issues with the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. Providers of *Fachhochschule* programmes can be the Federal Government as well as legal entities of public or private law. In the *Fachhochschule* sector, the State can only exert indirect influence on the development of course offers via funding of study places.

Matters concerning the universities and the universities of art and music, the bodies representing students' interests, study grants and scholarships, support for the construction of student residences, as well as support for university-related research are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry of

Science and Transport. The Federal Ministry of Finance is responsible for matters concerning the university staff because of their status as civil servants.

Austria's political and legal systems are characterised by extensive formal and informal participation of interest groups in the pre-parliamentary process of gathering informed opinion. In addition, opinions on all statutes and statutory instruments are obtained in the assessment procedure. Higher education law provides for diverse bodies to advise the Federal Minister, e.g. the Federal Conference of Non-Professorial Academic Staff of Austria's Universities and Universities of Art and Music, the Professors' Association, the Federal Conference of Non-Academic Staff, the Rectors' Conference, and, since the passing of the 1993 *UOG*, the *Universitätskuratorium* (National University Board) as a committee of experts.

Internal organisation and management in higher education institutions

A number of the resource management and staff recruitment functions previously fulfilled by the Federal Ministry are now assigned to the rector/dean. The rector and dean are responsible for allocating the funds within the framework of the global budget allocated by the Federal Minister. The *UOG* 1993 enhances the role of the rector, who is assisted by vice-rectors bound to execute the rector's directives and mandates to manage specific affairs. The rector also decides on the appointment of professors as well as of university teaching staff with employment contracts under private law. Other monocratic organs are the heads of institutes and the deans of studies. Introduced as a new role was dean of studies, whose task is to coordinate teaching and examination operations.

As university self-administration is characterised by the duality of self-governing bodies and monocratic organs, the University Senate (*Senat*), the Faculty Collegium and the Institute Conference are the collegial bodies at the corresponding level of organisation. With the 1993 *UOG*, the Senate's rights and duties were substantially expanded. These include the following: establishment and amendment of the university's statutes; announcement of executive positions and selection of applicants; decision-making on long-term resource allocation needs; fields of specialisation and the nature and period of employment for vacant or new positions for professors; approval of the annual university budget proposal and establishment of programmes for the promotion of women. The organisation of study programmes is the responsibility of curricular committees, the functions of which are described in section 1.

The *Universitätsbeirat* (University Advisory Board) was established by the 1993 *UOG*. It provides advice on planning, on internal distribution of university personnel and the budget and is a link with industry and society. Besides administration by the state, universities of art and music also enjoy autonomy in certain spheres. They have the right to make applications and proposals to the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport, as well as decision-making authorities, on matters such as complementary teaching staff and study programmes. The legal provisions for the organisation of the universities of art and music are currently being revised in order to establish greater structural affinity between the two types of universities, and will become effective in 1998.

The universities of art and music are headed by a rector, who is elected by the university collegium, the highest representative organ consisting of the following members: the rector and his/her deputy, the heads of departments as well as non-associated representatives from the institutes, two representatives of the less senior staff of the faculty and two representatives of the student body. Co-determination by different groups is provided for in all collegial bodies, these being the department committee that elects the head of department, and the curricular committee whose principal function is to issue course programme schedules.

The **Fachhochschulen** and the **Danube University** Krems enjoy an extensive degree of autonomy in organising courses and in recruiting staff. A *Fachhochschule* collegium is established at each *Fachhochschule* to carry out and organise teaching and examinations. The teaching staff, the students and those charged with the development of course offers are represented in the collegium. It elects its head and his/her deputy from three candidates proposed by the providing body, submits motions regarding programme changes to the *Fachhochschule* Council, makes the budget application to the financing body, issues proposals concerning the appointment of teaching staff, coordinates lectures, seminars and examinations content, and evaluates teaching and examination activities, and deals with the course programme schedules and examination regulations. The **Danube University** Krems, founded in 1994, is managed by an executive committee known as the *Präsidium*, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the institution. It allocates personnel, financial and equipment resources and appoints academic and administrative staff. Academic teaching, research and services are organised within departments. Their heads are represented in the executive committee, which is responsible for, amongst other things, the constitution and development planning of the institution. A committee known as *Kuratorium* is responsible for setting general objectives, evaluating research and teaching, as well as monitoring finances. These two bodies and financial matters are under the supervisory authority of the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport.

2.2. FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Universities and universities of art and music

The universities and universities of art and music are federal institutions, which means their funding comes almost exclusively from the federal budget. The expenditure and staffing plans required are drawn up by the National Assembly each year under the Federal Finance Act. The division of funds and posts between individual universities and universities of art and music is decided by the Federal Minister. The 1993 *UOG* introduced function-oriented budgeting for the universities, whereby the universities receive a global budget which is increased or reduced as the services offered by the individual university change. Major investments are funded separately.

Besides state funding, the universities have additional financial sources. They can acquire assets within the framework of their partial legal capacity or conduct research commissions and use the proceeds for specific purposes associated with performing university functions. In addition, most of the resources of the Austrian Science Fund, which is funded from the federal budget, go to universities. Tuition fees exist only for foreign students. Such income can be used within the context of the university's autonomy. Funding through the Federal Government's higher education budget covers almost the entire expenditure of universities. Around 8% of the total expenditure of universities and other higher education institutions is funded from other sources and this percentage has not changed significantly since 1992.

The construction and maintenance of higher education buildings is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Federal Real-Estate Agency. Decisions on the construction of new buildings are agreed between the Ministries of Science, Economic Affairs, and Finance as well as the university concerned. Funding in connection with this is provided from the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Federal Real-Estate Agency's rental income and the federal budget. Occasionally, the Federal State and urban authorities also contribute towards the construction of higher education buildings.

The annual federal budget for universities is approx. ATS 30 billion. Income from external (third party) sources reaches approx. ATS 1 billion annually. The university budget accounts for almost 1.3% of the GDP. Personnel costs account for more than 40% of the university budget.

Fachhochschule sector

Fachhochschule programmes can be run by the Federal Government or by other public and private legal entities. The *FHStG* makes no stipulations regarding the funding of the sector, although it is primarily financed by public resources. The criteria for the allocation of the amount of federal subsidies are regulated in the plan for the development and financing of the *Fachhochschule* sector (adopted by the Government in March 1994). The plan provides for mixed funding i.e. to involve other public and private providers in addition to the Federal Government. The aim is to encourage corporations and industry to invest in education, to take advantage of available resources, and to increase the involvement of those institutions which demand certain types of programmes and graduates. The Federal Government only grants a subsidy per study place and academic year. Until 1999/2000, 10,000 study places will be financed. The costs of a study place are calculated on the basis of annual staffing costs and overhead expenses, using previous comparable figures from the school and university sectors. The costs are between ATS 105,000 in technical subjects and ATS 88,000 in the business fields of studies. The Federal Government has to bear 90% of these standard costs.

The accreditation of a *Fachhochschule* programme is carried out by the *Fachhochschule* Council. For the allocation of federal funding, an application for the recognition of a *Fachhochschule* programme must receive at least 50 points based on a catalogue of criteria contained in the development plan. Up to 10 points are awarded for each of the following criteria: innovation, national coordination, long-term development concept, reduction of regional disparities, adjustment of educational policy structures, access for new target groups, programmes for employed people, utilisation of available resources, private co-funding, and international cooperation.

The **Danube University** Krems is funded by Federal Government contributions, resources provided by the *Bundesland Niederösterreich* (Lower Austria), and tuition fees. An agreement between the Federal Government and Lower Austria forms the basis for joint financing. The administrative and permanent academic staff as well as investment and equipment expenditure are funded by the Federal State; the buildings and operational expenditure for buildings are financed by Lower Austria. Courses are funded from tuition fees. Further financial sources are proceeds from various organised events and academic services, income from assets, as well as income from endowments, donations and other contributions from private and public funds.

2.3. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

University sector

In Austria evaluation in the field of higher education was regulated in a new and systematic way in the 1993 *UOG*. Because of the shift of decision-making power to the universities, regulations on procedures like budgeting, planning of needs and evaluation became necessary. Some instruments of evaluation such as the work reports of the heads of institutes date back to the 1975 *UOG*.

The following responsibilities for evaluation and quality assessment were established under the 1993 *UOG*:

- The Federal Minister of Science and Transport was bound by law firstly to enact a decree (subordinate legislation) on the collection of data and on the framework of evaluation measures in research and teaching. The decree on evaluation took effect in October 1997. Secondly, in planning activities covering research and teaching in the whole university sector the Federal Minister is permitted to initiate evaluations of study programmes, universities and their organisational units. And thirdly, the Federal Minister has to report on the achievements and problems of higher education institutions to the National Assembly at least every three years (This obligation has existed in a similar form since 1966).

- The National University Board is allowed to initiate cross-university evaluations.
- The rector is permitted to evaluate organisational units or study programmes offered by the university. Measures with far-reaching consequences for the study programme offer or the organisation or performance of the university must be evaluated after a reasonable period. Furthermore, the rector has to collect the work reports of the heads of institutes and publish these reports every two years (see also above).
- The deans of studies are responsible for the periodical evaluation of teaching and examination at a given faculty and for organising quality assessment of courses by students at intervals of not more than two years.

The decree on evaluation specifies these responsibilities and defines the aims and subjects of evaluation, evaluation tools, procedural regulations, how the results should be used and imposes the obligation to publish them. In Austria, both the Federal Ministry and the National University Board have the power to initiate cross-university evaluations, but neither of these operates as a national agency for evaluation compared to international examples.

The decree on evaluation is currently being implemented. The aforementioned legal provisions cover the university sector with the exception of the universities of art and music. (The recent reform of the law on the universities of art and music will extend the evaluation responsibilities discussed to that sector). The objectives of evaluations are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and research and organisational measures. The aims are the assurance and enhancement of quality and the support of decisions in terms of organisation and personnel. Evaluation results have to be the basis for decisions of university organs as well as those of the Federal Minister. They also have to be taken into account in personnel affairs like *Habilitation* (the right to teach as a professor in a circumscribed field or discipline), appointment (employment as a full professor), the careers of university teachers, and so on. Additionally, they must be reflected in the university's budget proposal and in the allocation of budget funds concerning capital expenditure in research. The focus of evaluation can be the development of the range of study programmes, organisational measures or research and teaching. The Federal Minister can also evaluate affirmative actions.

At the beginning of the 1990s a few evaluations of study programmes such as architecture, teacher training, computer sciences and music studies were carried out along with evaluations of research in certain disciplines such as physics, electrical engineering and biochemistry. Most projects were initiated by representatives of the disciplines and carried out through peer review. The Austrian Rectors' Conference coordinated the participation of study programmes under European pilot projects for evaluating quality in higher education.

The Federal Ministry of Science and Transport did not initiate evaluation projects until the decree on evaluation came into force in October 1997. It was intensively discussed by the representatives of the higher education system. Under the decree, universities may, to a large extent, design their evaluation tools and establish quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

***Fachhochschule* sector**

The type and quality of study programmes are controlled by an accreditation procedure (ex-ante quality assessment) and an evaluation procedure (ex-post quality control). Therefore, the accreditation of *Fachhochschule* programmes is restricted to a maximum of five years. At the end of this period, an evaluation has to take place and its results will influence whether an extension is granted. This mechanism ensures a flexible response to short and medium-term changes of the educational demand.

The *Fachhochschule* Council operates as a national evaluation agency for the sector. Quality assurance comprises an internal and external evaluation. The procedure is defined by the *Fachhochschule* Council in cooperation with the *Fachhochschulkonferenz* (Association of Providers of *Fachhochschule* Programmes). The internal evaluation of a *Fachhochschule* programme is a kind of monitoring, in which the results of a survey on relevant areas has to be notified to the *Fachhochschule* council once a year. Courses also have to be assessed once a year, by way of internal reports, written by those responsible for the course, containing at least 14 points such as aims, evaluation of teaching, relevant data, entrance requirements, etc. External evaluation is carried out by peer review. On the basis of the internal report, the accredited application for the *Fachhochschule* programme and a site visit, peers draft another report. This and the opinion of the representatives of the *Fachhochschule* programme are submitted to the *Fachhochschule* Council.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

Access

Admissions policy is specified in statutory instruments by the National Assembly. The requirement for admission to all degree programmes and most university courses is the *Matura* (upper secondary school-leaving certificate), which allows enrolment on a study programme of one's choice. There are no access restrictions. For some subject areas, supplementary tests in specific fields not taught or not taught to a sufficient extent at upper-secondary schools are required. In some major fields of studies relevant artistic or physical aptitude is examined.

The minimum age for access to degree programmes in the visual and performing arts is 17 (15 for musicianship) and students must pass an entrance examination. Additional requirements (i.e. *Matura*) have to be met for individual study programmes, such as architecture or secondary school teaching accreditation. Foreign students must demonstrate an adequate knowledge of German. *Fachhochschule* programmes may also admit students with relevant professional experience or vocational qualifications, or sometimes with the additional obligation to sit an exam. *Fachhochschule* graduates are entitled to pursue doctoral studies at a university, which last another two semesters.

An alternative form of access is the university qualification examination (*Studienberechtigungsprüfung*) based on the University Entrance Qualification Act of 1985. Graduates of religious education teacher training colleges and social work colleges, who were granted entry to their college studies by special preparatory courses, had facilitated access to specific degree programmes from 1990 onwards. In 1997, the so-called 'vocational certificate' (*Berufsreifepfung*) was introduced which also gives right of access to universities and *Fachhochschule* programmes. It applies to people who have either completed an apprenticeship, a minimum of three years at a vocational secondary school, a nursing school or medical-technician training. However, these university access possibilities only play a minor role, in terms of numbers.

Wastage

Between 1980 and 1993, first level degree graduation rates ranged from 51% in 1980 to 43.1% in 1988. Since then, this figure has risen continuously, reaching 47.8% in 1993. The rates predicted for the subsequent years show a continuing upward trend. According to Pechar (1997), the low graduation rate is partly caused by the large number of students who remain enrolled at the university while not actively pursuing their studies. This group and the large proportion of students doing paid work also account for the high average duration of studies.

Just as persistent as this phenomenon is the gender-specific difference, as the rate of women graduation with a first level degree is always a few percentage points lower than that of their male counterparts.

There is no clear political consensus on the diagnosis of the dropout phenomenon. There being no (formal) selection in the access to higher education, a number of university representatives and politicians consider a high dropout rate to be necessary and regard it as proof of the high educational standards. A contrasting view is that discontinuation of studies is a sign of the failure of a system designed to provide as many people as possible with the highest level of formal qualification. The continuing absence of consensus about the evaluation of dropout rates means that active counter-measures beyond information and consultation have not been agreed between the parties concerned. Regardless of this, it is within the scope of each university, each department and study programme to exert influence on success and dropout rates through the quality of supervision and consultation provided. However, centralised information is not available regarding this issue. The introduction of an orientation phase under the *UniStG* 1997 intends to provide students with a clear picture of study requirements, information on study success statistics and employment opportunities, as well as the qualification profiles of graduates. This should result in fewer students discontinuing their studies at a late stage.

So far there have been no indications that people discontinuing their studies represent a special problem group on the labour market.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Data and information in this regard is available in the comparative analysis by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe*, 1999.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Types of studies, programme structures, degrees, and curriculum development

The teaching functions of higher education institutions are only very generally stipulated in the law. The University Studies Act (*UniStG*) distinguishes between degree programmes, doctoral programmes (postgraduate degree programmes for the development of the capacity for independent research) and university courses (non-diploma programmes for continuing education).

The provisions for the structure of studies are virtually the same or similar for all study programmes. Undergraduate studies are usually divided into two stages, each of which is completed by taking a diploma examination in one or more subjects. Preparation of a diploma thesis (*Diplomarbeit*) is a prerequisite for being admitted to the final examination. The degree programme for medicine ends with the award of a doctoral degree (*M.D.*) and consists of three stages. In a number of study programmes, specialisation in the second stage is organised by splitting the course into branches. For some undergraduate studies in the humanities and natural sciences, two fields of subjects have to be combined. The completion of a degree programme in an relevant discipline (or a comparable degree from an accredited domestic or foreign post-secondary institution) is a prerequisite for enrolment in a doctoral programme, which entails the preparation of a doctoral thesis, and a final examination (*Rigorosum*).

Basically, completion of studies does not represent qualification for a profession. If professional qualifications are required by statute (e.g. for doctors, teachers, judges), these are acquired, with the exception of veterinary surgeons, through post-university training.

The following academic degrees are awarded by Austrian universities. For undergraduate studies, degrees are *Magister/Magistra* (gender specific titles) or *Diplom-Ingenieur/Diplom-Ingenieurin* (for specific programmes in engineering and applied sciences); doctoral degrees are *Doktor/Doktorin*, and Master's degrees are Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) or of Business Administration (MBA) (after completion of a university course programme at graduate level that consists of a minimum of 70 semester credit hours).

Universities of art and music offer different types of study programmes. Their main objective is to provide pre-professional training in the form of degree programmes and shorter non-degree programmes (*Kurzstudien* which award a certificate, as opposed to a diploma). Full-length degree programmes include teacher training for secondary school teachers in artistic subjects. Doctoral studies can only be pursued after completing a degree programme in a corresponding field of study. The structure and organisation of degree programmes at universities of art and music are similar to those for degree programmes at other universities. The same applies to academic degrees. Separate courses and course programmes are offered in the areas of adult education and continuing education for graduates in particular. It is also possible to attend individual lectures and seminars.

In 1997, 119 degree programmes were offered at universities, many of them at several locations. This corresponds to a total of 301 available study programmes. Through the foundation of new universities, the enlargement of the range of studies at all universities and the introduction of new fields of study, the total number of study programmes offered has risen by 60% over the past 30 years. The largest increase can be observed in the humanities and natural sciences. The *UniStG* provides for mandatory evaluation of the overall range of studies until the year 2007. At the universities of art and music, 56 degree programmes were offered in 1997. Around 25% of these programmes are in the areas of fine arts and applied arts, with 75% devoted to music and the performing arts. Teacher training studies account for 11% of all study programmes offered.

The *UniStG* has shifted the responsibility for the establishment of curricula to the universities and has only set out framework conditions for studies. The general specifications for individual fields of studies are confined to number of semesters and upper and lower limits for lecture hours per semester. The curricular committees at universities are responsible for the detailed regulations on the number of stages of study, examination subjects, the examination system, possible areas of concentration/specialisation, the range of courses and the organisation of the orientation phase for curricula. Harmonisation with labour market requirements and the wishes of professional and social interest groups now occur in direct communication between curricular committees and representatives of the employment system and academic professions. The procedure for integrating these parties obliges the curricular committee to obtain proposals for changes to study courses. A qualifications profile is produced, which serves as a basis for the formulation of curricula. Moreover, qualifications profiles and draft curricula have to undergo an assessment procedure inside and outside the universities.

Since *Fachhochschule* programmes are defined as study programmes at higher education level which provide a 'scientifically sound professional education' (§ 3 *FHStG*), the scientific nature of curricula and their consistency with practical needs have to be guaranteed at several levels. Thus, half of the members of the *Fachhochschule* Council must have worked for several years in a professional field relevant to the *Fachhochschule* sector. The same applies to two out of the four members of the development team of an individual *Fachhochschule* programme. The teaching staff also have a responsibility for applied research and development. Moreover, the staff must regularly include people working in a relevant professional field. In the initial stage of the study programme application, a survey

on demand and qualification requirements for the planned study programme has to be conducted. All study programmes, excluding those for people in employment, provide for at least one period of compulsory professional, practical training during the studies.

The minimum length of *Fachhochschule* programmes, including the period necessary for a diploma thesis, is three years. Individual programmes contain compulsory work placements in related professional fields, which lengthen the duration of the course accordingly. The study programme is completed on the submission of a diploma thesis and the passing of an examination before a panel. The academic degree *Magister/Magistra (FH)* or *Diplom-Ingenieur/Ingenieurin (FH)* is awarded. Holders of FH degrees are entitled to enrol in doctoral studies at universities, which last another two semesters. The *Fachhochschule* Council and the Inter-University Joint Curricular Committees issue decrees that establish doctoral programmes to which graduates of specific *Fachhochschule* programmes have access, and lay down the conditions under which supplementary examinations must be taken by FH graduates.

The *Fachhochschule* course offers focus primarily on the fields of technology, economics and tourism. The programmes are generally shorter than university programmes and more structured. In 1996/97, 32 *Fachhochschule* programmes were established. The sector is still being developed.

Teaching methods and assessing study achievements

The teaching staff at universities are free to structure and organise their teaching in terms of content and methodology. Besides lecture courses, there are also seminars, tutorials, exercises, excursions, working groups, project studies, *Privatissima* (small group exercises) and *Konversatorien* (conversation classes). The methods of instruction have not changed substantially over the past few decades. The *UniStG* of 1997 provides for integrating distance learning elements into the curricula. At the universities of art and music, instruction is organised in classes and is often supplemented by individual instruction to further artistic development.

The curricular committees have to design and organise the study programmes in such a way as to enable the students to complete their studies within the minimum duration. Studying longer than the legally prescribed minimum period required for degree programmes is common. Only four percent of the students complete their degree in the minimum period of time.

Study achievement is ascertained through examinations and by assessing diploma and doctoral theses. Successful participation in course units is assessed by the respective teaching staff. Diploma and doctoral examinations may take place as comprehensive examinations (*Gesamtprüfung*), subject examinations (*Fachprüfung*, consisting of one examination per subject), or cumulative individual course examinations (*Lehrveranstaltungsprüfungen*).

Higher education staff

The academic-scientific and artistic personnel as well as the general university personnel (administration, technical support, libraries) are usually civil servants or contractual employees.

Teaching careers at universities and universities of art and music may begin at all qualification levels, i.e. without a previous career at the university. (However, this is not the rule, since this does not apply to professors at the universities of art and music.) After completing their first degree, the majority of university teachers begin their careers as university assistants and acquire the additional qualifications necessary for advancement (doctoral degree, *Habilitation*). The prerequisites for the further employment

of an assistant are a positive evaluation of his/her performance in research, teaching and administration as well as the completion of a doctorate within a maximum of six years (and in artistic disciplines a comparable demonstration of accomplishment) or, for physicians, completion of a course of studies as a specialist. Afterwards, university assistants may apply for the transformation of their contracts into 'definitive' (tenured) employment and assistants on temporary contracts into contracts for an indefinite period of time. They may also apply for appointments as university or contract senior lecturers (*Dozenten*).

Candidate search committees (*Berufungskommissionen*) are established in the realm of university self-administration in order to fill every open or new permanent position for university professors and to recommend a shortlist of three candidates to the rector (in the case of universities), or to the Federal Minister of Science and Transport (in the case of universities of art and music). The selected candidate is appointed with a full academic mandate by the Federal President. The 1993 *UOG* transferred the final selection of the candidates for professorships from the Minister to the rectors of the individual universities. The appointment as a university professor requires the *Habilitation* or a commensurate form of scholarly, scientific or artistic qualification. Pedagogical and didactic qualities, management skills and international practical experience also play a role. The terms of employment as a professor are 'definitive' (tenured), with the exception of the recently introduced category of fixed-term contract professors (allowed in specific cases, i.e. employment of substitutes or part-time employees, sponsored professorial chair).

The responsibilities of university professors were enumerated in the 1993 *UOG* and the amendment to the 1997 Law on civil servants. These are research or cultivating the arts, teaching courses, holding examinations, student counselling, cultivation and promotion of a younger generation of scholars and scientists, and participation in administrative tasks and in evaluation measures. These laws also incorporated the teaching functions of university assistants into their occupational duties. These functions had previously been regulated only by teaching contracts. In addition, the full and associate professors became a homogeneous category of university professors.

The teaching of permanent university personnel is need-oriented, so tailored courses are given (free in subject matter and methodology). University assistants, depending on their qualifications, may be mandated to teach specific courses independently. Their obligation to participate in the teaching duties of the university professors has been limited to their first year of employment. Scholars, scientists and artists, who are not permanent university employees, serve in complementary capacities either as faculty lecturers (*Lehrbeauftragte*) contracted to teach a specific course with a limited academic mandate or as guest professors with the full academic mandate of the *venia docendi*.

Although all higher education teaching staff are under an obligation to pursue further specialist training, there are no very detailed regulations or training courses for the continuous training of higher education teaching staff. It is left to the universities and universities of art and music themselves to organise and offer further training programmes on a voluntary basis. Higher education teaching staff are free to attend further education programmes at home and abroad.

Equal treatment and affirmative action

Since 1991 (amendment to the 1975 *UOG*), every university has had a working group which acts as a type of monitoring body for equal treatment issues, and makes sure that women are not discriminated against in the recruitment process because of gender. Members of working groups for equal treatment issues have significant power in personnel affairs. They must be informed of every staff recruitment and, if they suspect discrimination against women, can file a complaint with the Minister of Science. The consequence of this is that the recruitment process is stopped and reviewed by the Federal Minister. If

the review proves gender-based discrimination, the decision made by the university is repealed through a legally binding notice.

In 1995, the first affirmative action plan was set up for the Ministry of Science. This plan was enacted as a decree, which provides for various measures for the advancement of women among university personnel. The provisions of this decree also serve to support working groups on equal treatment issues, as they regulate in detail the roles of these groups in staff recruitment procedures. To extend the range of legal measures relating to the promotion of women, an amendment to the decree was worked out.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation of the higher education institutions is characterised by a combination of bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation instruments, supplemented or reinforced by national resources and measures at state and/or university level. Offices for international relations have been established or expanded at all university level institutions since the 1980s to guide and support students and teaching staff in academic mobility aspects. In addition, they act as units for the administration of foreign-study grants and, in some cases, also deal with academic exchange programmes. In the *Fachhochschule* sector this function is performed by the person in charge of the *Fachhochschule* programme. The Austrian Academic Exchange Service (*ÖAD*) and the associations of universities and university level institutions advising foreign students and teachers provide assistance in these matters (focused information, staff training, information delivery).

The legal basis of cooperation in the field of education

The support of international collaboration in research and teaching is a legal duty of Austrian universities. One of the principles of the *UniStG* in the establishment of study programmes is the promotion of international mobility of students and graduates. Consideration has to be given to international development when deciding on study offers. The *UniStG* provides for the possibility of using foreign languages in subject units and examinations. The same applies to the writing of a diploma or doctoral thesis, if the supervisor agrees.

Under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), credit points can also be allocated to individual subject units when specifying the curriculum. The curricular committee can issue recommendations for creditable studies at foreign universities in order to promote mobility and the transfer of studies abroad. Optional subjects in each curriculum can also be taken at universities abroad without any restriction on content. Thus, students have the entire teaching programme of all universities at home and abroad at their disposal. In addition, in order to facilitate the mobility of Austrian graduates, the *UniStG* provides for the conferring of academic postgraduate degrees 'Master of Advanced Studies' and 'Master of Business Administration' on graduates of certain university courses. To assist the international mobility of students, the *UniStG* also provides for the issue of bilingual certificates or of additional certificates in a foreign language.

The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) is responsible for the recognition of study credits earned abroad and for the formal classification of foreign academic degrees. It also provides a wide range of information and acts as an information and advice office for Austrian and foreign students, teaching staff and administrative personnel. Applications to have degrees obtained abroad recognised as Austrian graduate or doctoral studies qualifications have to be made directly to the university concerned. Where such recognition is based on a bilateral agreement, it is then carried out by means of notification (*Nostrifizierung*) by the Federal Minister of Science and Transport.

Exchange programmes and study grants

Austria has been taking part in the EU educational programmes, especially Erasmus, since 1991. The scholarships granted by the educational programme Socrates are co-financed by the Federal Ministry of Science and Transport (and to a smaller extent by other ministries). For achievement-related scholarships, research abroad, exchange semesters as well as the support of international relations based on Joint Study Programmes with over 30 countries, the higher education institutions have additional budget resources at their disposal, which have been administered by the Federal Ministry since the beginning of the 1990s. The exchange of higher education teaching staff is also provided for under these university partnership agreements. Apart from the grants conferred within the framework of bilateral scholarship or cultural agreements, grants are also available within the context of multilateral (e.g. EU educational programmes) and regional cooperation (e.g. Ceepus). There is also a whole range of unilateral Austrian grants both for Austrian students studying abroad as well as for foreign students wishing to pursue studies in Austria.

To facilitate their mobility, socially disadvantaged students can receive their study grants for up to four semesters during the study period abroad. Furthermore, they are awarded an additional grant for studies abroad for up to 10 months to cover additional financial expenditure, as well as a travel subsidy.

Most universities and universities of art and music offer special orientation programmes or 'welcome days' as well as introductory German courses for foreign students on exchange programmes. Foreign students who have to take an examination in German or another subject in order to be admitted as full students can attend courses at the so-called pre-study facility in order to prepare for such examinations.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The current reform activities are based on a complex and long-term approach. To reach the objectives of higher education reform plans of the last years, the projects described in section 1 have to be continued and new measures have to be taken. The University Organisation Reform of 1993 paved the way for deregulation and decentralisation and established procedural regulations such as planning for demand, budgeting and evaluation. A number of essential decision-making powers were transferred to the universities. It is anticipated that, by the end of the year 1999, all universities will be organised according to 1993 *UOG*.

To bring the universities of art and music in line with the new laws on university studies and university organisation, an amendment is currently being worked out. At the end of 1995, preparations were started for reforming the universities of art and music and incorporating them into the 1993 *UOG* and the University Studies Act. The objectives pursued are the same as in the University Organisation Reform, but also take into account the particularities and specifics that result from the difference between scientific research and teaching on the one hand and the development (cultivation and teaching) of the arts on the other. In the reform of studies, equivalence to university studies should be achieved. Furthermore, the range of studies should become smaller, the minimum study duration shorter and the contents of the fields of studies should be reoriented. Following detailed discussions with representatives of the universities of art and music and a two-stage assessment procedure, decisions on the organisation and study reform of the universities of art and music will be taken during 1998.

The implementation of the University Studies Act of 1997 is the major task in the reform of studies. The curricular committees have to establish new curricula by decree by 2002, meeting the needs of the labour market and complying with the wishes of professional and social interest groups. For this purpose, a hearing is held which is the basis for the formulation of qualification profiles.

In order to gain some room for manoeuvre in the allocation of resources, the project *Schwerpunktsetzungen* (focus areas) will review the overall range of studies with regard to site decisions taken so far. A working programme set up in cooperation with the Rectors' Conference, will evaluate the practicality, cost-effectiveness and demand orientation of the range of studies. Proposals for inner-university concentration and inter-university regroupings of teaching and research capacities must be developed, as must focus areas at individual university locations. A pilot project covering 9 study programmes in natural sciences will be concluded in autumn 1998. A discussion on the introduction of a new undergraduate degree (Bachelor's) has only just started.

Referring back to the intensive discussion of the draft of the Organisation Reform Act of 1991, individual universities now request greater autonomy. The 1993 *UOG* brought about a modernisation of the internal organisation of universities and a high degree of decentralisation. However, universities have remained state institutions and are still bound by the Federal Budget Act and civil servant law for higher education teaching staff in the key areas of budget and personnel administration. Under these conditions, modern university management can only meet the specific requirements of an autonomous institution to a limited extent. A pilot project will therefore investigate to what extent individual universities, which have already been organised according to the 1993 *UOG*, could be constituted as independent legal entities with full legal personality. This new legal character should increase flexibility, which could have positive effects on performance. Thus, personnel would no longer be civil servants, but contractual private employees of the university. The financial regulations of the general federal administration would be substituted by a general legal framework which could meet the needs of the modern university management. However, the fundamental obligation of the Federal Government to fund universities will remain unchanged. The specific allocation of resources would be based on the achievement agreements between individual universities and the Federal Government. In any case, the co-determination standards of the 1993 *UOG*, such as the principle of the participation of all university personnel in the university decision-making process, have to be retained.

Initial preparatory talks between the Federal Ministry and university representatives commenced in the middle of 1997. A first outline of the above changes should be publicly discussed in 1998/99.

The establishment and expansion of the *Fachhochschule* sector has been rapidly and successfully continued. The development plan provides for the financing of 10,000 study places by the year 2000. The second development plan will be issued in 1999 and will aim at strengthening the sector, especially with regard to meeting the educational needs of specific target groups and widening the range of professional offers.

A White Paper on Higher Education in Austria, focusing on the objectives of the ongoing reforms to the higher education system, will be issued by the Federal Minister of Science and Transport in 1998.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>AHStG</i>	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an den wissenschaftlichen Hochschulen</i> (General Studies Act for Higher Education)
Ceevus	Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies
<i>FHStG</i>	<i>Bundesgesetz über Fachhochschul-Studiengänge</i> (Federal Act on <i>Fachhochschule</i> Programmes)
<i>KHStG</i>	<i>Kunsthochschul-Studiengesetz</i> (Studies Act for Universities of Art and Music)
<i>UOG</i>	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Organisation der Universitäten</i> (Federal Act on the Organisation of Universities/University Organisation Act)
<i>UniStG</i>	<i>Bundesgesetz über die Studien an Universitäten</i> (University Studies Act)

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Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

PORTUGAL

National description

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INTRODUCTION

The first university in Portugal dates from the 13th century and was moved between Lisbon and Coimbra several times, to be finally established in Coimbra. In the mid 19th century, university studies were created in Lisbon and Oporto and the fourth of the older universities was created in 1930, in Lisbon.

The higher education system underwent important changes after the April 1974 revolution, although important changes had been announced just before this. In 1973, a new legal framework for the higher education system was established at the same time as a decision was taken to create new public universities and polytechnics. These changes were questioned after the revolution and suffered various transformations during the first years of the new regime.

In 1980, there were 9 universities, 4 university institutes and the Open University, all public, compared with 4 public universities before 1973. The university institutes became universities in the 1980s. Besides public universities and other higher education institutions not integrated into the university system, at this time, there was also the Catholic University and one private university created in 1979.

In 1979 and 1980, a new polytechnic system was created, encompassing the medium level colleges that had existed before 1974, these being 13 polytechnics. In these years, the first installation committees of these institutions were appointed.

A binary organisation of the higher education system was established and confirmed by the Education Framework Act of 1986.

The growth in the number of institutions corresponded to the growth in the number of students, which rose from 87,000 in 1980/81 (including the medium level colleges) to 335,000 in 1996/97.

The years just after the revolution of 1974 saw many structural changes in Portugal that are important in understanding the period from 1980 to the present. In 1976, the democratic Constitution was approved, the first elections under the new Constitution were held (both presidential and parliamentary) and the first Constitutional Government took office. Following the independence of the African colonies in 1975, there had been a significant influx of people to Portugal, estimated to be around 10% of the population of Portugal. At that time, numerous large firms, but also many of small and medium size, were nationalised. These abrupt changes, the social unrest and the disruptions in the production system, as well as the effects of the oil crisis of 1973, induced a significant loss in production and fuelled inflation that reached 30% in the worst years of the 1980s.

Before April 1974, access to higher education was reserved to a privileged few. After the revolution, the expectations of the population with respect to this rose and the pressure on the system increased dramatically. This increase in demand and the limitations of available facilities and academic staff brought the Government to impose *numeri clausi* as a way of preventing a loss of quality in education provision. In spite of the increase in the capacity of the higher education system through the creation of polytechnics and new universities, the public system was unable to provide the number of places required to meet demand. This fact induced an increase in the number of private providers of higher education, especially from the second half of the 1980s onwards. In 1996, for the first time, the number of higher education applicants was clearly surpassed by the number of places offered by public and private higher education taken together.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, investment in higher education, in particular in the new polytechnics, was supported by World Bank loans. Portugal joined the European Community in 1986, benefiting from pre-accession funds and, later, structural funds. These funds have been assembled into a special programme for the development of the education system, *Programa de desenvolvimento educativo para Portugal (PRODEP)* in 1990.

The higher education system today comprises both university and polytechnic institutions, both public and private, as well as the Catholic University. In 1996/97, the public and non-public institutions represented 64% and 36% of all students respectively. Public institutions include both those that are exclusively under the supervision of the Ministry of Education (14 universities, one university institute and 16 polytechnics) and others that are jointly supervised by the Ministry of Education and other ministries. This is the case for the nursing colleges, which were included in the formal system of higher education in 1988, and also for polytechnic institutions.

Under the latest version of the framework law on the education system, the Education Framework Act of 1997 (Law 115/97, 19 September), all institutions of higher education may award the degrees of *bacharel* and *licenciatura*, the postgraduate degrees of *mestre* and *doutor* being reserved for universities.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

In what follows, for the sake of clarity, reforms are approached separately under three themes: the structure of the system; the degrees awarded; and the status of academic staff. Other reforms will be described in more detail under the specific sections.

The structure of the education system, as it is today, was mainly established between 1977 and 1980, the creation of most of the polytechnic institutions dating from 1979 and 1980 (Decree-Law¹ 513-T/79, 26 December, and Decree-Law 303/80, 1 August). This binary organisation of the higher education system was confirmed by the Education Framework Act of 1986 (*Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*, Law² 46/86, 14 October).

The need for longer schooling in many areas which were previously taught at secondary or medium level education in order to reach a standard of education and training adequate for society's requirements was one of the main reasons behind the creation of new areas of study, as well as shorter higher education courses. In parallel, it was perceived that universities would not be able to provide the more vocationally oriented education that this need implied. These were the reasons behind the first attempt to create a polytechnic system in 1973.

These reasons remained valid after the revolution of April 1974. Furthermore, the demand for higher education, due to longer schooling of the population, people's higher expectations and unemployment, had brought more pressure to increase the capacity of the higher education system. In fact, in 1976, the *numeri clausi* were introduced in medicine and veterinary medicine and, in 1977, extended to all higher education.

Preparation starting in 1976, the network of polytechnic institutions took shape in 1979 and 1980. The creation of this subsystem of higher education, initially termed short-cycle higher education, was not

¹ A decree-law (*decreto-lei*) is a legal document issued by the Government.

² A law and a framework act are legal documents issued by the Parliament.

created without opposition. It was perceived by some sectors as a re-enacting of existing medium level education, which was viewed as a socially devalued form of education.

The main outline of the polytechnic network was designed between 1976 and 1980. A specific project was set up and a special unit was created in the Ministry of Education, a substantial part of the resources coming from World Bank loans.

At the same time, the new universities were taking shape, after a phase of uncertainty just after the April 1974 revolution. In those places where new universities existed, the training of primary and pre-primary teachers, which was traditionally assigned to polytechnics, now took place in special departments of these universities. These departments were created with the general denomination of integrated centres of teacher training. Later, in 1991, the Polytechnic of Faro (in the Algarve) was integrated with the University of Algarve created in 1979. It was the first instance of the co-existence of both polytechnic and university type units within the same institution.

Since the creation of the polytechnic system, other training institutions, not dependent on the Ministry of Education and not included in the formal education system, have been integrated into polytechnic higher education, e.g. nursing colleges in 1988.

The number of non-public institutions of higher education in 1980, including private institutions and the Catholic University, was very limited, representing less than 10% of the number of students enrolled. The growth of the private sector was especially high during the period between 1982/83 and 1992/93, with an average annual rate of increase in student numbers of approximately 30%.

The growth in the number of private institutions motivated the publication of a decree-law, establishing a specific legal basis for private higher education in 1989 (Decree-Law 271/89, 19 August), which had previously come under the same legislation as private education in general. This 1989 decree-law was considered insufficient from the point of view of the rules it defined and, in 1994, it was reviewed and a new decree-law published (Decree-Law 16/94, 22 January, amended by Law 37/94, 11 November).

The main lines of the reforms above, consolidated by the Education Framework Act of 1986 (Law 46/86) persist to date, although changes occurred with respect to the degree system, the status of academic staff, autonomy, financing and institutional assessment.

In 1980, the postgraduate university degree of *mestre* was created (Decree-Law 263/80, 7 August, amended by Decree-Law 216/92, 13 October). The degree system pre-dating the Education Framework Act was confirmed under the same law in 1986, with minor changes. As a result, universities awarded the degrees of *licenciatura*, *mestre* and *doutor* and the polytechnics awarded the degree of *bacharel* and diplomas of specialised higher education (*diploma de estudos superiores especializados - DESE*), equivalent to the degree of *licenciatura*. In fact, the polytechnics could award the degree of *licenciatura* whenever the degree of *bacharel* and the *DESE* formed a coherent sequence.

This framework law was reviewed in 1997, doing away with the *DESE* and allowing polytechnics to award the degrees of *bacharel* and *licenciatura* and universities to award these two, along with the postgraduate degrees of *mestre* and *doutor*. The programmes leading to the degree of *bacharel* last three years, although they may have one or two semesters less, and those leading to the degree of *licenciatura* four years, with the possibility of an additional one to four semesters.

The careers of academic staff in public higher education are regulated by law. There are two laws, one for universities and another for polytechnics. The present regulation of university staff careers dates from

1979/80 (Decree-Law 448/79, 1 November, amended by Law 19/80, 16 July), and underwent some changes in 1987. The career structure introduced in 1979/80 emphasised staff's scientific work, with the objective of developing scientific research at universities. In 1987, the concept of exclusive dedication was introduced. Members of the academic staff adhering to this regime received a pay rise, as a career incentive.

The grading structure for academic staff of polytechnics dates from 1981 (Decree-Law 185/81, 1 July), the regime of exclusive dedication being applied also to careers in these institutions in 1987.

At present, the categories of university staff are, from lower to higher qualifications, *assistente estagiário* (requiring the degree of *licenciatura*), *assistente* (requiring the degree of *mestre*), *professor auxiliar* (requiring the degree of *doutor*), *professor associado* (requiring the degree of *doutor* followed by a competitive exam) and *professor catedrático* (after the public examination of *agregação* and a competitive exam). At the polytechnics, they are *assistente do 1º triénio* (requiring a degree of higher education), *assistente do 2º triénio* (the same as the previous one, after three years of teaching), *professor adjunto* (after a public competitive exam, simplified for the holders of the degree of *mestre*) and *professor coordenador* (after a public competitive exam, simplified for the holders of the degree of *doutor*). In terms of salaries, the categories of *professor associado* and *professor coordenador* are equivalent, as are the first two years of the categories of *assistente estagiário* and *assistente do 1º triénio*.

Besides these categories of academic staff, other people, not categorised as above, may be recruited with reference to the career grading structure, depending on their *curriculum vitae*.

Both grading structures are being revised at present and negotiated with the trade unions. One of the main objectives for the revision is, in broad terms, the recruitment of academic staff holding at least the degree of *doutor* to universities and of those with the degree of *mestre* to polytechnics. Another objective is to have promotions based on public competitions, in order to increase their transparency.

As far as private and cooperative higher education is concerned, the statute for these establishments indicates that staff grades should roughly follow those of public higher education.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

The administration of higher education, at central level, within the Ministry of Education, is the responsibility of the General Directorate of Higher Education, working under the Secretary of State for Higher Education. The autonomy of institutions is established by law, conferring different levels of autonomy on public universities (Law 108/88, 24 September), public polytechnics (Law 54/90, 5 September) and private institutions (Decree-Law 16/94, 22 January, amended by Law 37/94, 11 November).

The law on public universities' autonomy, dating from 1988, gives the universities autonomy with regard to internal organisation, the creation and running of courses, research, personnel and the administration of facilities. This autonomy was increased in 1997 (Decree-Law 252/97, 26 September), in particular in matters of personnel and university buildings. The Ministry of Education, as regards public universities, is mainly concerned with the budget, current investment, the number of places that universities may offer under each programme and the numbers of academic and non-academic staff.

Universities are run by elected individuals and bodies. The rector is elected by a body of representatives of the academic staff, other staff and students.

Universities may be organised into faculties or departments with a variable degree of autonomy within the university. In turn, faculties are run by elected bodies, with the exception of the Scientific Council, which is composed of all members of the academic staff holding a doctoral degree (*doutor*).

The law on management and autonomy gives the polytechnics a lesser degree of autonomy than the universities in the creation of their courses. These have to be approved by the Ministry of Education.

Similarly, polytechnics are run by elected individuals and bodies. The presidents are also elected and the bodies in the different colleges follow a similar pattern to faculties, the Scientific Council including members with the degree of *mestre*.

Private higher education institutions, according to the law on private higher education, are established on the initiative of firms, cooperatives or foundations created specifically for the development of higher education and, to award national degrees, must be officially recognised. This recognition is based on a proposal that is analysed under several headings, such as internal organisation, academic staff, buildings and equipment and an economic viability study. The dossier submitted is analysed by the General Directorate of Higher Education, the economic viability study by a consultancy firm and then there is a final analysis of the whole project by a specialist commission. Recognition of individual courses follows a similar procedure, based on the curriculum and general course regulations, academic staff, physical facilities and equipment and the number of students proposed.

The organisation of these institutions is more flexible. Although some of the management bodies are similar to those of public institutions, their composition has a greater degree of flexibility. The rector or president is appointed by the entity owning the university or polytechnic, be it a firm, a cooperative or a foundation.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

The budget of public institutions, both universities and polytechnics, comes mainly from the national budget. The public funds allocated are split into current expenditure and investment.

The current expenditure budget is calculated through a formula that takes into consideration the number of students, student to academic and to non-academic staff ratios, as well as salaries, which depend on national rules relating to qualifications. The ratio of students to full-time equivalent academic staff varies according to the field of study, as well as the type of institution (university or a polytechnic). It also takes into consideration the fact that the number of teaching hours for academic staff is different according to the institution, 6 to 9 at universities and 6 to 12 at polytechnics.

The investment budget depends on the planning of construction and facility renewal activities, undertaken at national level, in agreement with the institutions, by the Ministry of Education and following proposals. These activities are included in the budget of each institution, which is responsible for implementation.

The budget financed through the Ministry of Education is mainly dedicated to educational activities, although it supports the salaries of academic staff, who dedicate part of their time to research. The research activities of higher education institutions also receive funding from the Ministry of Science and Technology. These institutions are also financed by their own income from contract work.

In 1996/97, tuition fees were PTE 1,200, an amount first fixed in 1941. In 1992 (Law 20/92, 14 August), the Government established a new level for fees, which were to rise to 50% of the current expenditure

budget figure per student. This law was suspended in 1995 and the previous amount re-established. The Framework Act on Higher Education Finance passed in 1997, first applied in the academic year 1997/98, establishes that the annual tuition fee is equal to one monthly minimum national wage, independent of the cost of the programme. For the academic year (1997/98), this corresponded to PTE 56,700. Fees, as part of the income of the institutions, represent approximately 8% of the budget of higher education institutions, taking all institutions together.

The present formula to determine the current expenditure budget was established in 1994. Up to that time, the budget of each higher education institution was based on the previous budget and direct negotiation between the Ministry of Education and the institutions. The formula currently comprises an adaptation component, allowing the institutions to adapt progressively to the reference budget.

The education activities of private institutions are financed by student tuition fees and their own funds, and they are also eligible for public research funds.

The *PRODEP* programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund, supports building and renewal of education, sport, residence and canteen facilities, as well as training for academic staff at postgraduate level and work experience for students, in both public and private institutions.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

In 1980, there was no systematic assessment of the quality of programmes or institutions. A law on the evaluation of higher education was passed in 1994 (Law 38/94, 21 November), establishing the basis for a regular assessment of the quality of higher education programmes. The very significant growth of higher education in preceding years had made quality an important issue.

The application of this law implied the establishment of independent institutions responsible for the evaluation process. The first institution formally recognised as such was the Foundation of Portuguese Universities, which has been conducting the process of evaluation of public universities. The first report on the external evaluation of university courses was presented in April 1997. More recently, in 1998, an agreement was signed with the Association of Portuguese Polytechnic Institutions for the assessment of public polytechnic institutions.

In July 1996, a working group was created in order to prepare the extension of the process to the whole system, public and private. In 1997, the Minister of Education defined the general principles to be considered by the working group in the preparation of legislation concerning the evaluation process. The main principles include the assessment of all institutions, universities and polytechnics, public and non-public, using a common framework and the same type of indicators. The assessment may be of single programmes, of a given domain or of the global institutional performance. The assessment process is to be coordinated by the National Council for Assessment of Higher Education Institutions, created in 1998. The evaluation of universities and of polytechnics is coordinated by two councils within the national council, one for each subsystem, including in each case both public and non-public institutions.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

As referred to in the introduction, *numeri clausi* were introduced in 1976 and their use extended to all courses in 1977. This created a need to define candidate selection criteria for a given programme.

The minimum entrance requirement had previously been 11 years of schooling. Between 1978 and 1980, the completion of secondary education included a preparation year for higher education. Thus the 12th year of schooling was created and it became the minimum requirement for access to higher education, although a transition period was established.

Following the introduction of this general requirement, there have been many successive changes. These concern, amongst other things, whether students must have studied specific subjects in secondary education to enter a given higher education programme, and the need to pass a general access exam (between 1989 and 1992) or national exams in certain disciplines for a particular programme.

At present, in 1997 and 1998, besides completing secondary education, candidates must have done the national exams in the disciplines specified for each programme and must have obtained a minimum mark in these exams and overall. Some programmes, like physical education and music, impose some prerequisites that candidates must satisfy.

Candidates for public higher education must complete a form indicating six choices in decreasing order of preference, and are placed according to a mark, composed of the mark in secondary education (50%) and the mark in the specific exams (50%).

Besides this system of selection for students entering from secondary education, there are special arrangements for candidates from the families of diplomats in Portugal, Portuguese emigrants, the handicapped, the Timorese (from East Timor) and candidates from Portuguese-speaking African countries. These special arrangements were introduced in 1993. Candidates aged 25 years old or over, not holding a secondary education certificate, may sit a special higher education access exam.

The new Education Framework Act of 1997 (Law 115/97, 19 September) establishes a higher degree of responsibility for higher education institutions in defining the selection criteria for access to higher education, although the responsibility for selection and placement operations will continue to rest with the Ministry of Education.

As regards wastage and dropout, there are no direct measures to promote their reduction at central level. The Ministry of Education undertakes statistical surveys of the average number of years required to complete a given programme of study. Direct measures are the responsibility of the institutions themselves. However, the Framework Act on Higher Education Finance defines the number of years of study that each student may be financed by the Government, as $n+2$ for programmes of up to 4 years and $n+3$ for those which are longer, n being the notional duration of the programme.

The system of quality evaluation of higher education (see section 2.2.), in association with development contracts between the Government and the institutions established by the Framework Act on Higher Education Finance of 1997 (Law 113/97, 16 September), may also have a positive effect on the reduction of dropout.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

In 1980, financial and other support for students of higher education were under the same institution as the other levels of education, the Institute for Social Action in Education (*Instituto de Acção Social Escolar - IASE*). In this year, a specific board for higher education was created, the Council for Social Action in Higher Education (*Conselho de Acção Social Escolar do Ensino Superior - CASES*), and the social services of each university became autonomous by law in 1980 (Decree-Law 132/80, 17 May).

The basic system remained unchanged. Payment of grants was made to students of lower economic means. The building and running of halls of residence, refectories and medical services was provided for. After 1990, the social services of the universities were allowed to grant loans to students.

As polytechnics appeared, similar support was given to their students, although, in the beginning, this task was the responsibility either of the social services of a nearby university or of the polytechnic institution itself rather than of its social services.

In 1993, a new law (Decree-Law 129/93, 22 April) replaced the *CASES* with the National Council for Social Action in Higher Education (*Conselho Nacional de Acção Social Escolar no Ensino Superior - CNASES*) and the social services of each public institution of higher education, university or polytechnic, were set up. Specific medical services were replaced by giving students access to the national health service.

In 1990, subsidies to pay fees were established for students of private higher education with lower incomes. This system remained in place until the academic year 1995/96, with changes only in the maximum amount of the subsidy. In 1996/97, for the first time, such students were given grants, as well as the fee subsidy. Although the number of grants is still limited by the budget, it has been increasing. The objective is to cover all lower income students. In 1997/98, the rules applied to the grants are almost identical to those of public higher education, with an additional fee subsidy.

For 1997/98, students that are eligible for a grant must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree programme and be in a position to complete their studies in $n+2$ years, which means that they must succeed in completing 40% of the curricular units every year. The grant amount depends on the per capita income of the family, which must be below the minimum national wage (PTE 56,700 in 1997/98). Other provisions include a special subsidy for students studying at a higher education institution away from their place of residence.

The system for private higher education is identical, the maximum additional fee subsidy being, in 1997/98, PTE 293,300 per year.

The Framework Act on Higher Education Finance passed in 1997 introduces some changes that are still being implemented. A Student Support Fund (*Fundo de Apoio ao Estudante*) was created in 1998, which provides direct and indirect social support to students, including grants, loans, emergency support, and so on. This support is awarded through the social services budget for public higher education institutions and directly for private institutions.

The same law establishes new grant levels for students of public higher education and the progressive extension of the same benefits to private higher education students. The rules for 1997/98 were already based on the principles of this new law.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

As referred to in section 1, the polytechnic system was created in the 1970s, in order to develop more vocationally oriented programmes, although some polytechnics existed before as non-higher education institutions. As already mentioned, nursing became one of the programmes of the polytechnic institutions in 1988, previously being non-formal vocational training. The Education Framework Act of 1986 indicates that polytechnic programmes have a more vocational orientation, although practice shows that the distinction may not be as clear as the original planners might have intended.

Initially, the distinction between universities and polytechnics rested on their different degrees, *bacharel* at the polytechnics and *licenciatura* at the universities, with programmes of different duration. This distinction was reduced with the Education Framework Act of 1986, which introduced the *DESE*, equivalent to the degree of *licenciatura*. The new version of the law, passed in 1997, further reduces the difference, by enabling the awarding of both degrees under both subsystems.

At present, vocational programmes are offered at both universities and polytechnics, but the more traditional academic programmes are offered at universities. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a tendency for programmes to be more specialised, giving way to the proliferation of course names and content. The present direction of the Government is to reverse this trend, promoting a broader spectrum of education, more adapted to the requirements of higher professional mobility.

The evolution of teaching methods used in higher education has not been the subject of systematic study. It is difficult to identify general changes, as different methods have been used throughout the system. With the introduction of student/teacher ratios limiting the number of academic staff, institutions have been compelled to increase the use of larger classes, reduce small group teaching and reduce the number of hours of teaching per week.

Credit units were introduced in 1980 (Decree-Law 173/80, 29 May). Programmes may be organised by credits, which are defined in relation to a number of teaching hours, different for theoretical or practical classes and seminars, etc. Organisation by credits has not yet been extended to all programmes.

The scientific training of academic staff is an important part of the *PRODEP* programme, which finances postgraduate programmes for them. This training effort is of paramount importance for the consolidation of the system, as the higher education system has grown very rapidly, to three times its size of 10 years ago (twice its size in the public institutions and six times in the private ones).

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Portuguese accession to the European Union, in 1986, induced an increase in European level exchanges of students and academic staff. This is the case for both universities and polytechnics. Portuguese higher education institutions also participate in the different European research programmes.

Portugal is also active in other fora, such as the Council of Europe and Unesco. In April 1997, the Diplomatic Conference for the Adoption of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, convened jointly by the Council of Europe and Unesco was held in Lisbon, Portugal being one of the signatories of the Convention.

In 1980, the international participation of Portuguese higher education institutions and academics was facilitated by the policy of grants for postgraduate studies abroad, set in place by the Government of 1968. This policy allowed the training of a significant number of academic staff at postgraduate level in countries like the United Kingdom, the USA or France. The changes introduced to the academic staff careers structure in 1979/80 and the salary increase based on the exclusive dedication option in 1987 made it possible for holders of postgraduate degrees to make a career in higher education teaching and research and to be involved in research projects with foreign institutions.

After some difficulties in relations between Portugal and its ex-colonies just after the independence of these countries, relations have progressively improved and Portugal and Portuguese higher education institutions have significantly increased their cooperation with these countries.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The introduction in 1997 of changes to the Education Framework Law and of the new Framework Act on Higher Education Finance will have implications for the evolution of the system in the near future. The first of these two laws implies a reorganisation of the programmes offered, in particular by the polytechnics, as these institutions will cease to award *DESEs* and will now award *licenciaturas*. In the polytechnics, programmes leading to a *licenciatura* degree will be mostly organised as two-step ones, the first leading to the degree of *bacharel*, the second being similar to the *DESE*, but with greater coherence between the two steps.

The Education Framework Act stipulates that all teacher training programmes, including pre-primary, are *licenciaturas*. This will require a special effort by the system to give all teachers the opportunity to obtain a *licenciatura*.

The Framework Act on Higher Education Finance creates new instruments that are now being developed, and that will definitely influence the relations between the Ministry of Education and the institutions, which will be regulated by contracts to be established between the two parties. There are two kinds of contracts: 1) development contracts, with a duration of more than five years, regulating the mutual agreement on the long-term development of each institution and the means to implement that development; and 2) programme contracts of a shorter duration and aimed at solving specific difficulties in the running of the institutions.

Under the Framework Act on Higher Education Finance, the newly-created Student Support Fund (*Fundo de Apoio ao Estudante*) will develop new forms of student support such as loans, as well as ensuring a more equitable distribution of social benefits to students at national level, while maintaining the autonomy of each institution's services.

Concerning the assessment of higher education programmes and institutions, the process will be extended to all institutions, both public and private, universities and polytechnics, and the assessment of individual programmes will be conducted on a regular basis.

An external evaluation of private institutions is underway, conducted by a special group appointed by the Council of Ministers, and is expected to complete its work in 1999. This is important from the point of view of ensuring that all institutions comply with the relevant legal requirements and higher education objectives after a period of exponential growth, as was the case in past years.

A graduate observation system is being implemented, which may provide valuable information on the relevance of the training provided to the labour market. This system will be useful to higher education candidates in making their choice of programme, as well as for the institutions and the Ministry of Education on relevance and the need to expand given programmes or fields of study.

The new autonomy of universities, resulting from the legislation passed in 1997, will be adapted and applied to polytechnics.

The effort towards offering postgraduate level training to academic staff of all higher education institutions will be pursued, in order to achieve a situation where most permanent academic staff will hold at least the degree of *mestre* at polytechnics and the degree of *doutor* at universities.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

- DESE* *Diploma de estudos superiores especializados* (diploma of specialised higher education)
PRODEP *Programa de desenvolvimento educativo para Portugal* (Programme for Portugal for the development of the education system)

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Eurydice
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

FINLAND

National description

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FINLAND

INTRODUCTION

Finland's first university was established in Turku in the time of Swedish rule in 1640. Almost two hundred years later, by which time Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire, the Academy was transferred to Helsinki, where it reopened in 1828 as the Imperial Alexander University of Finland.

The University of Helsinki remained Finland's only institution of higher education until 1908, when the Helsinki University of Technology, founded half a century before, was given university status. Soon afterwards, two universities were founded in Turku: Åbo Akademi University (Swedish-language University of Turku) in 1917 and the Finnish-language University of Turku in 1920.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a rapid expansion of the Finnish higher education system. In order to respond to the demands of rapidly developing business and industry several specialised institutions of business and technology were established.

Until the 1960s and 1970s, the provision of higher education was heavily concentrated in the southern parts of Finland. In order to expand the number of students in higher education and to ensure a balanced regional development for the country, several new universities were established in eastern and northern parts of the country. The overall aim was to provide university education for one fifth of the age group, the term age group being commonly used in the Finnish education system to signify those students born in the same year.

Since then, the increase in university student numbers has been rapid: from c. 24,000 students in the 1960s to c. 147,000 students in 1999.

The present university network is among the densest in Europe: there are 20 universities and the network covers the whole region of Finland. Out of the 20 institutions, 10 are traditional multi-disciplinary universities and 10 are specialised institutions: three schools for economics and business administration, three universities of technology and four art academies (music, theatre and dance, art and design, fine arts). The annual number of new students is c. 19,000, which represents one quarter of the age group.

There were some structural reforms in the university sector when teacher education was transferred to universities at the beginning of the 1970s. Institutes providing translation studies were merged with universities in 1981. The College of Veterinary Medicine was established as an independent university in the 1960s but was annexed as a faculty to the University of Helsinki in 1995. The latest expansion of the university network took place in 1993 when the Academy of Fine Arts was granted university status.

The most significant reform in the Finnish higher education system following the 1960s and 1970s and the establishment of the new universities was the introduction of the *ammattikorkeakoulu* system (which encompasses polytechnics) in 1991. The reform, still being carried out, started with an experimental phase, which means that all the institutions will be carefully evaluated before they are granted an operating licence. Polytechnics are mostly multi-discipline regional institutions of higher education, emphasising working life contacts in their operations. Compared with universities, polytechnic studies are more practically oriented. Polytechnics educate experts for positions in working life and its development. They provide non-university professional higher education for those who have completed either the matriculation examination, normally taken at the end of the three-year general upper

secondary school, or an upper secondary level vocational qualification. The completion of a polytechnic degree takes 3.5-4 years. In 1998, there were some 24,000 new students and the total number of polytechnic students was approximately 82,000.

The reform is based on the existing system of Finnish vocational education and training. Institutions, most usually the result of mergers of several individual institutions, offering vocational education and training at the post-secondary level are upgraded to higher education level after an assessment. The assessment evaluates whether the applying institutions satisfy the necessary prerequisites for higher education level. The final decision on including a given institution in the experimental phase is taken by the Government, which bases its decision on the expert evaluation report.

In 1999, there are 29 operating polytechnics. All polytechnics will operate on a permanent basis as from August 2000.

University level degrees can also be completed in the National Defence College, which is not under the Ministry of Education. The Act on the National Defence College (668/1992) is based on legislation on the defence forces and contains regulations on the degrees, teachers and students of the College. Comparability of the degrees of the National Defence College and universities is decided under the Decree on the System of Higher Education Degrees (203/1994) and refers only to professional eligibility for public posts conferred by the degrees.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Up to the 1950s, the Finnish university system grew without any clear national policy. The first national guidelines for higher education policy were drawn up by the National Committee for Higher Education, operating from 1952 to 1956.

The first Higher Education Development Act was passed in 1966 for the years 1966 to 1981. The act's validity was later extended to 1986. The purpose of the act was to expand university education, to balance the regional distribution of higher education, to shift the sectoral distribution of student places towards technology and the natural sciences, and to promote research at universities. The act was based on the proposal of the working group appointed by the President of the Republic.

The period of rapid expansion of the system during the 1960s and 1970s was not altogether favourable. The increase in student numbers mainly took place in the humanities and social sciences, which were less resource demanding than technology or natural sciences, and this led to disparities between the provision of graduates and the actual demands of the world of work. The act therefore sought to ensure sufficient growth in university resources and better coordination between the provision of education and the world of work.

Partly due to the fairly favourable social and economic development occurring in the 1970s and 1980s in Finland, the goals set in the act were largely achieved by the year 1986. However, some problems still continued to exist and new ones had arisen.

Study times were growing longer despite the degree reform carried out in the 1970s, postgraduate education was poorly organised and the number of doctoral degrees awarded was quite low. The steering system was too rigid and centralised, and the internal management of the universities far from efficient.

A new Higher Education Development Act (1052/1986) was passed in 1986. The objective of the new act was to guarantee stable resource development for universities until the mid-1990s and to prepare the ground for internal reform. The Government made a resolution as an adjunct to the act, which marked a totally new thinking in Finnish higher education policy.

The main goals in the Government's resolution were the gradual introduction of management by objectives into universities, the introduction of an assessment system that would give enough information on the results and costs of teaching and research and to respond to the demand for more efficient undergraduate and postgraduate education.

The new act and the Government's resolution were successfully implemented, and the universities enjoyed a remarkable increase in their resources.

The Government prepares a Development Plan for Education and University Research every four years. The Plan outlines general policy guidelines for the development of the whole education sector. The Development Plan drawn up in 1991 also set the goals for higher education: high quality of education and research, internationalisation, increased efficiency and further delegation of decision-making powers from the Government to the institutions themselves.

The rapidly deteriorating state of the Finnish national economy also forced austerity measures on higher education in the first years of the 1990s. In 1993, the Government revised the Development Plan of 1991 to provide guidelines for development in the changed operating environment. The Revised Development Plan called for measures from the higher education system to alleviate the dramatically changed unemployment situation by reforming the degree structures and content to better meet the new demands of the world of work. Research and development was expected to contribute more directly to the strengthening of the national innovation structure. Much emphasis was placed again on international cooperation.

The Government's Development Plan for Education and University Research for 1995-2000 sets out ten priority areas: the principle of life-long learning; responsiveness to the changes in the workplace; internationalisation; language teaching; implementation of the national information strategy for research and education; sustainable development; improvement of mathematics and science skills; an emphasis on the cultural mission of universities; a policy of centres of excellence; and strengthening the role of evaluation. The new plan for the years 1999-2004 was drafted by the Ministry of Education in the summer of 1999.

Between 1994 and 1997, a new degree structure was introduced to most of the university disciplines (with decrees on degrees by fields of study). The introduction of the three-year first-cycle university degree (*kandidaatin tutkinto*) - in Finnish terminology, the lower academic degree - is aimed at shortening graduation times, making degrees more flexible and internationally comparable. The higher second-cycle university degree (*maisterin tutkinto*) - in Finnish terminology, the higher academic degree - takes another two years to complete after the lower academic (first-cycle) degree.

The degree reform is closely linked to the introduction of the postgraduate schools in the beginning of 1995. Postgraduate schools offering a considerable number of full-time positions in research training were established as a result of the Government's decision to supplement earlier arrangements for research training. The purpose of the reform was to raise the quality of postgraduate education and to make it possible for students to obtain their doctorates in four years of full-time study. The introduction and implementation of the postgraduate school system was done through close cooperation between the Ministry of Education, universities and the Academy of Finland.

The 1980s and 1990s have been characterised by an overall reform in the Government-university steering system. At the national level, the reform has meant a more relaxed steering by legislation, norms and budget, and as a result, greater internal autonomy for universities.

At the university level, since the late 1980s, administration and decision-making systems have been streamlined by reducing the number of levels in decision-making and delegating authority. In the university central administration, authority has been transferred to the rectors and, at lower levels to the deans, and other heads of units.

All universities adopted budgeting by results by the beginning of 1994. This meant replacement of itemised appropriations with appropriations tied to objectives. Now, only two items are distinguished: operational expenditure and investment. Universities are free to make their own decisions on how to use their allocations.

Apart from the existing legislation, steering of universities is based on consultation between them and the Ministry of Education. The first instances of consultation occurred in 1992. The outcome, a joint view on the objectives for universities and the resources needed, is recorded in a performance agreement signed by the representatives of the Ministry and universities. From 1997 onwards, the setting of targets and the basic budgeting is done for three years at a time.

Since 1988, a certain proportion of the appropriations for universities has been allocated on the basis of performance. The indicators used have varied along the years.

A major change in the funding system of the universities was introduced in 1996 when a form of budgeting was adopted in which the basic funding of a university was linked to an agreed target number of both higher academic (second-cycle) and doctoral degrees. Formula-based budgeting will be implemented gradually up to the year 2003. The new budgeting model is based on the proposals of a joint Ministry of Education-universities *ad hoc* working group.

The change in the steering system is well illustrated in the new Act on Universities, ratified on 27 June 1997 and entering into force on 1 August 1998. Up till then, there were separate acts and decrees for each university stipulating the mission of the university, the system of administration, teaching and other operational units, languages of instruction, teaching and research and so on. The new act and the decree issued on the basis of it make up a loose legislative framework leaving much room for each university as regards decision-making.

With the new steering system, evaluation has become an important element of the process. A new Finnish Council for Higher Education Evaluation was established by the Decree (1320/1995) as of the beginning of 1996. At the same time, the former advisory body to the Ministry of Education, namely the Higher Education Council, was abolished. The main task of the Evaluation Council is to assist universities and polytechnics in their own evaluation processes and to promote evaluation in Finland in general. The Council is also responsible for evaluating the polytechnics seeking operating licences.

The national student financial aid system underwent several changes during the 1980s and 1990s. The changes were made by amending the legislation dating back to 1972, until a totally new Act and Decree on Student Financial Aid came into force on 1 May 1994 (65/1994). The financial aid scheme had two elements: the grant and the repayable loan, and the basic idea of the amendments in the 1980s was to increase the proportion of the grant compared to the proportion of the loan.

In 1992, a profound reform was introduced to the financial aid system. Until then, banks had applied centrally controlled basic interest rates when granting state-guaranteed student loans. With the radically changed economic situation of the country, market interest rates started to be applied to student loans.

With the new Act on Student Financial Aid (65/1994), the maximum time that a student can get financial aid was restricted to 55 months for a higher academic (second-cycle) degree. This period can be lengthened in cases of illness etc. In addition, the Ministry of Education has made a decision by which students of certain disciplines are automatically granted a longer period because of the extent of the first degree or an unusually demanding syllabus (e.g. medicine, some languages not taught at secondary schools).

As referred to earlier on in the text, the most profound reform in the Finnish higher education system in the 1990s has been the introduction of the non-university sector parallel to the universities. The reform was launched with the enactment of legislation on experimental *ammattikorkeakoulu* (polytechnic or former AMK institutions) in 1991 (391/1991). The experiences of the experimental polytechnics were so positive that the Act on Permanent Polytechnics was passed in 1995 (255/1995) and as from 1 August 1996, the first nine polytechnics were granted a permanent operating licence.

The reasons for introducing a distinct non-university sector were many. There were some clearly dysfunctional elements in the vocational education and training system, and the system was not attractive enough for those school-leavers who had taken the matriculation examination, and thus successfully completed general upper secondary school. The number of young people going to the general upper secondary school is very high in Finland. Nearly 60% of annual cohorts continue their studies in general upper secondary school after comprehensive school, and as universities could offer a study place for only one quarter of this number, there were many disappointed students with the required matriculation exam. It was thus important to improve their chances of a higher education study place.

Since the latter half of the 1980s and 1990s, Finnish society has been going through a rapid phase of internationalisation. The former system of vocational education was not very transparent or easily comparable to systems in other, mainly European, countries. In addition, due to the development of modern technology and its rapid introduction into Finnish working life, there was an acutely felt need to have better qualified people in the labour market.

In addition, Finland has set the goal of providing higher education for 60-65% of pupils of the same age in the early years of the 21st century and, as it was considered that universities could not expand their provision without endangering the quality of education and research, an attractive alternative at higher education level was needed. The aim is that universities provide education for c. 20% of the 60-65% target for higher education entrants, and polytechnics for the remainder.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

All of Finland's 20 universities are state-owned institutions under the Ministry of Education. They have extensive autonomy in questions relating to teaching and research and in other internal matters. (The new Act and Decree on Universities came into force in 1998, as already explained in section 1).

The internal university administration is based on representation of various groups in administrative bodies. Most commonly, half of the members are professors, one quarter represents other staff and the remaining quarter, students.

Since the late 1980s, the administrative structures have been streamlined by reducing the number of levels and by delegating authority. The rector, deans and other heads of units are now charged with most responsibility for the internal operation of the university.

Each university has an administrative council whose main responsibility is to make strategy decisions and prepare operational plans and budgets. The council is also responsible for appointing key officials, except for professors and directors of administration. These had been appointed by the President of the Republic, but this changed with the new Act on Universities when the appointment of professors became the responsibility of the universities themselves.

Faculties are responsible for the administration of teaching and research in universities. Decisions are made by the Faculty Councils, which are composed of teaching and research staff and students. The dean of the faculty is responsible for general management and performance. Some universities have also included representatives of outside interest groups in their administrative bodies in order to promote interaction between the world of work and university.

Up until the mid-1980s, Finnish national administration of education was centralised. The internal organisation and decision-making of the universities was regulated by administrative orders and decrees. The state university budget determined the allocation of funds in detail. Decrees on studies and degrees included detailed stipulations on the curricula and the provision of instruction. Teachers' duties were laid down in detail in collective agreements.

Today, the changed steering system allows universities extensive freedom of action. The role of the Ministry of Education is restricted to strategic plans and target-setting and monitoring the overall performance of the universities.

Unlike universities, none of the 29 polytechnics is state-owned. The Government may grant an operating licence to a local authority, joint municipal board or registered Finnish foundation or association. The Government sets out the educational function and specific development requirements of the institutions in the licence. Before a polytechnic is granted a permanent operating licence, it must have successfully undergone the evaluation by the Council for Higher Education Evaluation. The criteria for the evaluation are set out in the legislation governing polytechnics. A phase of experimental operation must always precede permanent status, i.e. no institution can be upgraded directly from post-secondary vocational institution to higher education level.

Basically, the management and steering of polytechnics is similar to that of universities. Management is based on the overall policy objectives laid down in the Government's Development Plan for Education and University Research and yearly consultation on performance and objectives between the Ministry of Education and the institutions themselves. During consultation, a representative from the municipality or organisation maintaining the polytechnic is always present, too.

Polytechnics have the same kind of internal autonomy in matters relating to teaching, certification, evaluation etc. as the universities. However, they are expected to be more regional in orientation and have more direct relations between local business and industry than the universities.

The general administration of a polytechnic is handled by the board and the president (rector) and, if necessary, a consultative committee. The administrative arrangements are mainly up to the owner of the institution. The board and the consultative committee or other kind of multi-member administrative body of a municipal or private polytechnic may include representatives of teachers, other staff, students, and business and industry.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Up to the early 1990s, the university budget grew steadily. This was due to the Higher Education Development Act and a favourable economic situation in the country. From 1991 to 1994, public funding declined by 16% in real terms. This was due to the recession that hit Finland at full force. The provision of the Higher Education Development Act had to be repealed twice during those years (1993 and 1994). The decline in public funding came to a halt in 1995.

In conjunction with the Act of 1987, the Government issued a decision under which total expenditure on salaries, other consumption, scholarships and appropriations for research materials would be increased by no less than 15% a year. On the whole, this target was met.

Today, about three-quarters of the university education budget is financed from the state budget through the Ministry of Education. The rest comes mainly through the Academy of Finland which finances basic research and researcher training in universities, other ministries and research institutes.

The Government's policy is to encourage universities to increase the amount of external funding through chargeable services, commissioned research, international projects etc. There are no student fees and the proportion of purely private funding is very low.

In the current system of management by results and objectives the universities' operating costs are covered by allocations consisting of core or basic funding (c. 90%), performance-based funding (c. 5%) and project funding (c. 5%). Project funds are earmarked for new research or education projects of national importance. They can be initiated either by the Ministry of Education or the universities themselves.

As from 1996, reform of university funding will gradually be carried out. The reform involves a formula based on the agreed target number of higher academic (second-cycle) and doctoral degrees. The shares for performance-based funding and project funding will also remain in the new budgeting system.

In 1996, the total university budget channelled through the Ministry of Education was FIM 6,090 million and the income from chargeable services was FIM 925 million. Altogether, the university budget represents 3.1% of the whole state budget.

The operation of the polytechnics is financed from state budget funds and contributions by the students' home municipalities. Thus, unlike universities, polytechnics are not funded entirely by the State. The Government has also granted institutions additional targeted funding for development projects and granted performance-based funding. The level of funding for a given institution is based on the number of students.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

Universities and polytechnics are responsible for quality control and systematic evaluation of their own activities and output. The Finnish Council for Higher Education Evaluation, an independent advisory body both for universities, polytechnics and the Ministry of Education, was established in 1996 to assist universities and polytechnics and the Ministry of Education in matters related to evaluation. The Ministry may initiate evaluation also, but it does not use the results as a basis for allocating resources. The Government has set a goal for an extensive evaluation programme according to which Finnish universities should have undergone an institutional evaluation by the year 2000.

Polytechnics are evaluated before being granted a permanent status. Some polytechnics have also been evaluated for their international activities on their own initiative.

In 1990, the Ministry of Education issued an educational quality assessment programme for universities. The goals of the programme were the development of the monitoring and evaluation of student admissions, the content of teaching, curricula, the form of courses and the implementation of their goals, the progress of studies, utilisation of student places and job placement.

In 1991, the Ministry of Education decided to carry out a nation-wide evaluation of individual disciplines, general evaluations of different universities and an operational and organisational evaluation of the Academy of Finland.

The evaluation of the individual disciplines (humanities, natural sciences, pedagogy) led to the university degree reform described earlier on.

The Academy of Finland is responsible for the evaluation of research and it has been charged with the task of evaluating the status and standard of Finnish research every three years. The first systematic evaluations by discipline were started in 1983 by the Academy.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

In Finland, general eligibility for university studies is given by the Finnish matriculation examination, which is normally taken at the end of the three-year general upper secondary school. The same eligibility is given by the international *baccalaureate*, European *baccalaureate* and the *Reifeprüfung*. In addition, students with post-secondary level vocational diplomas are eligible. Universities can, using their own judgement, admit a person whom they consider has the knowledge and skills required for university studies. In practice, c. 95% of students admitted have taken the matriculation examination.

Universities are responsible for their own student selection, and they decide on field-specific student intake according to agreed target numbers of degrees. A *numerus clausus* system is applied in every field. Because of the limited number of places, universities use different kinds of selection criteria. Most commonly, universities take into account the grades the student has received in the matriculation examination together with the results of the field-specific entrance test arranged by the university itself.

Admittance may also be based solely on the results of the entrance examination or else grades in the matriculation examination (sometimes together with the marks of the secondary school leaving certificate).

In some fields, applicants can get additional points for things such as work experience or previous studies. Students who have not passed the matriculation exam are normally selected on the basis of the entrance examination only.

Students who have studied in the open university system may be granted the right to study for a degree at regular universities where they have completed at least one third of the courses necessary for a university degree. Study attainment credit from the open university may be counted towards a regular university degree in these circumstances. The number of students admitted through this channel has been very low.

In developing higher education, the policy in Finland has been to widen access to universities and polytechnics, and accordingly, in the Act on Vocational Education Institutions (146/1991) general

eligibility was extended to students with post-secondary level vocational qualifications. Up till then, they had had more restricted eligibility.

In order to facilitate transition from secondary education to higher education, the Government set the following goal for the student selection process in the mid-1990s. Universities are to develop their selection procedures so that three-quarters of students annually admitted are those seeking admission to post-secondary level courses for the first time, and a quarter are those with former further education qualifications or study attainments. (Three quarters of students admitted should be those who apply for study places immediately after the completion of upper secondary education. The rest consists of those who do not get in the first time and try again the following year.)

Dropout and change of discipline are major problems in certain fields. To some extent this is due to the strict *numerus clausus* system, in which students in many cases have to consent to entering the field of their second choice. Altogether, some 75-80% of students admitted complete a degree. It is difficult to give exact numbers of students finishing their studies in the standard time, because it is very common for students to work during their studies, and a fairly large number of students interrupt their studies for several years and then come back to finish their degree. This is possible because the right to study is not restricted to a particular number of years.

The problems of dropout and study times which are too long have also been tackled with the help of the student financial aid scheme. The reform of 1994 restricts the time for public financial aid to the maximum period of 55 months for a higher academic (second-cycle) degree. The most common standard time for a higher academic (second-cycle) degree is five years, and the mean study time is c. 6.5 years.

In addition, one of the very motivations behind the latest university degree reform carried out in 1994-97 was to help students graduate in the standard time set out in the field-specific decrees and to ensure that students, once admitted, complete at least the shorter-cycle lower academic (first-cycle) degree. Some universities give financial bonuses to students for rapid graduation.

It is still too early to say how the reforms in the degree structure and financial aid scheme affect the problem of dropout and study times which are too long.

Attention has also been paid to special guidance and counselling services at universities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has set the national goal of promoting excellence in university teaching, and modern methods of teaching and learning are applied in many universities to make teaching and learning more efficient. As an incentive, high-quality university teaching is among the indicators the Ministry uses in allocating performance-based funding for universities.

General eligibility for polytechnics is given by general or vocational upper secondary education. Students apply for polytechnics through the joint national application system. The permanent polytechnics determine the principles of student selection themselves, while the Ministry of Education determines those for the experimental ones. All polytechnics will operate on a permanent basis as of August 2000.

Student selection in polytechnics is most commonly based on secondary school achievement, work experience and in many cases, entrance examinations. In practice, the majority of students admitted to polytechnics have passed the matriculation exam, but the Ministry of Education has emphasised the importance of ensuring transition possibilities for those with upper secondary vocational qualifications.

As the first permanent polytechnics started their operations only in 1996, it is still too early to say whether dropout or exceeding standard study times will be a problem. It currently seems that dropout rates are about the same as in post-secondary vocational education, i.e. about 10%. The funding system for polytechnics differs radically from that for universities and is based on number of students and on students' graduating in the standard time (most commonly four years).

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Data and information in this regard is available in the comparative analysis by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe, 1999*.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

Education and research in Finnish universities can be divided into twenty 'basic' fields of study, each of which is governed by a decree (humanities and natural sciences have a joint decree).

With the newly emerging system of polytechnics, special emphasis has been placed on scientific research as a basis for teaching in the development of universities. Research-based education is seen as the cornerstone of universities, and as a characteristic most relevant to universities when defining division of tasks between universities and the non-university sector of higher education.

All students in the Finnish higher education system - in both universities and polytechnics - must take courses in their mother tongue (Finnish or Swedish), the second official language of the country (Swedish or Finnish) and in at least one foreign language.

In both sectors, course programmes are modular in nature and a credit system applies.

Courses leading to traditional liberal professions are given by universities. Teacher education is also provided by the universities; comprehensive and upper secondary school teacher training was transferred to universities between 1973 and 1975 and kindergarten teacher training in 1995. Teachers of vocational institutions may also have their teacher training in some polytechnics if they have an appropriate degree.

The requirement for the lower academic (first-cycle) degree is 120 credits (minimum), with one credit equating to the workload of 40 hours demanded of the student. Students are expected to complete the lower academic (first-cycle) degree in three years of full-time study. The lower academic (first-cycle) degree exists now as a result of the reforms carried out in 1994-97 in all other fields of study except medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, technology and architecture.

The extent of the higher academic degree (second level university degree) is 160 credits (minimum), and the standard duration of studies is five years or two years following the lower academic (first-cycle) degree. The higher academic (second-cycle) degree consists of an extensive thesis (minimum 20 credits).

Professional postgraduate degrees (specialist's degrees) are awarded in the fields of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine.

There are two scientific postgraduate degrees in Finnish universities. The licentiate degree is an optional pre-doctoral, postgraduate degree, which can normally be completed in two years of full-time study after

the higher academic (second-cycle) degree. A doctoral degree takes four years of full-time study after the higher academic (second-cycle) degree.

Apart from education leading to a formal degree, universities offer a wide range of continuing education courses.

Open university instruction may be given by different kinds of educational institutions outside universities, but the syllabi followed are the ones set by a given faculty.

The degrees awarded by the polytechnics are vocationally oriented higher education degrees designed to meet workplace requirements and development needs more directly than traditional university degrees. The minimum duration of studies for a polytechnic degree is three years (120 credits) and the maximum duration is four years. A period of practical training is an integral part of the polytechnic degrees.

Studies are organised as degree programmes approved by the Ministry of Education. The institutions themselves are responsible for designing the curricula. Most polytechnics are multi-discipline institutions and students are encouraged to make use of this.

In addition, polytechnics may also offer non-degree post-polytechnic courses.

Open polytechnic instruction is also being introduced and discussion has started to create a post-polytechnic degree system, at least in some areas of study.

Universities are responsible for arranging their own teaching and ensuring its quality according to national regulations.

Alongside the traditional forms of teaching - lectures and examinations based on lectures and literature - other methods, such as project and group work and tutoring are increasingly being used.

Poor quality of teaching was long a cause for complaint in Finnish universities. The latest degree reform was partly designed to modularise degrees in order to leave room for individual flexibility and academic mobility. Special attention has been paid to efforts aiming at better quality in university education: the Ministry of Education appoints centres of excellence in teaching and a proportion of the performance-based funding is allocated according to the number of these centres within an individual university.

Since universities were made explicitly responsible for systematic evaluation of their education and research in the early 1990s, various forms of assessing the quality of teaching have been applied in universities. Student feedback, feedback from employers etc. are among the methods used.

The Government has invested heavily in the introduction of modern information technology to teaching during recent years by means of special appropriations for purchasing new equipment and teaching materials and by launching pilot projects in IT-aided teaching.

Student evaluation is based on continuous assessment. Most often, students are evaluated on the basis of written examinations at the end of a lecture series or larger study units. Oral examinations are used to some extent. In addition, students are expected to do independent written assignments.

Both lower academic (first-cycle) and higher academic (second-cycle) university degrees require a written thesis.

In the recruitment of university teaching staff, pedagogical skills or formal teaching qualifications are not required. In fact, the discussion on the need to pay attention to candidates' pedagogical skills when appointing professors started only a few years ago.

The situation in polytechnics differs from universities in this respect: all members of the teaching staff are required to have formal pedagogical education and training (35 credits minimum).

A special action programme has been launched by the Government to support polytechnics' teaching staff in upgrading their qualifications. The tenured polytechnic teaching staff is made up of senior teachers and lecturers, and senior teachers are required to have a *licentiate* or a doctoral degree while lecturers are required to have a higher academic (second-cycle) degree. The required qualifications are considerably higher than at the post-secondary vocational institutions, which form the basis for polytechnics.

Polytechnics have developed their teaching methods strongly during the first years of their existence. This is partly due to their need to fulfil the evaluation criteria in the licensing process. Special attention has been paid to bringing teaching closer to the reality of the workplace.

In both sectors, institutions grant a degree certificate to students on the completion of the degree course. On request, institutions may issue credit transcripts for the student during studies.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

The research done at universities has always been international by nature, but special attention to the internationalisation of education began to be paid in the 1980s, and the Ministry of Education designed a strategy for internationalisation of higher education in 1987. Clearly defined quantitative targets for international student exchanges were set at the end of the 1980s. The quantitative goal was that, by the end of the 1990s, every postgraduate student and at least 5,000 students per year studying for a higher academic (second-cycle) degree should spend at least one academic semester studying abroad.

All universities and polytechnics have extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements with their counterparts abroad, and the quantitative goal set will most likely be met by the end of this decade. Usually, the agreements include cooperation in research activities as well. The scope of international activities is one of the indicators (number of outgoing exchange students and number of researcher exchanges) used in allocating performance-based funding for universities and polytechnics.

The new polytechnics have created extensive international cooperation, partly because the extent of international activities is one of the criteria considered when granting permanent licences.

Naturally, fostering international student and staff exchanges was not an end in itself. From the start, internationalisation was seen to have two main objectives: firstly, to influence students' attitudes, capabilities and skills so as to prepare them for operating successfully in an increasingly international society and workplace; and secondly, to improve the quality and effectiveness of education and to diversify its supply.

Institutions of higher education have paid special attention to promoting student exchanges: they have arranged special language and culture courses for outgoing students and most of them grant extra scholarships for those participating in exchange programmes. Finnish national student financial aid has always been transferable, and it is possible to have a rise in the level of the grant on the grounds of studies abroad.

From the beginning of the strong internationalisation boom, it has been necessary for Finnish authorities and institutions to make extra efforts to attract international students to Finnish institutions of higher education because of the singularity of the Finnish and Swedish languages, the languages of instruction in Finnish institutions.

Provision of foreign-language teaching has rapidly increased at both universities and polytechnics, partly with the help of special budgetary appropriations. In their foreign-language provision, the universities have mainly concentrated on offering specific study programmes of 15 to 40 credits, while the polytechnics have chosen to create degree programmes entirely in English. In most cases, these modules and programmes are open both to Finnish and foreign students. Thus they serve also as periods of integrated language teaching for Finnish students.

Most Finnish universities offer courses in Finnish or Swedish for incoming exchange students and foreign degree students. Housing can normally be guaranteed for all foreign students.

To promote international cooperation in education, the Centre for International Mobility was set up in 1991 under the Ministry of Education. The Centre is responsible for administration, developing and monitoring of various student and trainee exchanges and providing information on studies abroad and on the Finnish education system and provision.

The Academy of Finland is mainly responsible for scholarship programmes for researcher exchanges, but some programmes, designed especially for the exchange of young researchers, are administered by the Centre for International Mobility.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The development of the newly emerging binary system of higher education will be one of the key issues in Finnish education policy in the coming years: how to ensure a balanced development of both sectors and strengthen the specific educational profiles of their respective degrees.

Although Finland has overcome the economic recession of the first few years of the 1990s, an unacceptably high level of unemployment will continue to be a challenge to higher education. How to guarantee graduate employment on the one hand, and to what extent public authorities can expect institutions of higher education to contribute to the development of new economic and production infrastructure for the country on the other, are among the issues which will dominate the near future.

At this point, it seems unrealistic to expect any major increase in the level of public funding of the higher education system. However, the ideal of educational equality is still cherished in the country and the new Act on Universities, which came into force on 1 August 1998, stipulates that education leading to a degree in Finnish universities is free of charge.

New legislation will continue to strengthen the autonomy of the Finnish universities and widen access to universities when all students who have completed three-year upper secondary vocational education are made eligible for university studies.

It is foreseen that the policy of lifelong learning will also have effects on higher education, including the duration and organisation of degree studies. In addition, there is a need to re-examine the relationship between degree courses and various kinds of continuing education, what elements should be included in degree courses and what could be left to be learned later on.

Perhaps the main issue of future years could be summarised as follows: how to create a high-quality, effective and cost-effective higher education network that can accommodate the needs of the increasingly heterogeneous student population and the needs of the rapidly changing world of work.

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Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

SWEDEN

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SWEDEN

INTRODUCTION

There were 13 state universities and 23 state university colleges in Sweden in 1999. The oldest universities are the University of Uppsala dating from 1477 and the University of Lund dating from 1666. An important expansion took place in the industrialisation era in the second half of the 19th century. In this, there are the roots of Stockholm University and Göteborg University as well as the Royal Institute of Technology and the Chalmers University of Technology (now a foundation). Some of the university colleges also have their roots in this era, as teacher training institutions. The next period for expansion of the existing institutions and for establishing new universities and university colleges was the post-war period, with high birth-rates and increasing demand for education. This expansion was closely connected with regional policy. The latest change is the conversion of three university colleges into universities in 1999.

In the group of university colleges, there are seven art colleges in Stockholm, the Stockholm University College of Physical Education and Sports and the Stockholm Institute of Education. Most of these institutions became university colleges in 1977, when all post-grammar school education was brought into the sphere of higher education. The latest arrival among these 23 university colleges are the *Södertörn högskola* in southern Stockholm from 1 January 1997 and the *Högskolan på Gotland* and *Malmö högskola* from 1 July 1998. With the arrival of the *Högskolan på Gotland*, each county in Sweden now has its own higher education institution. The other two new university colleges can be seen as part of the Government's effort to increase the recruitment of higher education students from homes with no higher education traditions or from areas with a low proportion of higher education graduates.

In addition to state universities and university colleges, there are certain individual privately organised institutions receiving national grants. These include three institutions which offer postgraduate education, together with some ten different privately organised institutions receiving national grants which are entitled to carry out various examinations at the undergraduate level (after having been evaluated by the National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*)). All but one of the approximately 20 former university colleges of health sciences run by local authorities have, in recent years, been integrated into the system of universities and university colleges, forming a new part of these institutions.

The 1980s and 1990s saw major changes in higher education. First of all, it is appropriate to mention certain milestones in the dramatic development of the decades preceding this period. The most decisive development was in student numbers. At the start of the 1930s, around 2,500 students took examinations every year at upper secondary school. Of these, scarcely half enrolled at universities or university colleges. Around 1,000 registered students sat examinations annually (U 68, SOU 1973:2, s.71). Now, at the end of the 1990s, there are over 300,000 students attending universities and university colleges, and about 65,000 students enter higher education every year. The 1960s in particular saw an almost explosive increase in student numbers. The number of new students was 7,800 in 1960/61, 26,400 in 1970/71, 42,500 in 1980/81, 50,400 in 1990/91 and in 1997/98 was up to 64,500. (SCB 1999).

The number of enrolled students rose somewhat later than the number of new entrants. During the period 1977/78-1989/90, it rose slowly from 177,000 to 193,000 and then more rapidly until 1997/98 to over 305,000. The concept of higher education students covers both those following official programmes and those following independent courses in order to combine them into an examinable programme of study or as further or continuing education.

The proportion of women in undergraduate higher education has remained relatively unchanged over the past 10 years. In 1997/98, they represented 58% of enrolled students. In terms of equality, it is positive that a large proportion of women elect to undertake higher education. Equality problems manifest themselves in a different way however. On the one hand, recruitment is slanted towards certain types of courses and, on the other, a smaller proportion of women than men go on to do postgraduate work. The ratios are changing rapidly however. 44% of new entrants to postgraduate education in 1996/97 were women as opposed to 23% in the early 1970s. In higher teaching posts, the proportion of women is also relatively low but rising. Universities and university colleges, the Government and Parliament have each, in their different ways, worked to increase equality between the sexes.

The increase in student numbers has brought with it major changes in the university milieu. In the 1930s, there was still a close relationship between students and professors. Professors could take part in teaching and examinations and communicate the results of their research in a totally different way than was possible after the mighty expansion in higher education of the 1960s. During the 1960s, many undergraduate students never managed to see their professors and had to attend lectures in leased premises scattered across the university towns. The student environment gradually improved as campuses sprung up around the universities and university colleges. The reforms of recent years have attempted to bring about closer contact between undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Certain significant reforms preceded the developments of the 1980s and 1990s:

- **The 1955 Parliamentary Inquiry into universities.** One result of this was the so-called university automatic mechanism, which was introduced in 1964 and applied throughout the 1960s. The automatic mechanism meant that educational resources at the free faculties (the faculties of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences) were automatically adjusted to student flows. In connection with this reform, teaching-only (i.e. non-research) positions were introduced.
- **The 1963 University and University College Commission (U 63).** One result of the U 63's proposals was the expansion of universities into new locations through the construction of university extensions (1967). The Commission's proposal for making education more effective in order to increase throughput led to a proposal for fixed programmes presented in 1968. This came under heavy criticism from students and triggered the Swedish part of the European student revolt. A modified proposal was implemented in 1969. For the free faculties, the Government set up 17 'education lines' covering 3 or 3½ full-time studies, with government-set combinations of study courses in different subject areas in the first two years. A standard syllabus would exist for each course of study. This was established by the central government agency, The Office of the Chancellor of the Universities and Colleges in Sweden, with a local curriculum drawn up by the university.
- **1963 Parliamentary Inquiry into research.** This inquiry led to a reform of postgraduate education in 1969 with the proposal to increase the effectiveness of postgraduate education. The inquiry proposed among other things a different organisation of posts, so that professors, readers (*docenter*) and research assistants could devote themselves to research, postgraduate teaching and research supervision, whilst university lecturers and assistant lecturers would take charge of undergraduate teaching. This division of tasks was carried out most decisively in the faculty of philosophy (Frihet, *ansvar, kompetens*, SOU 1992:1 p.53 ff).
- **The 1968 Education Commission** was designated the task of examining the structure and volume of post-secondary education as a whole. In its work, the question of the needs of the labour market in relation to individual educational preferences played a predominant part. The conclusion of the Commission, which was shared by Government and Parliament, was that a restriction in total resource availability was necessary to create a system in which labour market and resource questions on the

one hand, and individual preferences on the other, could be weighed against each other across the board on a rational basis. At the same time, all higher education programmes were given a certain orientation towards vocational areas (OECD 1995b).

The most important of the following reforms are those of 1977, which were carried out on the basis of the 1968 inquiry, and those of 1993. Both will be described in the following chapters.

Economic development and political changes

Before going on to describe more recent reforms in higher education, some information on earlier developments in Sweden is given below.

As regards economic development, Sweden has, like many other highly developed industrial countries, experienced weaker growth in recent decades. Between 1980 and 1990, GDP rose by an average of 2% annually. This can be compared with 3% during the 1950s and 5% in the 1960s. During the 1980s, economic growth in Sweden was at about the same level as in the rest of Western Europe. In a number of respects, however, Sweden developed differently. Unemployment remained low, while in many other countries it tended to stay at high levels. At the beginning of the 1990s, GDP declined and lower production and higher unemployment led to a drastic deterioration in public sector finances. After the 1991-93 recession, the economy recovered significantly. Behind the higher output of recent years has been a substantial growth in exports. The competitiveness of Swedish industry has greatly improved.

The 1980s and 1990s were marked by a diminishing trust in large-scale centralised solutions to society's problems and to central planning. A major reform of public administration was carried out at the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s when a goal- and result-oriented steering system was introduced. As regards the education system (schools as well as institutions of higher education), the State has gradually switched from laying down rules to an approach based on goals and results. Local authorities were secured extensive autonomy in the administration of educational institutions within the framework laid down by the Government. Decision-making in several important areas was decentralised to the institutions of higher education.

From the 1930s, Sweden was characterised in political terms by Social Democratic rule. In 1976, the non-socialist parties won a majority in the Swedish Parliament and governed until 1982. There was a second period of non-socialist government between 1991 and 1994 when a four-party non-socialist coalition government was in power.

An important change was Sweden's altered view of EU membership. Because of the superpower conflict that divided Europe during the Cold War, before 1989, Sweden had not viewed membership as reconcilable with its existing neutrality policy. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the issue of joining the EU (or EC before the 1992 Maastricht Treaty) was the focus of an increasingly lively debate. In October 1990, the Social Democratic Government announced that in its opinion, Sweden should aim for EU membership. In the following year, the Swedish application was submitted and the negotiations started in 1993. On 1 January 1995, Sweden became a member of the European Union.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Of decisive significance for developments during the 1980s was the 1977 reform, which was carried out on the basis of the 1968 inquiry. The essence of this reform may be summarised as follows:

- All post-secondary education was to be regarded as higher education - including municipally administrated higher education. The need for a more uniform and simpler system is the basis for this common concept of higher education. This also made it easier to develop appropriate channels for

contact between the different forms of education and between research and undergraduate education.

- New university colleges not offering research and postgraduate education were established across the country (and often teacher training institutions became a part of these).
- Increased access to higher education across the country and for new types of students.
- The introduction of representatives of public interests on the boards of institutions and on study programme committees.
- Permanent influence in all decision-making bodies for students and employees, at the expense of professors and lecturers.
- The organisation of a large proportion of undergraduate education into vocationally oriented programmes. A main aim of the reform was to emphasise the importance of adjusting higher education across the board to the needs of working life and of preparing students accordingly. This system became known in Sweden as the 'line system'.
- The introduction of a *numerus clausus* for all undergraduate education, which from a planning point of view was probably the most important effect of the 1977 reform. A detailed system of admission requirements was introduced, based on marks and work experience credits. The admission of students to education programmes was handled centrally, while universities and university colleges themselves handled admission to separate courses.
- The central government agency, the Office of the Chancellor of the Universities and Colleges in Sweden (*Universitetskanslersämbetet - UKÄ*) was reorganised, strengthened and renamed the National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges (*Universitets- och högskoleämbetet - UHÄ*). The UHÄ managed the admission of students and the planning of educational provision. The agency was responsible for determining general curricula for nationally determined education programmes.
- Regional boards - with a majority of representatives of public interest - were set up in order to strengthen university colleges' links with the regions where they were situated. Regional boards were abolished in 1988 and the participation of representatives of the social partners and local authorities was transferred from the regional board to the university or university college board. The role that the regional boards had played in the organisation of higher education at universities and university colleges could, it was believed, now be taken over by the institutions themselves (Fritzell, 1998).

In 1985, a simplified system for teaching posts was introduced. Teaching, research and administration were established as tasks for all teachers.

In 1989, the study support system which had existed since the 1960s was remodelled so that repayment did not represent an excessive burden on students. The level of state subsidy increased, as did the proportion of total aid in grant form. Loan repayments were made contingent on borrower's income (4%).

Despite successive changes during the 1980s to the system introduced in 1977, criticism of it grew. According to the critics, the system did not meet the needs of society. A vocationally oriented line system, where admission places (location and number) were centrally decided, seemed to be out-dated as it became evermore clear that it was impossible to forecast the needs of the future labour market (Fritzell, 1998).

There were also economic reasons for a reform such as the need to improve the conditions for Swedish industry and to cut costs for the public sector. By decentralising higher education and in this way reducing expenditure on administration, the Government wanted to gain resources for education and research. Additional resources for higher education and research would lead to increased growth as well as improved international competitiveness.

In January 1992, the new non-social democratic coalition government published a Memorandum on independence of universities and university colleges, for wider discussion of the measures which were going to be included in the new Higher Education Act, which came into effect on 1 July 1993. The main aim of this reform was to give higher education institutions increased autonomy in the organisation of studies, admissions, use of resources and general organisation.

The *UHÄ* was abolished and some of its functions were divided among the Ministry of Education, a new National Agency for Higher Education (*Verket för högskoleservice*), an Office of the University Chancellor (*Kanslersämbetet*), and a Board of Appeal for Higher Education (*Överklagandenämnden för högskolan*). Universities and university colleges assumed full responsibility for planning the course programmes they offered and students gained greater freedom of choice of courses within 'lines' or programmes. The fixed content of programmes was replaced by goals set by the Government. The changes were included in a Degree Ordinance, which also included criteria to establish the international validity of diplomas in line with the requirements of the European Union, which Sweden was about to join. The new law also gave universities autonomy to establish professorial chairs.

In 1995, a new central governmental agency was established, the National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket*) into which the Office of the University Chancellor and the Board of Appeal for Higher Education were integrated (*SFS 1995:443*). One of its functions was, and still is, to act as a body of experts in questions related to higher education. It also deals with investigatory work and analyses as a basis for the political decision making process, as well as follow-ups of political decisions. The Agency is assigned the task of inspecting and promoting higher education activities and is responsible for monitoring, evaluation, supervision of entitlement to award degrees, other types of supervision, quality auditing and enhancement, educational renewal, information concerning studies and international issues in the sphere of higher education. The National Agency for Higher Education was not a re-establishment of the *UHÄ*. The Agency does not have a planning role at national level. Higher education institutions have full responsibility for the organisation of courses, setting the parameters for education and the utilisation of their resources within the framework set by the Government and Parliament.

The task of serving universities and the university colleges with regard to admissions and the purchasing of expensive equipment was assigned to a new authority, which retained the name *Verket för högskoleservice* (*VHS*) but which in English is normally referred to as the National Admissions Office to Higher Education. The universities and university colleges have the option of using the *VHS* for these two purposes. The office is financed (mainly) by the institutions using its services.

The Swedish Higher Education Act (*SFS 1992:1434*) stipulates that universities and university colleges shall offer

- education that rests upon a scientific, or artistic ground and approved experience and
- research, development in the arts and other development work.

Close cooperation between universities and university colleges and society is considered to be of the utmost importance. The significance of this cooperation and mutual dependency has been stressed and, in 1996, 'societal cooperation' was designated as a third task of higher education besides education and research under the Higher Education Act.

In order to strengthen the management of universities and university colleges, as well as to promote close cooperation with society, the Government proposed in a bill in 1997 to reorganise the management of universities and university colleges. As a consequence, the Higher Education Act now contains specifications on the selection of the chairman of the governing board of an institution and on the tasks of teachers and the institution's responsibility for the distribution of these. It also states that, from 1 January 1999, senior lecturers who are qualified to hold a professorial chair by the university or

university college should be appointed professors. This means that the number of professors will increase from that date.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Parliament and Government are fundamentally responsible for higher education in Sweden. The Government's right to set guidelines is regulated in the Higher Education Act (*Högskolelagen*). This sets out the overarching objectives of higher education and research. It also lays down the requirements of quality and effectiveness, equality and internationalisation. The act specifies the composition and responsibilities of the boards as well as the duties of the vice-chancellors. It also sets out the tasks of teaching staff and the requirements for appointments. It establishes student's rights to admission as well as the reasons for suspending students and the circumstances in which students and employees can appeal against certain decisions. The Government is responsible for the Higher Education Ordinance, which contains specifications on the activities of universities and university colleges.

A characteristic feature of the Swedish system of administration is that there is a division of responsibilities between relatively small ministries and central government agencies. It is important to note that the institutions, universities and university colleges, are agencies in their own right. This means, for example, that each educational institution has its own allocation for undergraduate education and that this is established by the Government and Parliament based on the institution's annual statements of account, the points of view put forward by institutions in dialogue with the Government and, of course, political values and the general needs of society. Universities and university colleges with research and postgraduate teaching also have their own allocations for this purpose.

The National Agency for Higher Education has the task of supervising and promoting activities within the higher education sector. A part of this task is to follow up and evaluate higher education and research and to encourage educational innovation and renewal.

The *VHS* is primarily funded by universities and institutions of higher education themselves. Its main task is to coordinate the admission of students and the purchase of expensive equipment.

As discussed in the introduction, two major reforms have affected higher education, the first in 1977 and the second in 1993. Detailed regulation has been abandoned and universities and university colleges have become more independent. Decisions have been decentralised in important areas.

In a schematic comparison between the 1977 reform and the aims of the reform of 1993, the differences can be described as follows (Fritzell, 1998):

<i>The 1977 governing system</i>	<i>The 1993 governing system</i>
Governing by legal framework	Goals and Objectives
Detailed decision by Government	Decision-making at each higher education institution
Resources to the various educational sectors and the different faculties	Resources to each university and university college
Resources depending on input	Resources depending on output
One system with state institutions; very few private institutions	Competition between institutions; foundation of new private institutions

Now the Government lays down certain objectives and parameters - mainly financial - and delegates decisions about the orientation of the content of education and training offers to the universities and university colleges themselves. Furthermore, all universities and university colleges are responsible for the internal allocation of resources, the admission of students, the appointment of professors, the methods and focus of research, the salaries of all staff except the vice-chancellor, the quality of teaching and research, the premises and investment in furniture and equipment.

Every state university and university college must have a board of governors to regulate the institution's affairs and to be responsible for ensuring that the institution fulfils its obligations. The Government appoints most of the board's members every three years. Each board of governors has to contain a majority of external members, e.g. representatives from trade and industry, municipalities and county councils. In this way, experience from different sections of society may enrich and influence the management of higher education institutions. In order to make the governing boards of higher education institutions more independent, the Government has stated that the chairman of the governing board shall no longer be the vice-chancellor of the university or university college but a person who has their main responsibilities outside the institution for which they are presiding on the governing board.

Student democracy has a long tradition at Swedish universities and colleges. The student's right to be represented in councils and governing boards of the universities and university colleges dealing with educational matters is enshrined in the Higher Education Act of 1992. Furthermore, students at Swedish universities and university colleges are required to become members of a student union. At each institution of higher education there are one or more such organisations. They act on behalf of students and, among other things nominate student representatives to the various governing bodies of the university or university college. They also handle a considerable share of student welfare services and social activities.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

All public higher education in Sweden is free of charge for students.

In Sweden, all levels of education and research at universities have always enjoyed more open and generous government funding compared to GNP than in most other countries. This trend continued to be evident even during the years of spending restrictions imposed because of the reduction in GNP. Priority for investment is still being given to education.

The appropriations allocated directly to state universities and institutions of higher education for undergraduate education and for research and postgraduate studies represent about 65% of the resources of these institutions. The remainder consists of external funding for research and commissioned assignments. The major external sources of funding are public authorities such as research councils, sectoral bodies and local authorities (*HSV*, Annual Report).

As a result of the 1993 higher education reform, a new budgeting process was introduced for resource allocation for undergraduate education. The new system means that universities and university colleges are allocated grants on the basis of the number of enrolled students and what they have achieved, rather than on the basis of plans and forecasts as used to be the case.

There is a major difference between the allocation of resources in the system introduced in 1977 and the 1993 system. In the older system, there was an appropriation for the five different vocational study programme sectors in undergraduate education:

- natural sciences and technical professions,
- administration, economics and social work,

- medical and paramedical professions,
- teaching professions,
- professions in cultural life and the media.

For each vocational sector and institution it was indicated which education programmes were to be offered together with the number of students that could be accepted during the budget year. Through the *UHÄ*, the content of each of these programmes was established based on standard syllabuses. Besides this appropriation for vocational sectors, resources were also distributed for single-subject courses and locally planned study programmes. The resources and the number of places for these courses were initially allocated to the various educational institutions by the six regional boards (until 1988 when the regional boards were scrapped).

The idea behind the new system of 1993 was to encourage institutions of higher education to tailor the courses they offer to student demand. By linking the allocation of funds to results, higher education institutions are also given an incentive to make the most effective use of their resources. Each institution receives an 'educational assignment' for undergraduate education, which specifies:

- the minimum number of degrees to be awarded during two three-year periods, with respect to Master's degrees and, in appropriate cases, specific professional degrees (currently in engineering, various teacher's degrees and pharmacy) and preliminary goals for the number of examinations in these degrees for the following three-year period;
- the minimum number of annual full-time student equivalents for the fiscal year for the university or university college as a whole and, if required, for a specific field of education (currently technology and natural sciences);
- the maximum total remuneration for annual full-time students and the annual performance achievement;
- special assignments that may lead to specific, additional remuneration.

The 'assignment' also sets out the financial planning framework for the remaining 2 years of a 3-year period.

The amounts to be paid for full-time equivalent students and annual performance equivalents are determined on an annual basis by the Government and stated in official guidelines for the use of appropriations, in the 'Government implementation document'. These amounts differ for different subject areas but are standardised in as much as, within each of these areas, the same amount in annual student and performance remuneration applies to all institutions of higher education. (All programmes and courses are divided into these subject areas.) As institutions are responsible for the internal allocation of resources, they have the right (and obligation) to redistribute resources internally. The university and university college amount for annual students includes all costs, including for premises, equipment and furnishings.

Universities and university colleges receive provisional funds at the beginning of each budget year and the finalised amount is determined at the end of the year taking into account student numbers and accomplishments presented in the annual report for that budget year.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

Quality was emphasised in the 1993 reform. The fact nonetheless remains that education institutions had already undertaken extensive work on quality before then. The difference after the reform is primarily that work to improve quality has been given a more systematised form than previously.

As already discussed, funding for undergraduate education at higher education institutions, since 1993, has been dependent on number of students as well as on the institution's accomplishments. The danger with this system was that results could be produced at the expense of educational quality. Securing quality in education was therefore an important part of the reform. The starting point was that higher education institutions themselves were responsible for their activities and for ensuring the quality of education. The tasks of the Office of the University Chancellor and later of the National Agency for Higher Education were both to check and promote the quality of work of higher education institutions. During the late 1990s, the National Agency for Higher Education has evaluated the quality control systems within all universities and university colleges and a new cycle of evaluations is planned. For each institution, a report is produced which describes and assesses the functioning of the quality control system. In addition to the evaluation of quality work institution by institution, this agency also carries out evaluations of study programmes or specific aspects of higher education.

Each university and university college is responsible for quality in its activities. The forms of quality control and evaluation vary from one institution to another. National evaluations of education and research can either be made on the initiative of the National Agency for Higher Education, at the request of the Government or of higher education institutions themselves.

Another aspect of the quality of education emphasised by the coalition Government when it published both the Memorandum of 1992 (discussed in section 1) and another document, *Quality through Freedom*, in 1993 was competitiveness among higher education institutions. With this starting point, among other things, two state institutions, the University College of Jönköping and the Chalmers University of Technology, were converted into foundations (for higher education and research). The quality of the work of these foundations has been evaluated by the National Agency for Higher Education and is on a level with that of comparable state institutions. Whether the conversion of state institutions into foundations and the achievement of an increase in competition has had any effect on other institutions has not yet been proven.

An example of quality-promoting measures that are found both before and after the 1993 reform is student cooperation in course evaluation. Increased equality, increased internationalisation and increasing demands regarding teaching skills typify the whole period.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

In accepting students into higher education, a balance has to be struck between giving as many young people as possible the opportunity to pursue higher education studies and their having what it takes to benefit from studies. In Sweden, this has been solved by having liberal requirements as regards basic qualifications and special requirements concerning prior knowledge in the subject area which the student wants to study.

To be admitted to undergraduate education the applicant must thus meet the basic eligibility requirements, which are the same for all courses and programmes. This may be in the form of a certificate from any upper secondary national programme. Those who are at least 25 years of age and have been employed for at least 4 years or have equivalent experience and have a knowledge of Swedish and English equivalent to the level acquired from an upper secondary national programme will also have basic eligibility. Most courses and programmes also have special requirements with respect to previous knowledge (*HSV*).

If the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available, a selection must be made. At least one third of the study places intended for new students must be distributed on the basis of school grades, and at least another third must be distributed according to the results of the University

Aptitude Test or a combination of such results and work experience. The University Aptitude Test is appropriate for all forms of higher education, and measures knowledge and skills of importance in studies at tertiary level. For selection of students of fine arts and some other specific areas of education, special tests are used.

The entry process and admission requirements have been changing in the last few decades. Before 1977, access to university was generally free, with the exception of special programmes and expensive courses such as laboratory courses. After the reform of 1977, the Government set the framework for the educational offer. The level of admissions for every study programme as well as the number of students on courses was centrally established on an annual basis. New general entrance requirements - basic eligibility - were established in the Higher Education Ordinance in 1977. Aptitude testing was also introduced that year for adults who had not completed an upper secondary programme. Since 1991, all applicants have had the opportunity of competing for admission through this test.

In the 1993 reform, the responsibility for student admissions was decentralised to higher education institutions. Institutions were awarded the right to set their own requirements. With effect from autumn 1997, more uniform national rules apply to eligibility, selection and admission to universities and university colleges. The reasons for these changes were to increase the legal rights of applicants as well as to make the rules more transparent.

The Higher Education Ordinance 1977 states that students ought to be given access to course counsellors and careers guidance and establishes their right of access to such guidance.

The participation of older students in Swedish higher education is high. In 1997/98 about 19% of students were at least 35 years old and 20%, 21 years old or younger. The percentage of older students (at least 35 years old) has not changed much over the past decade, standing at around 20% of enrolled students. During the same period, 1987/88-1997/98, the percentage of younger higher education entrants first increased from 42% to 54% (in 1992/93) and then decreased to 48% in 1997/98. Compared with other countries Sweden has a low proportion of younger students.

The reasons for the high proportion of older students are various. In 1969, an experiment was introduced involving widening access. Under this, the general right to undertake higher education in certain areas was granted to everyone who had reached the age of 25 and had 5 year's work experience, if they also fulfilled the requirements for specific prior knowledge in the subject and other necessary prior knowledge according to particular specifications. Gradually this 25:5 rule was extended to all of higher education and took the form referred to at the beginning of this section. The special investment in adult students constitutes an education policy aimed at narrowing the educational gap between different generations and eliminating dead ends in the educational system.

In addition to admission rules, the fact that older students can get financial support to study at university level has greatly contributed to the high participation rate of adult students. It should also be mentioned that adult students are fully integrated into ordinary higher education and that there is a wide offer of separate courses for supplementary training.

In the late 1990s, 10% of the total number of students were open or distance learning students (ODL). Life-long learning and continuing education has increased thanks to both the development of ODL through new technologies and support, as well as the generous system of study assistance.

As stated in the introduction, there has been a great expansion of higher education since the middle of the 1980s and this expansion will continue. The aim is to give younger students opportunities to study

and thus build up the well-educated labour force demanded by society. For example, many industries currently demand technological competence.

The dropout rate from programmes in Swedish higher education is quite low, especially from shorter programmes. One of the reasons for this might be that students continuing receipt of aid is conditional on some attainment requirements.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

A fundamental principle in Sweden is that all public higher education is free of charge. There are also no charges for tuition at independent institutions of higher education.

Another basic principle is that all students who need help to finance their studies (cost of living) can receive assistance for this purpose. Students are awarded both non-repayable grants and low interest loans according to their individual economic situation and independent of the means of parents or spouse.

Study assistance can be awarded for studies in other Nordic countries on the same terms as in Sweden. Studies outside the Nordic area were, until 1989, subject to certain restrictions. In principle, support could only be granted for studies which were unavailable in Sweden or which were essentially different from the study programmes offered there. Since 1989, the scope of support has expanded greatly and support is available for all post-secondary study programmes of high quality.

The study support system has a long history in Sweden. From 1919, it was possible for poor but talented students to obtain interest-free student loans for teacher training. During subsequent decades, many university students were forced to live on private loans. In 1946, it became possible to transform study debts into a more favourable type of loan underwritten by the State. In the 1950s, the next step towards a more global system of university student finance was taken, when Parliament introduced loans with state credit guarantees. The student aid system was important as a tool to encourage more working-class children into higher education. Between 1947 and 1960, the proportion of such students increased from 8 to 15%.

The next reform was carried out in 1965. Study assistance for higher education was became a combination of grant and loan - 25% grant, 75% loan. All those admitted to higher education and meeting certain conditions were entitled to study assistance. To begin with, study assistance was only awarded for full-time studies, but entitlement was extended to part-time students in 1971. Initially, assistance could be granted for eight years but, in 1982, this was reduced to six years.

The present system was introduced by a reform in 1989. State subsidisation increased as the grant increased as a proportion of total aid. The loan repayment was made contingent on borrower's income to prevent repayment imposing an excessive burden on the individual.

The National Board of Student Aid (*Centrala studiestödsnämnden - CSN*) is the central administrative authority for handling applications for and payment of study assistance, as well as monitoring and evaluating different systems for financing studies. The CSN organisation consists of the main office in Sundsvall, as well as a regional organisation.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING AND STRUCTURE

Since the reform of 1977, Swedish higher education has had a unitary system. All post-secondary education belongs to the higher education system and is ruled by the same Higher Education Act. Until 1993, the curriculum for each programme of study was laid down centrally.

Today all basic higher education is given in the form of courses. Universities and institutions of higher education may link courses into a study programme with more or less scope for individual choice on the part of students. Education programmes given at different universities and university colleges share the same aims, however, and these are specified in the Higher Education Ordinance.

The 1977 reform introduced a credit system based on 'points' which applies to all types of higher education, courses and study programmes: a week of full-time study is equivalent to one point and a term's full-time study to 20 points. A first diploma level can be reached by obtaining a minimum of 80 points; the completion of the longer programmes requires, in some cases, the acquisition of 200 to 220 points. The abolition of the 'line' system in 1993 did not bring about any radical changes in course organisation. In addition to the 'line' system, there was a system of single subject courses, which could be combined into a degree.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

The OECD team who visited higher education institutions in Sweden in 1993 to review educational policy, reported that there was considerable evidence of a willingness to experiment in very significant ways with new approaches to teaching and curriculum content (OECD, 1995b) on the part of university faculties and administrators. Innovative teaching methods such as intensive studies or Problem-Based Learning (PBL) are used where groups of students from different programmes solve complex problems together.

Such experimentation is favoured by a low proportion of students compared to academic staff. Teaching staff are willing to utilise more active and participatory methods of teaching. In recent years, with the additional help of technology, both traditional (audio-visual) and new (computer and information networks), such teaching methods are becoming more widespread and effective. To some extent, educational programmes for television at all levels have been produced and broadcast by the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company in cooperation with universities and university colleges. An open and distance learning system is going to be extended to a growing number of higher education institutions. In the spring of 1999, the Swedish Institute for Distance Learning was established. Its principle task is to support the development of ICT-based distance and flexible education.

A number of programmes include practical training in industry or the public sector, either for longer periods during the summer vacation or for shorter periods during courses, together with seminars and workshops.

With respect to assessment of students, a particular Swedish tradition is to emphasise continuous assessment over final summative assessment. Rather than final exams, students have to pass tests, write papers and discuss topics studied over the semester, and are assessed on the basis of this, in most cases on a very simple scale: fail, pass or pass with distinction. Many curricula include a final degree project or thesis for which students may work individually or in small groups.

At the beginning of the 1960s, as the number of students grew, resources for education automatically increased in line with this. To respond to the increased demand for education, teaching posts (for which teaching was the sole task) were introduced at universities. The present Higher Education Act and Ordinance stipulates that (from 1 January 1999) teaching as well as research shall be the tasks of all teachers, professors as well as of senior lecturers. The precise distribution of these tasks, along with administrative work, is the duty of each university and university college.

Teaching skills have become an increasingly important consideration in the recruitment of teachers at universities and colleges (as well as in the recruitment and appointment of professors). At the same time, the importance attached to research as a task of teachers has grown. How teaching, research and other tasks are distributed among the teachers is today to a great extent decided at a local level, by the university or university college.

During the 1970s, Units for Educational Development were introduced at both a central and local (university) level. The responsibility for educational development rests with universities and university colleges. The organisation of this work is not regulated by law. The institutions offer, among other things, courses for teachers and organise conferences on educational matters.

The introduction of different forms of examination has been linked to educational development. The universities and university colleges are responsible for this. Degree projects have become more important than previously under the Degree Ordinance in the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100). In order to obtain a *kandidatexamen* (a qualification at the end of a three-year programme, corresponding to 120 university 'points' and translated as 'Bachelor's degree') the student has to write a paper equivalent to at least 10 'points', corresponding to half a university semester. In order to obtain a *magisterexamen* (involving a four-year programme, corresponding to 160 university 'points' and translated as 'Master's Degree') the student has to write one or two papers corresponding to 20 'points', equivalent to one university semester. Degree projects also form a part of many of the professional degrees, especially the longer ones. On foundation courses, students often have to write various shorter papers.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

International cooperation within higher education has increased considerably in recent years. Students, teachers and researchers spend longer or shorter periods abroad, with this time sometimes constituting an integral part of a study programme. The prescribed texts of many study programmes deal with global aspects of subjects; papers and degree projects on such topics are also encouraged. In many subjects, a great deal of the course literature is in English or sometimes in other foreign languages. Many institutions and academic departments participate in international research projects. There are also courses offered in foreign languages at a number of higher education institutions in Sweden.

The Higher Education Act stipulates that universities and university colleges are to promote understanding of other countries and international matters in their activities. Internationalisation of education and research is regarded as an important element in the quality work of universities and university colleges. Most higher education institutions have drawn up internationalisation plans and, as a rule, have a number of administrators dealing with issues relating to internationalisation.

Since 1985, students have had the right to be given credit for studies outside their own university or university college, whether these studies were undertaken within Sweden or abroad, if these studies generally correspond to the studies at their own institution. (1985:601). Before 1985, this right was restricted to certain courses or programmes. (Higher Education Ordinance, 1977:263). For the Nordic countries, students have had this general right since 1977.

The goal of internationalising higher education has been very prominent on Sweden's agenda for the last two decades. The drive towards internationalisation in the 1970s and 1980s was motivated partly by concern for the competitiveness of Swedish industry abroad. In addition to this, there was the desire to promote active solidarity with cultures and countries in the non-industrialised world.

One of the political priorities of Swedish Governments since the late 1980s has been the promotion of Western European integration. Today, the European Union's special programmes for student exchange and research collaboration play an important role in fostering international contacts for Swedish universities and university colleges. Although Swedish higher education institutions' international cooperation is extensive, it nevertheless mainly concentrates on industrialised countries in the OECD and, to some extent, in Eastern Europe.

When Sweden became a member of the EU in 1995, all the EU's education programmes were open to Swedish participants. Sweden had, however, already taken part in European Community educational cooperation, first as a member of EFTA and then the EEA.

Today, European multilateral cooperation in higher education mainly takes place within the framework of the EU's Socrates education programme (the Erasmus programme). The number of Swedish students who, by means of Erasmus grants, are studying at higher education institutions in other EU countries has continued to rise, and over the last few years amounted to more than 3,000. The number of non-Swedish Erasmus grant recipients at Swedish education institutions was almost as high. Sweden has also been a very active participant in the Tempus programme since 1991. Swedish participation is dominated by projects in the fields of natural science and technology.

A treaty between the Nordic countries offers students a great amount of freedom in the choice of country for study. All students fulfilling admission requirements for higher education in their own country have the same rights in all other Nordic countries. A special exchange programme for students and teachers at Nordic universities and university colleges, Nordplus, was created in 1988 in order to improve Nordic educational cooperation.

Besides Western European and Nordic integration, another political priority since the early days of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s has been cooperation in the Baltic region, especially with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The incumbent Social Democratic Government is particularly stressing the existing commitment to regional cooperation around the Baltic and the need to refocus on cooperation with developing countries. The Government has thus decided to establish a new exchange programme for teachers and students called Linnaeus. This programme is modelled upon the Erasmus programme but is intended to promote exchange with countries outside the OECD area.

Study assistance is given to Swedish students who study at universities and university colleges abroad. (The transferability of study grants and loans was introduced in 1989.) However, only full-time studies are accepted and the student must have been residing in Sweden for the two years preceding the start of the studies abroad. Study abroad as an exchange student is considered to be equivalent to study at home and is normally combined with award of study assistance.

The transferability of study grants and loans has led to a dramatic increase in the number of students going abroad for a period of study. It is estimated that approximately 25,500 Swedish students participated in higher education studies in other countries for the whole or part of the 1997/98 academic year. Around 19,000 of them made their own arrangements using their state grants and loans. The remainder took part in student exchange programmes, the largest of which was the Erasmus programme.

If developments in Sweden during the period 1985-1997 are seen from a broader perspective, it might be argued that a number of structural changes in the higher education system have been inspired by the process of internationalisation. The policy of decentralisation of quality control is most certainly modelled upon structures in other countries. The reintroduction of the Master's degree is another example. (*Högskoleverket, 1999*)

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Swedish higher education reforms during the last decades have been based on decentralisation of power, increasing the autonomy of institutions, quality control and harmonisation between the higher education offer and the demands of the economy and society.

Because of the general trend of rising student numbers, a decision has been taken to create new permanent places for 1997-2000 and the Government has made a proposal to Parliament to increase the number for 2001 and 2002 as well. This could well lead to a doubling of student numbers in the 1990s compared with the 1970s and 1980s. The reduction in recent years in the number of new entrants has taken place in parallel with a reduction in the proportion of younger students among new entrants. A continued development in this direction is not desirable.

The great expansion of universities and university colleges during the entire post-war period has had a very positive impact on all young people irrespective of social background. More and more young people are going on to higher education. This includes those with no educational traditions at home, although this group is still less well represented than other young people. A major task for the future is continued work to reduce skewed recruitment to higher education.

The 1993 reform has been in effect for several years now and has functioned well as a whole. Despite this, the Government has found that it is time to reassess it and to consider whether there are certain points in that should be adjusted.

A reform of the study support system has recently been presented to Parliament. It is proposed to raise the grant level from 27.5% to 34.5% of total aid. The system is more uniform and includes students in compulsory school and upper secondary school as well as at universities and university colleges. The rules for repayment are adjusted.

Some of the main topics on the political educational agenda today are to improve quality, to increase cooperation with society at large, to diminish the effects of social background in the recruitment of students and to further equality in higher education.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

UHÄ *Universitets - och högskoleämbetet* (National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges)
VHS *Verket för högskoleservice* (National Admissions Office to Higher Education)

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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
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ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

INTRODUCTION

The first universities, those of Oxford and Cambridge, evolved as private bodies during the 12th and 13th centuries and it was not until the 19th and early 20th centuries that the major civic universities were founded in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Although some occasional financial aid was provided by the government, particularly to promote science, technology and advanced vocational training, these universities remained private foundations.

The first half of the 20th century saw the development of many university colleges catering mainly for local students taking University of London external degrees. Subsequently, the Education Act 1944 led to a large increase in the number of qualified school leavers and the Barlow Report (1946) recommended a doubling of university student numbers, especially in science subjects, to meet the need for scientific manpower. As a consequence, both government finance and student numbers were greatly increased in the immediate post-war period. In 1963, the Robbins Report, sponsored by the Government, laid down the basic principles which guided university development in subsequent years. The Report stated that '...courses of higher education should be available to all those who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them and who wish to do so'. The Report recommended further expansion, a broadening of both the regional spread and of the scope and diversity of university education, and the creation of specialist technological universities. This expansion was effected by the creation of new universities and the upgrading of many technological colleges to universities. Since then, despite retaining autonomous status, universities have been institutions predominantly funded by the Government.

Polytechnics developed out of the national network of colleges and gained university status following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Although originally financed and regulated by local authorities, changes introduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act removed this local authority control and provided funding for the polytechnics via the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC), a Non-Departmental Public Body. Despite the change in status of polytechnics and the creation of one unified sector for higher education, some organisational differences between the 'old', or 'pre-1992' universities and the 'new', or 'post-1992' universities have remained.

The last decade has seen a rapid expansion of the higher education sector. Full-time student numbers increased by almost 70% between 1989 and 1995 and one in three young people now enter higher education, compared with one in six in 1989. The result has been to introduce mass higher education in the UK and with this a change to a much more heterogeneous student body. The characteristics of students and the type of courses they follow now vary enormously.

In view of the rapid expansion, the Government announced a policy of consolidation at the end of 1992 under which controls on the growth of student numbers were applied in order to limit public expenditure. Tuition fee levels were reduced and upper limits were set for the numbers of students receiving publicly funded tuition fees for each institution. Funding per student fell, putting considerable financial pressure on universities and colleges.

Against this background, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education was established in May 1996, by agreement between the main political parties, to make recommendations on how the purpose, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the UK over the next 20 years. The Committee, chaired by Sir Ron Dearing,

reported in July 1997 (Dearing, 1997) and set a wide-ranging agenda for the development of higher education into the 21st century.

The Government response to the Dearing Report, *Higher Education for the 21st Century* (GB. DfEE, 1998a) included the commitment to the principle that 'anyone who has the capability for higher education should have the opportunity to benefit from it'. Following the report, the Teaching and Higher Education Act was passed in 1998 and new arrangements for student financial support have since been introduced. Other initiatives have followed from the recommendations of the report including: an independent review of staff pay and conditions of service; the establishment of the Institute for Teaching and Learning which is expected to play a key role in enhancing the professional skills and status of teachers in higher education; and the development of a new quality assurance model and code of practice on academic quality and standards in higher education.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Because of the autonomous nature of universities in the United Kingdom, there have been relatively few Education Acts pertaining to the higher education sector. However, government policy on higher education has been signalled in a number of White Papers.

In the early 1960s, pressure was growing for change in the provision of higher education in the UK. This led to the establishment of the Committee on Higher Education which presented its report in 1963 (Robbins, 1963). The recommendations for expansion were accepted by the Government of the day and additional funds were made available to the University Grants Committee (UGC) to meet the new targets. The principles and recommendations of the Robbins Report formed the basis for the development of the university sector for subsequent years.

The Robbins Report anticipated that by 1980 most higher education would be provided by universities or university-dominated teacher training institutions. However, the recognition of the growing need for vocational, professional and industrially-based courses, which could not be fully met by the universities, led to the publication of the 1966 White Paper *A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1966). This aimed to concentrate non-university higher education in thirty-one polytechnics in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and fourteen central institutions in Scotland, and consequently led to the development of the 'binary system' of higher education provision.

The 1978 *Report of the Working Group on the Management of Higher Education in the Maintained Sector* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1978) drew attention to a decline in the number of young persons in the age group 18-22 from 1986 onwards. It was estimated that, to avoid a decline in the numbers in higher education from the 1986 level, there would be required, by the mid 1990s, an increase of 50% in the proportion of the age group following higher education, or far-reaching changes in the composition of the student body and in the needs which higher education had, until then, sought to meet.

In the 1981 Public Expenditure White Paper (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1981), the Government announced plans which effectively reduced the expenditure in further and higher education by 8% over the next three years. It stated that 'This is likely to oblige institutions to review the range and nature of their contribution to higher education. It is also likely to lead to some reduction in the number of students admitted to higher education with increased competition for places.' This was seen by many as heralding a significant change in policy and initiated the process of reshaping higher education under conditions of severe resource restraint.

During the early 1980s there was continuing debate on the need for the rationalisation and concentration of higher education provision as the number of school leavers declined. The increase in the numbers of mature entrants and those without traditional entry qualifications also led to some concerns about the reduction in quality of higher education qualifications. The 1985 White Paper *The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1985) addressed a range of issues including the role of higher education in the production of qualified manpower, particularly in the areas of science and technology, access to higher education, patterns of provision and academic standards. The basic principle of the Robbins Report was modified to encompass those who would be 'able to benefit' from higher education, having regard to their intellectual competence, motivation and maturity.

The publication of the 1987 White Paper *Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1987) marked a change in government policies for higher education and set out a commitment to increase participation rates and widen access to higher education for mature entrants and those without traditional A-level qualifications. Major changes in the funding and national planning arrangements of polytechnics and colleges in England were proposed, including the setting up of institutions of substantial size as free-standing organisations to be funded by central government, and no longer under local authority control. There was also a renewed emphasis on the quality of teaching and research and increased efficiency, which was to be achieved by improvements in management and the development and use of performance indicators.

The Education Reform Act 1988 applied to all levels of education, from primary schools to higher education. The main reforms to the higher education sector concerned the implementation of changes which had been proposed in the 1987 White Paper, namely, the removal of the duty of local education authorities to provide facilities for higher education. The Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and the PCFC were established and, in 1989, the UFC and PCFC assumed formal funding responsibilities for universities, and polytechnics and higher education colleges in England respectively.

The White Paper in May 1991, *Higher Education: A New Framework* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991) proposed a number of substantial changes. The main recommendation concerned the abolition of the 'binary system' between university and non-university institutions (polytechnics and higher education colleges) and the establishment of a unitary system of higher education. New measures concerning quality assurance were also proposed. The changes were incorporated into the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 which was passed by Parliament in March 1992. The Act made fundamental changes to the structure of higher education allowing all institutions of higher education to include the word 'university' in their title, subject to their fulfilling certain criteria. The former UFC and the PCFC were replaced by separate Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales; funding of higher education institutions in Northern Ireland remained the responsibility of the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI).

The structure and funding of the rapidly growing sector of postgraduate education was the subject of a review sponsored by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom (CVCP) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) in 1996 (Harris and HEFCE, 1996). The findings and recommendations of this review were made available to the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom which began its work in May 1996.

The Committee of Inquiry undertook the most comprehensive review of the future of the sector since the Robbins Report in 1963. Evidence was gathered from many people and organisations involved in the higher education sector and the wide ranging recommendations covered student funding, institutional finance, the funding of research, the training of teachers, quality assurance mechanisms, the relation of higher education to industry and commerce and the use of information and communications technology.

The Government responded to the recommendations concerning the shared responsibility of students and the state for the funding of higher education, and introduced measures to change financial support for students in the Teaching and Higher Education Act which was passed by Parliament in July 1998. A full response to the recommendations of the Dearing Report was published by the Government in its report *Higher Education for the 21st Century* (GB, DfEE, 1998a).

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

Universities in the UK have diverse backgrounds, legal status and constitutional arrangements. The most important constitutional difference is between those created before and those created after the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Most pre-1992 ('old') universities have been constituted by Royal Charter but others are based on Parliamentary Statute. Any amendment to existing charters and statutes is made by the Crown, acting through the Privy Council, on the application of the universities themselves.

The post-1992 ('new') universities were established as higher education corporations by the Education Reform Act 1988. The Act states that the articles of government of these institutions must be approved by the Secretary of State. The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 extended these provisions to include Wales. It also amended the 1988 Act to provide a framework for the instruments of government, specifying the membership and constitution of a university's governing body which must be approved by the Privy Council. Most of the 'new' universities were previously polytechnics, originally set up by charitable endowment to enable working-class men and women to advance their general knowledge and industrial skills on a part-time or full-time basis. Many of the other higher education institutions were originally established by local education authorities. The use of the title 'university' is subject to the institution fulfilling certain criteria, for example on the range of courses offered and the distribution of students across the curriculum areas listed by the Funding Councils.

Whatever their legal status, all universities are legally independent corporate institutions and all (with the exception of the private University of Buckingham) receive significant public funding. As autonomous bodies, universities and other higher education institutions decide their own management and administrative structure. They arrange their own administration and recruit staff as they consider appropriate. Each institution decides which degrees and other qualifications it will offer, the curriculum and teaching methods and the number of hours of study required for each subject. Nevertheless, all are organised along similar lines and offer a wide range of taught courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as well as research opportunities. Each institution also determines its own admissions policy. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) acts as a clearing house for applications for admission to full-time first degree and first diploma courses at universities and other higher education institutions in the UK, but it does not set admission requirements or decide on the admission of individual students.

The governing body is the most senior decision-making body of a higher education institution and has ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the institution. The governing body is normally known as the Council for 'old' universities or Board of Governors for 'new' universities. The Council or Board comprises senior staff and a majority of independent members who are not employees or students of the institution. It is responsible for matters of general policy, the finance and property of the institution, for its proper administration, staffing and overseeing the institution's performance and development.

'Institutions of higher education are legally independent corporate institutions which have a common purpose of providing teaching and undertaking research. The council or board of governors is the executive governing body of the institution and carries responsibility for ensuring the effective management of the institution and for planning its future development. It has ultimate responsibility for all the affairs of the institution.' (Committee of University Chairmen, 1995)

The structures of institutional governance do, however, vary considerably across the sector, depending on the various histories and circumstances of the institutions. Both a Court and Council exist in many 'old' universities and in some of these the Court retains the decision-making powers. A new code of practice for institutional governance was proposed in the Dearing Report which would include the following components:

- unambiguous identity of the governing body;
- clarity of decision-making;
- appropriate membership and size of the governing body;
- arrangements for engaging formally with external constituencies;
- a rolling review of the effectiveness of the governing body and institution;
- reporting annually on institutional performance;
- arrangements to address grievances by students and staff; and
- effective academic governance.

The CVCP is the non-statutory body which represents the full range of university interests and speaks on behalf of the universities in their relations with other sectors of education, with industry and with the Government. It consists of the executive heads of all the universities of the UK. Other representative bodies include: the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP), which represents colleges and institutions of higher education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Committee of Principals of Scottish Centrally Funded Colleges (CSCFC); the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP); the Heads of Higher Education in Wales (HHEW); and the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC).

Representatives of these bodies also serve on the governing boards of a number of specialist agencies. These include: the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Agency (UCOSDA); the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA); UCAS; the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA); the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA); and the Higher Education Careers Service Unit (CSU).

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

The traditional ancient and civic universities in the UK were originally funded from private resources usually raised locally. Following the formation of the UGC, which was responsible for advising the Secretary of State on the funding for universities, there was a progressive dominance of public funding and this remained the position for the 'old' universities until 1988. Initially, polytechnics and colleges established in the 1960s received public funding which was administered by local education authorities (LEAs) in the areas in which the institutions were located. The allocation of this funding was determined, in part, on the basis of advice from the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB).

The position changed in 1988 when the UFC and the PCFC were established under the Education Reform Act 1988. In April 1989, the UFC assumed responsibility for the distribution of funds to universities in England and Wales. In Northern Ireland, universities were funded by the DENI on the basis of advice from the UFC. The PCFC assumed responsibility for the distribution of funds to the polytechnics and higher education colleges in England. In Wales, polytechnics and colleges were funded by the Welsh LEAs on the basis of advice offered to the Secretary of State for Wales by the Wales Advisory Board for Local Authority Higher Education (WAB). The Councils were non-departmental public bodies with a high degree of autonomy.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 introduced major reforms including the creation of a single sector for all higher education institutions funded by the Higher Education Funding Councils for England and Wales (HEFCE and HEFCW). Under the terms of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1993,

funding of the two universities in Northern Ireland continued to be the responsibility of DENI. Independent advice on planning and funding higher education was provided by the newly-established advisory council, the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council (NIHEC).

Higher education institutions in the UK now receive funding from many different public and private sources. The largest single source of income for the sector is provided by the Government. Decisions on funding levels are based on government policies concerning planned numbers and participation rates in higher education. The HEFCE and HEFCW are responsible for the distribution of these funds within broad policy guidelines. In Northern Ireland, higher education institutions continue to be funded through DENI on the advice of NIHEC and the HEFCE. Funds are provided to each university or college by the funding bodies to support teaching and research. The amount of money received by each institution is determined by formula and depends on its particular circumstances, including the size and composition of the student body, the subjects taught and the amount and quality of research undertaken. Institutions are free to distribute the grant internally at their own discretion, as long as the funds are used for the broad purposes for which they were provided. Institutions are, however, accountable to the Funding Councils, and ultimately to Parliament, for the use of these funds. The proportion of an institution's total income provided by a Council will depend on its mission, activities and money raised from other sources.

The Funding Councils work closely with other funding bodies, including the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Further Education Funding Councils, and regularly consult with bodies representing higher education institutions. In England, initial teacher training is financed by the TTA using similar procedures to the Higher Education Funding Councils. In Wales, this provision is funded by the HEFCW.

Tuition fees are the other major source of public funding. In the recent past, the Government has adjusted its tuition fee levels to reflect its policies. Fees were first increased to encourage higher education institutions to recruit more students on a marginal cost basis. Later, when the Government's target for around one in three young people to enter higher education was met, fees were decreased to discourage institutions from recruiting more students than the Government had planned.

Until 1998, funds for tuition fees were provided by the Department of Education and Employment and the Welsh Office to LEAs in England and Wales which made payments to universities and colleges for qualifying students (award holders) from the UK and other European Community countries. In Northern Ireland, DENI made tuition fee payments directly to institutions. From the academic year 1998/99, students have been required to make a means-tested contribution towards the cost of tuition fees. The maximum contribution represents approximately a quarter of the full cost of an average course. The remaining cost is met by the Government.

The Research Councils, whose funding is provided by the Office of Science and Technology, support research projects in individual institutions and also provide financial support for some postgraduate students.

Substantial core support for teaching and research in medicine, dentistry and other health care subjects is also provided by the Department of Health through the National Health Service (NHS). Many clinical medical and dental academic staff employed by universities are funded by the NHS. Colleges of health and schools of nursing now form part of the higher education sector and the NHS commissions non-medical education and training for health care professionals from universities and colleges on a contract basis. From 1998, the NHS has assumed responsibility for funding all courses in nursing and certain other health-related professions.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The evaluation of higher education is undertaken at institutional and at national level. There is no regional, provincial or local authority with these responsibilities. Public interest and concern about quality and standards in higher education increased in the mid-1980s following continuing debate on reforms to the sector. During that time, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) had two main roles in the non-university higher education institutions: to award degrees and to sustain and enhance quality. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision in polytechnics and colleges was also undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI). In universities, some quality assessment was carried out by the UGC.

The new Funding Councils established under the Education Reform Act 1988 included a remit on quality within their terms of reference. In 1990, the Academic Audit Unit (AAU) was established by the CVCP to audit the quality assurance processes of universities. The Unit was also seen to have a developmental role in relation to university policy and practice.

The 1991 White Paper *Higher Education: A New Framework* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991) proposed new arrangements for the quality assurance of teaching and learning, which involved two separately organised forms of external review. A distinction was made between the processes of quality audit and quality assessment. The proposals were subsequently incorporated into the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Quality audit was seen as a review of the systems and procedures used by institutions to monitor and assure academic quality and standards. This was conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) of the CVCP, which took over the responsibilities of the former AAU. Quality assessment, the assessment of the quality of education provided by institutions in individual subject areas, was organised separately in England and Wales by the respective Funding Councils. Under the provisions of the Act, the Funding Councils have a statutory duty to ensure that arrangements are in place to assess the quality of education in institutions to which they provide funding. In Northern Ireland, the assessment was organised by HEFCE on behalf of DENI.

A programme of assessments was started in 1993 following a series of pilot and test assessments. The arrangements were outlined in the HEFCE Circular 39/94. Assessment visits were made to gather, consider and verify evidence of the quality of education in the subject, in the light of the subject provider's aims and objectives in that subject, covering six core areas:

- curriculum design, content and organisation;
- teaching, learning and assessment;
- student progression and achievement;
- student support and guidance;
- learning resources; and
- quality assurance and enhancement.

An overall 'threshold' judgement ('quality approved' or not) was derived from a graded profile in the six core areas. Continued failure to achieve 'quality approved' status could lead to an 'unsatisfactory' grading which may result in the reduction of funding.

It became clear that the two forms of quality assessment involved some duplication and placed a considerable administrative burden on institutions. Accordingly, in December 1995, a Joint Planning Group (JPG), which included representation from the funding bodies and higher education representative bodies, was established with the remit to consider possible future changes in arrangements for quality assurance. The Group produced a draft report for consultation in autumn 1996 and submitted its final report containing its proposals for the establishment of a new UK quality assurance agency to the relevant Secretaries of State in December 1996. It was proposed that the new

agency would operate a new integrated process of quality assurance covering 'the totality of each institution's provision, wherever and however delivered, and however funded, which will secure significant benefits for institutions' (CVCP, 1996a).

In 1997 the QAA was established. The Agency is an independent body funded by subscriptions from universities and colleges of higher education and through contracts with the English and Welsh Funding Councils. Discussions are continuing with DENI, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the NHS Executive with a view to these bodies contracting with the QAA in the future. The QAA's mission statement is 'to promote public confidence that quality of provision and standards of awards in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced'.

It aims to achieve this by:

- working with higher education institutions to promote and support continuous improvement in the quality and standards of provision;
- providing clear and accurate information to students, employers and others about the quality and standards of higher education provision;
- working with higher education institutions to develop and manage the qualifications framework;
- advising on the grant of degree awarding powers and university title;
- facilitating the development of benchmark information to guide subject standards;
- developing codes of practice and examples of good practice; and
- operating programmes of review of performance at institutional and programme levels.

The quality of research in higher education institutions is assessed by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which is conducted jointly by HEFCE, SHEFC, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and DENI. The main purpose of the RAE is to enable the funding bodies to distribute public funds for research on the basis of quality, with institutions conducting the best research receiving a larger proportion of the available grant. The RAE is carried out every four to five years and the next exercise will be held in 2001. Quality ratings for research across all disciplines are provided. Specialist panels, the members of which are selected from the academic world and from commerce and industry, use a standard scale to award a rating for each submission. Ratings range from 1 to 5*, according to how much of the work is judged to reach national or international levels of excellence.

In Northern Ireland, DENI, advised by the NIHEC and the QAA, is responsible for the evaluation of the quality of teaching and research in higher education. The Education and Training Inspectorate of the Department of Education Northern Ireland (ETI) inspects and reports on initial teacher training institutions.

The quality of initial teacher training in England is assessed by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). Inspections are conducted in accordance with the *Framework for the Assessment of Quality and Standards in Initial Teacher Training* (OFSTED, 1996) which sets out five areas for the assessment of quality and standards. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA) is required to have regard to inspection evidence when allocating funds and student numbers to institutions providing initial teacher training. In Wales, Estyn (formerly the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (OHMCI)) has similar responsibilities with respect to providers of initial teacher training in Wales.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

In 1996/97, there were more than 1.6 million students studying at higher education level in the UK, over 1.1 million studying full-time or on sandwich programmes and over half a million part-time. In addition, an estimated 200,000 higher education students were studying in further education institutions. The

overall balance between full and part-time study has not changed significantly over time, but students of the Open University now make up a substantial proportion of all part-time students. More than half of the entrants to higher education are now mature students and 30% are over the age of 30. These figures are significantly higher in the 'new' universities than the 'old' universities. Numbers of students in all categories have expanded but, in recent years, postgraduate student numbers have grown the fastest. However, the growth in numbers studying for sub-degree higher education qualifications has been slower than the growth in first degree numbers (Dearing, 1997).

In its response to the Dearing Report (GB. DfEE, 1998a) and the Green Paper on Lifelong Learning *The Learning Age* (GB. DfEE, 1998b), the Government stated its commitment to the principle that anyone who has the capacity for higher education should have the opportunity to benefit from it. Widening participation in higher education is now a key priority. Initiatives are in place which are aimed at increasing participation in higher education by students from under-represented groups, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and disabled students, and to improve the retention of students from such groups.

Until 1994, there was no official policy on student numbers in higher education. In 1994, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment and the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland introduced target figures for full-time undergraduate enrolments; the HEFCE and the HEFCW and DENI, are expected to ensure that these figures are not exceeded. In England, the number of students to be admitted each year to initial teacher training programmes is determined by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. Some institutional flexibility was announced in December 1991 with respect to admissions in subject areas where there is a shortage of qualified teachers. The Department of Health, after consultation with the professions and with the Regional Health Authorities of the National Health Service, sets the yearly admission levels for courses in medicine and dentistry throughout the UK.

All major higher education institutions are autonomous bodies and each determines its own admissions policy. Applicants for most higher education courses are generally required to have obtained at least three general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) passes at grade C or above and two general certificate of education advanced level, (GCE A-level) passes, in different subjects, or their equivalents (including highers in Scotland). Alternative qualifications, including qualifications in vocational education, are also increasingly acceptable. In practice, because of the competition for places, many institutions require levels of qualifications considerably above the minimum. Institutions set their own entry requirements and vary these according to the course a student wishes to follow. Some courses require previous study in the relevant subjects. In the case of teacher training, institutions may not accept a candidate who has not achieved the standard required for GCSE grade C in English, mathematics and a science subject.

Students are expected to be able to follow lectures in English and to present their work and examinations in correct English. The University of Wales and some other institutions in Wales have provision for students to follow some courses through the medium of the Welsh language, and to present work and take examinations in that language.

Institutions also welcome applications from mature candidates and stringent entry requirements may be relaxed if the applicant can demonstrate the necessary motivation and suitability for the course of study. Increasing numbers of institutions offer courses on a modular and part-time basis and many now also give credit for prior study and informal learning acquired through work or other experiences (Accreditation of Prior Learning - APL or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning - APEL). Access courses can also provide an entry point to higher education. These are courses offered largely by further education institutions which aim to prepare students without academic qualifications for entry to higher education. The courses are mainly directed at mature students and are designed and taught to meet their needs. Such courses can, in certain circumstances, provide guaranteed entry to a specific undergraduate course.

The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing, 1997) reported that more students than ever before now enter higher education with qualifications other than the traditional qualifications. In 1996/97, 60% of full-time first year students studying for first degrees in higher education institutions had A-levels, Scottish highers or other equivalent academic qualifications, 2% had vocational qualifications at that level, 8% already had qualifications above that level, 4% had taken an Access course and 12% had no lower level qualifications. Part-time students are, on average, older than full-time students and generally have more diverse entry qualifications. In particular, the Open University has proved to be a route to higher education for many with few or no prior educational qualifications. The Dearing Report recommended that, when allocating funds for the expansion of higher education, priority should be given to those institutions which can demonstrate a commitment to widening participation, and have in place a participation strategy, a mechanism for monitoring progress, and provision for the governing body to review achievement.

There are various organisations available to provide advice and guidance to prospective students to help them make informed choices on the higher education course most suited to their needs. UCAS acts as a clearing house for those applying for admission to full-time first degree and first diploma courses at universities and other higher education institutions in the UK. UCAS was established in 1993 from the merger of the former Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), the Polytechnics Central Admissions System (PCAS) and the Standing Conference on University Entrance (SCUE). As well as processing applications for places, UCAS is also involved in research, consultancy, publication and other advisory activities to enable all parties to make the most of the system. UCAS provides advice to prospective students on the choice of course, institution and entry qualifications etc. Further information is also available from the ECCTIS Courses Database. ECCTIS is the computerised courses information service, partly funded by the Government, which provides comprehensive information on higher education courses throughout the UK. Access to the database is available through secondary schools, careers offices, further education colleges, higher education institutions and libraries. Students are recommended to make full use of these services before starting in higher education to ensure the course chosen best reflects their needs and aspirations.

A new Internet reference site for UK higher education, the 'UK HE Mall', is currently in the process of development. It is envisaged that the new service will provide a single access point for information on all aspects of UK higher education for a wide range of users, including prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students and their advisers.

As part of the Citizen's Charter initiative, the then Department for Education (DFE) and the Welsh Office published the Charter for Higher Education in 1993. The Charter explained the standards of service that students, employers and the general public could expect to receive from higher education, and specified where complaints should be addressed if service standards were regarded as unsatisfactory. Institutions were encouraged to develop their own charters or similar documents covering the same ground. Much of this information is contained in annual prospectuses published by individual institutions. These generally provide a range of information, including details of courses, entry requirements, quality of provision and the availability of residential accommodation and are a vital source of information for prospective students. A recent survey by the Institute for Employment Studies (funded by CVCP, HEFCE, UCAS and others) (Connor *et al.*, 1999) showed that well organised prospectuses and institution open days are the main sources of information for prospective higher education students.

It is recognised that guidance and academic support are essential to ensure student choice and effective learning. It is usual for all students in higher education institutions to be assigned to a member of the academic staff of an appropriate department to act as personal tutor. However, while most institutions provide good services in this area, the amount of guidance offered to students can vary from institution to institution. The former Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) developed a set of

guidelines to offer a framework for guidance and learner support (HEQC, 1995) the main principles of which were that guidance in higher education should be learner-centred, confidential, impartial, equitable and accessible. There has, however, been concern in some quarters that inadequate funding levels for higher education institutions reduces the support and guidance available to students and threatens completion rates for courses. Institutions also provide a range of non-academic support and guidance services for students including financial advice, medical centres and assistance in finding accommodation and child-care facilities. In some cases these services are supplemented by those provided by Students' Unions.

Student support was one of the issues considered by the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education. Following the recommendations of the Dearing Report, a Code of Practice covering many aspects of quality assurance in higher education is being formulated by the QAA. Sections concerning student guidance, welfare and counselling and student appeals, as well as complaints and grievance procedures will form part of this wider code.

The Dearing Report stated that completion rates for courses at higher education institutions are generally high although non-completion rates have been difficult to measure until recently because statistical records did not track individual students through the higher education system. Non-completion will become an increasingly difficult concept to measure if more students undertake higher education courses in a flexible way, over a long period. Estimates from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) suggest that, for the universities in England, drop-out rates did not change significantly over the ten years up to 1994/95, the level ranging from 14% to 18%. High completion rates contribute to the UK having one of the highest first degree graduation rates in Europe (GB. DfEE, 1998a).

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Before 1990, financial support for the living costs of students was provided on the basis of means-tested grants. In England and Wales, the LEAs made awards to cover maintenance costs and paid tuition fees direct to institutions on behalf of eligible students. In Northern Ireland, maintenance grants were paid by the Education and Library Boards.

In 1990 the system of financial support was reformed with the passing of the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990 and Education (Student Loans) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 and the subsequent introduction of student loans. It was intended that loans, which were administered by the Student Loans Company, would become a significant source of income for students to supplement maintenance grants. From 1994, the value of the maintenance grant was reduced while the maximum loan was increased by an equivalent amount so that, by 1996/97, the value of the grant element and the loan element were almost the same.

In July 1997, following the publication of the Dearing Report (1997), the Government announced plans for reforming higher education funding and student support. New arrangements for student support were incorporated into the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998 and the Education (Student Support) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 which came into place in September 1998. The main changes were as follows:

- From 1998/99, new entrants have been required to pay a contribution towards the cost of their tuition fees, depending on their own, their parents' or their spouse's income.
- From 1999/2000, means-tested maintenance grants have been replaced by maintenance loans, part of which is also means-tested.
- A new method of repayment of loans was introduced.

Some students are eligible for supplementary grants to assist in meeting certain living costs. Extra grants are available for students with dependants, single parent students and disabled students. Additional hardship loans and access funds are also available, mainly to help those students who may otherwise be discouraged from going into, or staying in, higher education because of the cost.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The concept of an education that provided training in abstract thought and that valued knowledge for its own sake has always been present in higher education in the UK. The Robbins Report (1963) specified four aims for higher education: instruction in skills suitable to play a part in the general division of labour; promoting the general powers of the mind; the advancement of learning; and the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship. The Dearing Report (1997) considered the intellectual and cultural purposes of higher education but also emphasised economic benefits. The Report stated that the aim of higher education should be to 'sustain a learning society' and the four main purposes which make up this aim are: the intellectual development of individuals so they are well equipped for work, can contribute effectively to society and achieve personal fulfilment; the increase of knowledge and understanding for their own sake and also for the benefit of the economy and society; to serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy; and to shape a democratic, civilised, inclusive society.

In recent years, the structure and content of higher education courses have been influenced by the move to a system of mass higher education, the drive to widen participation and attract students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds and changes in the level of funding for higher education. The broadening of the undergraduate curriculum was seen as a necessary condition for the expansion of higher education. Polytechnics and colleges of higher education originally led the way with the introduction of more multi-disciplinary and combined subjects courses but 'old' universities have also used these types of courses to attract a wider range of students.

The Green Paper on higher education (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1985) stated that the design and content of courses 'should be adjusted regularly in the light of advice sought from employers'. Most institutions responded to this advice, taking into consideration not only the needs of employers but also the needs of society; more vocational courses have been introduced and the curriculum for non-vocational courses has been adapted to cover key skills such as information and communication technology. Statistics showed that in 1994 (GB. DFE, 13/94) vocational education was the fastest growing area of higher education. The Dearing Report (1997) recognised the part played by higher education in preparing students for work and stated that 'the key skills of communication both oral and written, numeracy, the use of communications and information technology (ICT), and learning how to learn are necessary outcomes of all higher education programmes'. An increase in courses which offer a broader knowledge in a range of subjects and which provide a basis for subsequent specialisation was recommended in the Report. A further recommendation was that institutions should seek to increase work experience for students. Much work is now being done in this area and funding has been provided by the Higher Education Quality and Employability Division of the DfEE for research and development projects to improve graduate employability.

Generally, all higher education institutions offer a wide range of courses which include first degrees, postgraduate degrees and some professional qualifications at postgraduate level. Diplomas, professional qualifications and certain qualifications below degree level, which nevertheless are defined as higher education, are also available. For historical reasons some differences of emphasis in the range of courses offered by 'old' universities and 'new' universities still remain.

The 'old' universities do provide a range of professionally accredited degree courses including engineering, accountancy, teacher training, librarianship and information science and medical studies but qualifications specific to a profession and required for its practice are more often obtained through successfully completing examinations set or accredited by professional bodies, such as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Council of Legal Education. The 'new' universities, most of which were previously polytechnics, generally offer a wider range of courses leading to qualifications recognised by professional institutions. Non-university higher education institutions also provide degree courses, various non-degree courses and postgraduate qualifications; some may offer higher degrees. Degrees and other qualifications offered by most non-university higher education institutions are validated by external bodies such as a local university or the Open University.

Undergraduate courses usually last three years, although some take longer. Students of foreign languages are normally required to study or work for an additional year in the country of the target language. Sandwich courses generally also involve an additional year's work experience. In 1985, the Government rejected pressure to shorten degree courses to two years, but agreed to support experiments in a small number of institutions (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1985). A number of accelerated two-year degree courses which require students to study during the normal vacation periods were subsequently introduced as a pilot scheme in 1992, but such courses have not gained wide acceptance. The Dearing Report (1997), recommended that there should be an expansion in the range of sub-degree courses such as the Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) which normally take two years to complete and can provide the basis for further study.

As a means of expanding higher education and widening access, part-time study has been encouraged. Part-time courses offer mature students who may have missed out on higher education the opportunity to gain qualifications; they also allow individuals to update professional skills which are useful at work. Between 1982 and 1992 the numbers of part-time students in higher education increased by 60% (GB. DFE, 1994). The Dearing Report (1997) also recommended that there should be an increase in the number of part-time students and argued that these students should receive better financial support.

The academic year has traditionally been divided into three terms; however, modular systems of study based on two semesters a year have become more common, particularly in the 'new universities'. The 1987 and 1991 White Papers (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1987; GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1991) encouraged the implementation of Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes (CATs) as a means of extending opportunities. These schemes allow students to create a personal programme of studies to complete a degree. Within CATs, credit may be given for previous study or work experience. CATs also facilitate degree completion by students who are unable to undertake one continuous period of study and thus respond to the needs of non-traditional or mature students. There is no single national system of credit transfer but some institutions have formed local consortia to operate a common CAT scheme, thus enabling students, where appropriate, to follow certain courses at institutions other than their own but for which they will be given credit towards their degree. The new framework for higher education qualifications recommended in the Dearing Report is intended to facilitate credit transfer.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching methods

Teaching methods in universities and other higher education institutions are decided by the individual teacher, department, faculty, institution or a combination of these. Most courses involve a combination of formal lectures and more informal seminars and tutorials, in which students are encouraged to participate and lead discussions. By their nature, certain courses require practical sessions, such as

work in a laboratory for science subjects and oral classes for foreign languages. Institutions may exploit information technology, for example, using televised lectures, including interactive sessions.

Due to the expansion of higher education (the number of students has more than doubled in the last 20 years) most institutions have, in recent years, been obliged to adapt their teaching methods. In particular, the number of students in teaching groups has increased, putting the tradition of teaching in small tutorial groups under pressure.

There has also been a significant expansion in open and distance learning in recent years, not only in the Open University, but also in other institutions which are increasingly offering these types of courses. Between 1982 and 1992, the number of students studying at the Open University increased by 41% (GB. DFE, 1994) and it is now Britain's largest university in terms of student numbers, with some 160,000 students currently registered on its various programmes of study. During the 1990s there has also been a rapid expansion in postgraduate study and the opportunities offered by new information and communications technologies are enabling the Open University to become increasingly international.

Assessment

Assessment procedures are decided by the individual institution, but most require students to take examinations for first degrees. Universities award their own degrees but, prior to the 1992 Act which allowed polytechnics to apply for university status, degrees for polytechnics and other non-university higher education institutions were validated by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA). A review of current arrangements for the granting of degree awarding powers has been recommended by the Dearing Report (1997).

All universities appoint one or more external examiners for each subject. Their role is to give an additional opinion on the performance of candidates for degrees and thus ensure compatibility of standards between universities, and to ensure that the examination system and the award of degree classifications is fairly operated. These examiners are usually senior members of the teaching staff of a similar department in another university. The external examiner system has come under pressure in recent years with the expansion of higher education. The Dearing Report (1997) recommended that the current practice should be developed to meet new circumstances and proposed that the QAA should establish a pool of recognised academic staff from which institutions must select external examiners.

Records are kept of all marks awarded for students' work. These may be used simply to monitor progress but may also constitute a factor in deciding the class of degree awarded at the end of the course. The results of any tests and examinations may be used in the same way. Formal written reports are rare except when the student fails to make adequate progress. However, lecturers give comments, both written and oral on students' work and they discuss individual students' progress, both with the student and with their teaching colleagues. Most institutions assign each student to a personal tutor, who monitors the student's progress and gives help and advice when necessary. Dearing (1997) recommended that institutions introduce a 'progress file' for all students which would be an official record of achievement and would allow students to monitor their own development.

The development of a new framework for higher education qualifications was a further recommendation of the Dearing Report. It was proposed that the framework would embrace existing academic and vocational qualifications and cover the whole range of achievement; it would also incorporate provision for credit accumulation and transfer between institutions. Eight levels to the new framework were suggested ranging from H1 (certificate at sub-degree level) to H8 (doctorate), each level requiring a specified number of credit points. Work towards the development of national qualifications frameworks has since begun and a consultation paper on postgraduate qualifications was published by the QAA in

November 1998. The QAA is also working with the qualifications and curriculum authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and in November 1998, a project was set up, with the support of the DfEE, to explore the nature of sub-degree certificates and diplomas within the context of a national framework.

The principal higher education qualifications have been established for a number of years and the current assessment and examination requirements are described in the following sections.

a) Sub-degree courses: Certificates and diplomas of higher education; BTEC higher national diplomas and certificates (HNDs and HNCs)

Certificates and diplomas of higher education

Certificates and diplomas of higher education are sub-degree courses of higher education, usually in a specialised or vocational subject. Certificates normally take one year's full-time study and are equivalent to the first year of a degree course; diplomas usually take two years' full-time study and are equivalent to the first two years of a degree course. Part-time study may be available depending on the institution. Assessment arrangements are determined at institutional level but may include written examinations, continuous assessment, an extended essay or a combination of these.

BTEC Higher national diplomas and certificates (HNDs and HNCs)

Higher national diplomas and certificates are awarded by Edexcel and usually take two years to complete - the certificate by part-time study and the diploma by full-time study. The qualifications are based on units of study; in order to 'pass' a unit, students must demonstrate attainment of all the specified requirements. Assessment procedures, which may include a combination of examinations, continuous assessment and project work, are decided by individual institutions in accordance with BTEC's regulatory and quality framework.

b) First degrees

Undergraduate courses for a first degree lead to the title of Bachelor, the most common being Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BSc). It is now rare for the class of degree awarded to depend completely on student performance in final examinations. Most institutions base a component of the degree class on examinations taken during the period of study, especially those taken at the end of the second year, and many also use some form of continuous assessment.

Modular courses which allow students to build up their degrees from a number of self-contained modules have become increasingly widespread in recent years. They provide increased flexibility to both institutions and students by making it easier for institutions to offer their courses either full- or part-time and by enabling students to move in and out of study programmes and institutions. A minimum number of modules has to be completed successfully for the award of a degree. Assessment, which may be by examination, normally takes place at the end of each module.

Credit transfer schemes are also increasingly common and are often linked to modular systems of study which allow students to build up credits towards a full qualification. Generally, 'learning outcomes' define the achievements and skills students are expected to have acquired on completion of a course, and 'level descriptions' define what kind of learning outcomes are expected at each level.

c) Postgraduate certificates and diplomas

Postgraduate certificates and diplomas are usually offered in specialised or vocational subjects. They normally take one year's full-time or two years' part-time study depending on the institution. Diploma

courses are usually of a higher level than courses leading to a Certificate. Assessment arrangements are determined at institutional level but may include written examinations, continuous assessment, an extended essay or thesis or a combination of these.

d) Higher degrees

Higher degrees or postgraduate degrees may be obtained by successful completion of taught courses or individual research or a combination of these. They are awarded at two levels, Masters' degrees and doctorates. Research for a higher degree is carried out under the supervision of one or more members of the academic staff. The resulting thesis is submitted to a panel of examiners, which would normally include an external expert and another expert in the field from within the institution awarding the degree. The student subsequently undertakes an oral examination, conducted by the examiners. Masters' degrees usually require a minimum of one year's full-time study, or the part-time equivalent.

Doctorates are postgraduate degrees awarded for an extended essay, known as a thesis. Doctoral theses are normally expected to be around 60,000 to 80,000 words in length, although this depends largely on the kind of information presented. The most important criteria are that a thesis is based on original research and thought, that it is clearly presented and that it makes a contribution to knowledge. Many students study for the degree on a part-time basis. The degree awarded is normally that of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD or, at a few universities, DPhil), regardless of the field of study of the research, except for a few specialised fields as in the case of the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (AMusD). Some universities now also offer doctorates on the submission of a collection of published papers.

Senior doctorates may also be awarded to established scholars, often in recognition of a substantial body of published work. The titles of these senior doctorates normally reflect the field of the holder's interest more closely than do PhDs; thus titles such as Doctor of Letters (DLitt) and Doctor of Science (DSc) are awarded.

Teacher training

There is currently no statutory requirement for university staff to receive any initial teacher training. As autonomous corporations, each determines its own requirements concerning staff and there is no single legislative provision in this area. Increasingly, however, universities do provide training for teaching staff, especially those who are new to the profession. Admission requirements, curriculum content and method, and the evaluation and certification of any professional development offered to teaching staff in higher education institutions vary from one institution to another. In 1992, the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) set up an accreditation scheme which aimed to ensure a common and appropriate standard of training for higher education lecturers. Universities can submit their training programmes to SEDA for approval.

The drive to improve the quality of higher education has led to a desire to raise the standard of teaching and the Dearing Report (1997) recommended that all higher education institutions should 'develop or seek access to programmes of teacher training for their staff'. It also proposed the establishment of an 'Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education' to provide a national system of accreditation for such training programmes. All new full-time staff with teaching responsibilities would be expected to attain associate membership of the Institute in order to successfully complete their probationary period. Following consultation, the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) was launched in June 1999. The ILT is a membership organisation open to everyone engaged in teaching and learning support in higher education. Its explicit aims are to: accredit programmes and other routes for the professional development of higher education teachers; commission research and development in learning and teaching practices; and, stimulate innovation and support good practice.

Until 1988, members of a university's academic staff were, by custom and practice, and in some cases by the terms of their contracts, considered to have the right to remain in post until retiring age ('tenure'), unless grounds for dismissal for misconduct were established. The Education Reform Act 1988 required the statutes of each university to enable an appropriate body to dismiss any member of a university's academic staff 'by reason of redundancy' (see Section 203 Clause 5 of the Act) thus allowing universities to respond more easily to changing circumstances. In recent years, there has also been a tendency for universities to recruit fewer full-time permanent members of staff and to rely more heavily on staff with part-time or short term contracts.

The establishment of an Independent Review Committee on the framework for determining the pay and conditions of service for staff in higher education institutions was a further recommendation of the Dearing Committee. As a result, the Bett Committee was set up in February 1998 and the wide-ranging report was published in June 1999 (IRHEPC, UCEA and DfEE, 1999). The recommendations cover new negotiating machinery, changes in pay structures and levels, training, appraisal and equal opportunities.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Higher education institutions in the UK have been involved in international activities for a number of years and many institutions have built up extensive networks of links for both students and staff exchanges. Courses which include a European or international dimension are becoming increasingly common and these often provide opportunities for students to study abroad. UK universities are major participants in EU mobility and exchange programmes, for example the Erasmus and Lingua programmes, but many institutions also offer exchange programmes with universities in other countries, for example, the USA and Japan. Language courses aimed to prepare students for periods of study abroad are usually provided by the institution concerned.

The DfEE publishes an annual publication for home students who are considering studying in Europe entitled *The European Choice: A Guide to Opportunities for Higher Education in Europe* (DfEE, 1999). This provides information on European education and training programmes, the financial support available and brief accounts of the types of higher education institutions in the EU and EEA countries, with guidance on linguistic requirements, accommodation and student services.

A briefing paper prepared by the CVCP (1997) to inform the Dearing Inquiry stated that international students make up 12% of the total higher education population in the UK. In 1997, 198,400 international students were studying at UK universities, of these, 40% were postgraduate students and 43% were from other EU countries. The number of international students has tripled in the last decade.

Information on access to higher education for students from overseas is provided by organisations such as the British Council. The Education Counselling Service (ECS) of the Council supports international education by providing overseas access to British higher and further education. The ECS is an alliance between the Council and subscribing British universities and colleges designed to help them promote their services overseas. The Council guide *Access to British Higher Education Institutions 1998-2000* (British Council, 1998) gives information on bridging courses for international students who wish to study for a first or postgraduate degree at a higher education institution and provides details of flexible methods of study across the broad range of courses available in the higher education sector. Information on scholarships and accommodation is also provided.

Advice and guidance for international students is also available from the Council for International Education (UKCOSA). Founded in 1968, UKCOSA is a membership organisation which provides information, advice and training on the various aspects of the recruitment and support of international students.

Specific support for overseas postgraduate students to undertake research in UK universities is provided by schemes such as the Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme (ORSAS) which grants awards on a competitive basis to students of outstanding merit and research potential. This scheme is administered by the CVCP on behalf of the DfEE.

The need for effective support for international students has been recognised and reinforced by the development of institutional and external codes of practice (CVCP, 1996b; British Council ECS, 1995). The codes set out what students can expect from institutions in terms of academic and pastoral support. Many universities have international officers or advisers whose function is to ensure that the needs of international students are addressed. Higher education courses are normally delivered in English in UK higher education institutions, although there is usually support available for international students through access to initial and continuing English language training (ELT) as part of the support services available in institutions.

UK universities also make a substantial contribution to education and development projects in developing countries around the world helped by the Fund for International Cooperation in Higher Education provided by the Department for International Development.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The Dearing Report set a wide-ranging agenda for the development of higher education in the 21st century in the UK. In its response to the report (GB. DfEE, 1998a), the Government addressed the committee's recommendations including those on learning and teaching, quality and standards, research, and links to the community. Higher education has a key role in lifelong learning and it is intended that its contribution will expand in the future by:

- increasing and widening participation, particularly by groups who are under-represented in higher education, including people with disabilities and young people from semi-skilled or unskilled family backgrounds and from disadvantaged areas;
- offering opportunities later in life to those who missed out first time round;
- increasing its contribution to the economy and its responsiveness to the needs of business;
- collaborating more closely and effectively with other institutions and with the world of work; and
- exploiting new technology and flexible delivery so as to make itself more accessible and ensuring that maximum use is made of its other facilities through longer opening hours.

The changes seen for the higher education sector are part of a drive by the present Government towards the creation of a 'Learning Age' which would widen participation in, and access to, learning in further, higher, adult and community education. The importance of social inclusion and widening participation in post-compulsory education was also emphasised in recent reports on further education and continuing education (Kennedy, 1997; Fryer, 1997). Proposals to achieve these aims are set out in the Green Paper *The Learning Age* (GB. Parliament. House of Commons, 1998) and include the creation of the 'University for Industry', which will enable individuals and companies to take advantage of high quality education and training opportunities, and the establishment of individual learning accounts, to enable people to take responsibility for their own learning with support from both the Government and employers.

The wide-ranging developments and consultations stemming from the Dearing Report are ongoing. The report presented a vision for a world class higher education system combining rigour and economic relevance with a focus on cooperation between universities and colleges, individual students, the world of work and society as a whole. This is a key part of the strategy to create a learning society which will enable many more people to benefit from high quality education and training.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom
DENI	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Councils for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Councils for Wales
LEA	Local Education Authority
NIHEC	Northern Ireland Higher Education Council
PCFC	Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UFC	Universities Funding Council
UGC	University Grants Committee

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Eurydice
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

UNITED KINGDOM
Scotland

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INTRODUCTION

The main reforms of the Scottish higher education system in the last two decades began in the early 1990s. They cover 5 main areas: expansion of higher education; increasing access for women, for those from working class backgrounds and for mature entrants; the funding of higher education institutions (HEIs); quality assurance arrangements; and student financing.

University education in Scotland has a long history. Four of Scotland's universities¹ were founded in the 15th and 16th centuries and a further 4 universities² were established between 1964 and 1967. Four more universities³ were established in 1992 and a further university⁴ was established in 1994. Including the Open University, there are therefore 14 universities in Scotland. There are also 9 other institutions of higher education which specialise in particular areas of study, for example teacher training, music, agriculture, health care, art and drama.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

The most important reform acts since 1980 in higher education are the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990.

The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 made fundamental changes to the organisation of post-school education, which included the establishment of a distinct Scottish body able to take major decisions affecting the future of higher education in Scotland, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). SHEFC is responsible for the funding of higher education in Scotland⁵ and for the quality assessment of higher education in HEIs. The establishment of SHEFC removed the dividing line between the former central institutions and the universities in relation to their funding mechanisms. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 also made it possible for HEIs to apply to the Privy Council for powers to award their own degrees, and for approval to use the word 'university' as part of their name. Since 1992, 7 institutions have been granted powers to award their own degrees, and 5 have been granted a university title.

The Education (Student Loans) Act 1990 introduced loans whereby support for higher education students became a 'package' comprising a means-tested grant, a loan and university fees. Before the 1990 Act, student support was by way of means-tested grants, with tuition fees being paid in full direct to the institution by The Scottish Office Education Department Awards Branch on behalf of every eligible student.

¹ These are commonly known as the 4 ancient Scottish Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews.

² Dundee, Heriot-Watt, Stirling and Strathclyde universities.

³ Glasgow Caledonian, Napier, Paisley and Robert Gordon universities.

⁴ University of Abertay.

⁵ SHEFC is not responsible for funding higher education provision in further education institutions, nor in the Open University in Scotland, nor in the Scottish Agricultural College.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

There are 4 different models of governance in the Higher Education sector in Scotland, each reflecting the different origins and circumstances of the type of institution concerned. The Courts of the 4 'ancient' universities were established as the governing bodies by the Universities (Scotland) Acts 1858 and 1889. The four 1960s universities were established by Charter and the constitution and powers of their Courts are enshrined in the Charters. The Designated Institutions (including those institutions which received a university title under the 1992 Act) are governed in accordance with Orders of Council made under Section 45 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992. The colleges of education are governed in accordance with the Colleges of Education (Scotland) Regulations 1987. In terms of these Regulations, the Secretary of State is responsible for appointing a Chairman of the Board of Governors, and 2 or 3 members.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 brought virtually all higher education in Scotland within the Secretary of State's sphere of responsibility. The Act also established the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) as the main funding body for higher education in Scotland. SHEFC took over responsibility for funding HEIs in Scotland from 1 April 1994 and the first complete academic year to be funded by SHEFC began on 1 August 1994. Thus, the 2 Scottish higher education sectors which existed before 1993 and which were funded by the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) have now been integrated by the Council.

Twenty-two HEIs in Scotland are eligible to receive funding from the Secretary of State's programmes, including 13 universities. (The Open University in Scotland receives its funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England.) Twenty-one of the HEIs are funded by SHEFC; the Scottish Agricultural College⁶ is funded by The Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD).

Total government expenditure on higher education in Scotland in 1995/96 amounted to almost £1 billion. This comprised: grant-in-aid from SHEFC to the HEIs from the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) for higher education carried out in further education colleges, and from SOAEFD to the Scottish Agricultural College; expenditure in Scotland by the Research Councils; and expenditure on student awards. This amount has increased in real terms by 25% since 1991/92, although some of the extra provision has been to fund additional student places at marginal costs.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

Quality assurance in higher education has 2 strands: quality assessment of provision by subject area; and quality audit. The external arrangements for quality assurance are broadly similar to those in place elsewhere in the UK. Quality assessment of provision by subject area is the responsibility of SHEFC and quality audit is undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), which is a UK body. Since its establishment, SHEFC has had responsibility for ensuring that quality assessment is undertaken in the Scottish HEIs funded by the Council. Under the terms of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 (paras 39a and 39b), the Funding Council is required to:

- secure that provision is made for assessing the quality of education provided in institutions for whose activities they provide, or are considering providing, financial support; and

⁶ More than 90% of its students were enrolled on higher education courses in 1995/96.

- establish a committee, to be known as the 'Quality Assessment Committee' with the function of giving them advice on the discharge of their duty under paragraph (a) above and such other functions as may be conferred on the committee by the Council.

SHEFC have devised a quality framework consisting of 11 aspects which provide an operational definition of 'quality' in the provision of higher education. These are: aims and curricula; curriculum design and review; the teaching and learning environment; staff resources; learning resources; course organisation; teaching and learning practice; student support; assessment and monitoring; students' work; and output, outcomes and quality control. A variety of further elements have been identified within each of these aspects to provide more detailed guidance on the content of each aspect.

In their first annual report on quality assessment SHEFC identify 2 key features of their approach to assessment: one is the notion of peer review within subject areas; and the other is self-assessment by the institution under review. Subject areas are normally assessed once every 5 years and experienced practitioners within the subject area are employed to carry out assessments. Most are academics but usually at least one member of each team of assessors is drawn from outside academia. Each institution is invited to provide a critical assessment of its own provision in the relevant subject area and submit a report to the Council.

Quality assurance arrangements have been subject to intensive review in recent years. In their report of December 1996, the UK-wide Joint Planning Group recommended that the processes of quality assessment and audit be undertaken by a single UK quality agency. This led to the establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an independent body owned by the higher education sector and funded by membership fees paid by HEIs. The English, Welsh and Northern Irish Funding Bodies have agreed to contract with QAA to provide quality audit and assessment in the rest of the UK. However, SHEFC have expressed reservations about contracting with the QAA. In July 1997, the Garrick Report, (the Report of the Scottish Committee of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education) recommended that SHEFC and QAA should meet as soon as practical to begin negotiations that would ensure that the criteria to support Scotland's inclusion in the QAA would be met at an early date. The current position is that SHEFC have agreed to cease its Teaching Quality Assessment cycle at the end of academic year 1997/98. SHEFC and the QAA have now held exploratory discussions in the expectation that SHEFC will eventually be able to look to the QAA for the information it requires to fulfil its statutory obligations. SHEFC has also agreed to assist the QAA by participating in trial projects of the new process in Scotland.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

3.1. ACCESS

Participation rates in Scottish higher education have always been relatively high and the increase in participation among both older and younger people has been particularly striking over the last decade. The Scottish Office has calculated that the proportion of Scots aged under 21 years entering full-time higher education expressed as a proportion of 17 year olds rose from 23.8% in 1989/90 to 42.7% in 1994/95. The increase in the number of older entrants has been even more striking, with the number of full-time undergraduate entrants aged over 21 years increasing by over 200% since 1984/85. The increase in the number of female entrants to full-time higher education in Scotland is also striking: there was a 103% increase between 1985/86 and 1995/96. Evidence from the Scottish School Leavers' Survey shows that increasing numbers of higher education students come from working class backgrounds.

It is important to understand that in Scotland, higher education courses are provided in further education colleges as well as in HEIs. Altogether, 27% of higher education students in Scotland in 1994/95 were

enrolled in further education Institutions (FEIs) and the proportion of all full-time entrants to higher education courses in FEIs in 1994/95 was 41%.

It has been government policy to encourage wider access to higher education in recent years. The Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) was launched in 1988 and promotes vocationally-relevant higher education to able adults who lack the traditional entry qualifications. The keynote of the initiative is collaboration between HIE and FEI and students who successfully complete an access course are guaranteed a place on a course of higher education. SWAP has proved to be very influential, particularly in fostering the notion of a gradual progression from sub-degree studies to degree courses and in encouraging acknowledgement of the fact that traditional school leaver qualifications are not the only indicator of likely success in higher education.

Wider access has also been facilitated by Credit Accumulation and Transfer in Scotland. The first such scheme was established in 1990 with others following in 1991. As a result, a national Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SCOTCAT) scheme was established. All Scottish universities and other HEIs signed up to the scheme in 1992 and since then all Scottish FEIs have joined the scheme. SCOTCAT was recently renamed the Scottish Credit Framework to reflect its further development as a means of promoting continued and lifelong learning.

The Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report) identified an overall scarcity within higher education of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) have been asked to look at ways of encouraging HEIs to develop 'wider access' strategies and SHEFC have allocated £1m for each of the 5 years from 1998/99 to funding partnership strategies involving HEIs working collaboratively with schools, further education colleges, community education bodies and local businesses. These partnership strategies will aim to promote higher education to able young people who might not otherwise have considered it worthwhile for them.

3.2. WASTAGE

According to figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency 4% of students left higher education before completing their course. For those studying at postgraduate level, this figure was 3%; for those studying at under-graduate level it was 4%; and for those studying other higher education courses it was 9%.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

As noted in paragraph 1.3 above, the system of financial support for students in Scotland was reformed by the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990. Before the 1990 Act, financial support for students was provided on the basis of means-tested grants. Full tuition fees were paid by The Scottish Office Education Department Awards Branch direct to the institution on behalf of every eligible student. Under the 1990 Act, a system of loans was introduced and financial support for higher education students became a 'package' of 3 elements: a means-tested grant; eligibility for a loan; and tuition fees.

The current arrangements for student support in Scotland are slightly different from those in the rest of the UK. Awards of maintenance grant and tuition fees are administered centrally by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) rather than by individual local authorities. SAAS is an Executive Agency of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the awards are made under the Student Allowances (Scotland) Regulations 1996.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

The most significant difference between undergraduate study at degree level in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK stems from the HEIs, different entry arrangements which mirror differences in secondary education. In Scotland, school pupils do not specialise as much as their counterparts elsewhere in the UK. The HEIs continue this broad-based approach. There are 2 types of degree in Scotland: the ordinary or general degree which takes 3 years of study to complete; and the honours degree which takes 4 years of study.

Students do not enrol on an honours course until the 3rd year of degree studies and admission to an honours programme is normally dependent on achievement of a particular standard of performance during the 2nd year. In practice most students opt for an honours course. The 3-year Scottish ordinary degree (generally offered in most universities) is a recognised, distinct and long-standing option which is making a comeback after a long period of decline⁷. In 1994/95, 32% of all Scottish first degrees awarded were 3-year ordinary degrees.

In the pre-1992 universities, new entrants to HEIs are often admitted to faculties rather than to departments if they are not following a vocational course such as law or medicine. The traditional Scottish arts or science honours degree course is broadly based, with several subjects studied at first and second year level before any decision is taken to specialise. The 5 post-1992 universities and 9 higher education colleges offer a different style of degree provision, stemming from a different tradition. While they were central institutions, they were restricted to vocational courses by The Scottish Office. Where more general subjects were developed they tended to have a vocational slant (eg languages linked to business). The programmes they offer are less broadly based and more directly vocational and entrants to these institutions are more likely to be admitted to a particular course rather than to a faculty and their degree programmes will be built around the vocational specialisation they have chosen to follow.

The widening of the higher education catchment population has added a further strand to the different types of provision. Many students enter a degree programme in the second or third year, having completed a higher national certificate or higher national diploma, or a comparable qualification. Others transfer from one institution to another, or from one programme to another at an intermediate stage of a degree course. Most Scottish HEIs have now switched or are considering switching to a modular style of provision. This is seen as reinforcing the tradition of breadth and is one development towards a more flexible higher education system. Other developments include greater involvement of business in the design and delivery of postgraduate programmes; the emergence of new degree subjects; moves towards semesterisation; developments in distance learning; and greater reliance on IT. Modular provision also facilitates credit accumulation and transfer (see paragraph 3.1. above on the Scottish Credit Framework).

The funding methodologies in the HEI sector encourage competition between institutions for students and for research funding. This was stated in the Secretary of State's initial letter of guidance to the Chairman of SHEFC in June 1992 when he wrote that one of the aims of the Council's funding methodology should be 'to maintain and develop as necessary the current diversity in the system.' This does not preclude cooperation between HEIs, however. There are no rules governing collaboration and neither SOEID nor SHEFC exercise a planning role in this area. The Scottish HEIs are autonomous institutions which are free to collaborate with one another, and with other bodies, in the manner and to the extent which they regard as appropriate.

⁷ Part of the reason for that decline may have been the willingness of employers to pay more to an Honours graduate.

Higher education teaching in Scotland does not differ significantly from higher education teaching in the rest of the UK, nor from higher education teaching in many other European countries. Essentially, higher education teaching is carried out through lectures, tutorials, seminars, projects and practicals. Different courses in different institutions will use different patterns of these basic teaching aids, for example, practical work is often emphasised more in scientific subjects than in the arts. However, many courses now involve some form of work placement as part of the syllabus and these can be short, unremunerated vacation-based placements or year long paid employment-based placements.

Distance learning has been pioneered by the Open University in the UK, including the Open University in Scotland. Teaching by the OU centres around the use of modular material combined with the use of television and radio programmes for imparting information. Tutorials are available for those able to attend and most OU courses include mandatory attendance at a week long residential course during the summer. A new initiative in distance learning in higher education in Scotland is the University of the Highlands and Islands project. This is the development of a dispersed university in the least populated areas of Scotland involving 13 colleges and research institutions. The University of the Highlands and Islands project aims to become a federal collegiate university by 2001. Tuition will comprise a mixture of traditional residential courses and a wide range of open and distance learning using new technologies.

Most higher education assessment of students is based on the traditional method of end-of-year written examinations combined with some form of continuous assessment through coursework completed during the year. In addition, some departments include placement reports and oral examinations in their assessment processes. However, some degree courses are assessed entirely through coursework. As for teaching methods, different courses in different institutions are assessed using different combinations of assessment.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Most institutions of higher education in Scotland have been involved in international activities for many years, and have had considerable involvement in a number of research and training networks across Europe. The European dimension in education has been encouraged by HEIs, particularly through participation in European Commission programmes to increase student mobility, for example the Erasmus programme. Opportunities to become involved in Lingua and Comett programmes are also available to many higher education students in Scotland.

Two initiatives in Scotland are relevant in this respect. The Scottish Language Export Consortium was formed to provide language services for enterprise and to disseminate knowledge of the social and business cultures of other EU member states. The consortium includes in its membership 12 HEIs. The Strathclyde 1992 Consortium was launched in 1989 and has established a number of task forces to ensure the provision of comprehensive services to assist Scottish companies to become involved in European affairs. All the HEIs in the region (west-central Scotland) are collaborating in the Consortium, which includes a training task force.

Looking at internationalisation from a different perspective it can be seen that Scottish higher education is particularly attractive to students from abroad. It is striking that one quarter of all undergraduate and postgraduate students of higher education in Scotland come from outside Scotland. Overall, the number of students from outside the UK on full-time courses in Scottish HEIs grew by 106% between 1984/85 and 1994/95.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

Higher education in Scotland is at an interesting point in its history. It is clear from the information given above that there have been many changes in the nature and provision of higher education in Scotland, some of which are ongoing. In addition, recommendations made by the Scottish Committee which formed part of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education are still under consideration and plans are underway to establish a devolved Parliament in Scotland whose responsibilities will include higher education. New upper secondary qualifications, which form the traditional requirements for entry into higher education in Scotland, are currently being developed and the first stage of implementation will begin in the 1998/99 academic year. Some possible future developments in higher education are outlined below. These are largely speculative at the moment although some expectations at least have been identified on the basis of projections.

It is expected that participation rates in Scottish HEIs will continue to grow for both young and mature entrants at undergraduate level. It is also expected that the trend toward provision of higher education courses in both FEIs and HEIs in Scotland will continue. This is expected to engender closer partnership between FEIs and HEIs in Scotland. It is also expected that the SCOTCAT framework will lead to increasing flexibility in modes of access to higher education in Scotland and that it will allow for more flexibility in modes of study, especially work-based learning.

There are some indications that links between higher education and industry and commerce are likely to strengthen, with higher education contributing more in terms of applied research and technology transfer to local economies. In addition, the role of teaching and research in Scottish HEIs is a popular area of discussion at present, in particular how to achieve the optimal balance of quality work in each of these areas within institutions.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

FEI	Further Education Institution
HEI	Higher Education Institution
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
SCOTCAT	Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
SOAEFD	Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department
SOED	Scottish Office Education Department
UFC	Universities Funding Council

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Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

ICELAND

National description

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INTRODUCTION

The Icelandic system of higher education is small and relatively homogenous. For sixty years there was only one higher education institution in Iceland - the University of Iceland. Established in 1911, this first national university was formed by merging three professional schools founded during the previous century, a school of theology, a school of medicine and a law school, and also adding a faculty of arts. Until 1971, when teacher education was moved to the higher education level, and the University College of Education established, the growth in higher education occurred almost solely within the University of Iceland. Currently, the number of students in higher education in Iceland is 7,900 while 1,800 students are studying abroad.

At present, there are ten higher education institutions in the country. Six of those offer university degrees. The others are art colleges and a computer college which offer diplomas. According to a 1974 law on the school system, higher education was defined as education that requires matriculation examinations (from upper secondary school) for entry. In line with this law, several colleges that previously belonged to the upper-secondary level came to be defined as higher education institutions during the late eighties as they started to require the matriculation examination for entry. These were colleges for pre-school teachers, social pedagogy and the arts. In a new law on higher education, the Icelandic term, *háskóli*, is used to refer both to a traditional university and institutions that do not have research responsibilities. In addition to this law, the role of each institution is further defined in its individual laws, which describe its main role in education and research and the degrees granted.

After a growth in the number of higher education institutions during the last decade, there has been an effort made in the last three years to combine smaller institutions into fewer larger ones. This has happened in the case of teacher training colleges and, plans have been made to consolidate art colleges into one art academy.

In recent decades, there has been growing demand from students to enter higher education. The Icelandic population is relatively young compared to other European countries and, moreover, the proportion of the cohorts passing the matriculation examination has doubled since 1980. Consequently, there is increased pressure on the higher education system to diversify in order to meet the demand for more education and to accommodate an increasing number of students. Much of this growth is attributable to the increasing number of women, who have formed the majority of students in higher education since 1980. Presently, there are 39% more women than men studying at higher education level.

The diversification of the higher education system has followed three main lines. Firstly, some specialised colleges previously at upper secondary level have gradually been upgraded to higher education level. Secondly, new higher education institutions have been established. Thirdly, the number of programmes, within existing institutions has increased, mainly at postgraduate level. These have been gradual reforms mainly enacted at an institutional level. New ways of addressing the problem of financing higher education institutions have also been attempted by encouraging the establishment of private institutions at higher education level.

Iceland is a small country and culturally homogenous with a unique language spoken almost exclusively by its 265,000 citizens. The small size of the country raises many issues concerning the choices that the country needs to make in higher education. One issue is the kind of higher education that should be developed within the country and for what education students should be sent abroad. With limited resources and a small population base, there is a clear need to specialise in areas that relate to the strengths and needs of the country, its history, and its geographical and economic situation (OECD,

1987). At the same time many of the problems facing higher education in Iceland are comparable to those in larger countries, notably the growing number of students and limited financial resources.

Economically speaking, the evolution of tertiary education in Iceland has been shaped by two main forces. Firstly, the economic structure is relatively resource-based and there is high labour intensity in most sectors. This has arguably had a dampening effect on the demand for highly skilled human capital in key sectors. Secondly, the build-up of a modern welfare society has worked in the other direction and stimulated the growth of jobs requiring university education.

Recent structural economic reforms have transformed the economy and made it more global and competition oriented. There are also calls for greater diversification away from resource-intensive economic activities in order to provide citizens with a satisfactory standard of living. These economic changes have imposed new tasks for the education system to ensure stronger links between higher education and industry, to introduce greater diversity and flexibility in education and strengthen continuous learning. In policy debates, there has also been an emphasis on economic returns from higher education and the contribution of increased education to economic growth.

Culturally, the importance of higher education in maintaining and re-examining national identity in a changing environment has been stressed. This includes promoting cultural participation by the general population. It is no coincidence that until recently the only postgraduate programme available in the country was in Icelandic language, history and culture and, still, the only organised doctoral degree programme offered is in this area. The issue of open access by the population to higher education has also been important in policy debate.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

Since 1980, four major reform acts concerning higher education have been enacted. They involve the establishment of a new institution, the consolidation of existing higher education institutions, and the setting of a general legal framework for the higher education level in terms of administration, financing, responsibility and accountability of higher education institutions.

In 1988, a law on the University of Akureyri was enacted by Parliament. Preparation for the establishment of the university was in the hands of a committee chaired by a Member of Parliament from the north-east region where Akureyri is located. The town council of Akureyri also created a special committee to work on the establishment of the university, which was active in its foundation. The main arguments for establishing a new university in this area of the country were to strengthen educational opportunities outside the capital of Reykjavik and to build a link between higher education and the economy of the Akureyri region. The new university was to emphasise shorter courses of study and a close relationship with the economy of the region. At the same time, it was given a role in research and thus a university status.

The establishment of the University of Akureyri marked a new policy line on higher education with a regional focus and an emphasis on the link between the economy of the region and higher education institutions. The programmes of study that were launched at this new institution reflected the emphasis on practical lines of study, in nursing, fisheries studies, business administration and later teacher training. The reasons for the establishing of the new university were both political and economic. Concerns about the economic development of the region and the role of higher education in strengthening the economy of the area were predominant in the debate.

The time-scale for implementation was immediate. The preparation for the programmes to be offered had been made before the bill was introduced to Parliament and the new institution was therefore

immediately operational. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture was heavily involved in the implementation of the law in cooperation with the regional and university authorities.

In 1995, an act on art education at higher education level was approved by the Parliament. The act was based on proposals made by a committee appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. Previously, at least two other ministerial committees had made proposals for a new institution of the arts which had not been implemented. Calls for action in this area of education had been made by interested parties, such as the association of artists and the art colleges. Previous efforts to introduce changes in this area had got stranded on the issue of the predicted level of public expenditure which the establishment of a new higher education institution in the arts would incur.

The main objective of the proposal was to strengthen culture and art creation and to facilitate the creation of new lines of study in the arts. Combining the three existing higher education institutions in the arts into one art academy was seen as leading to savings in operational costs and the strengthening of the status of Icelandic art education vis-à-vis comparable educational institutions abroad. With growing international cooperation in education and research, the committee felt that one strong institution would be in a better position to participate in international activities than many small ones.

The novelty in the law concerned the establishment of a private organisation around the running of the art academy. Such an organisation would, in the opinion of the committee, be in line with the following goals:

- to increase the independence of the institution in teaching, administration and financial operation,
- to strengthen the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the institution,
- to give the institution greater flexibility in developing art education and in its financing,
- to encourage the effective participation of individuals and businesses in higher education.

The stated reasons for the proposals for the law, as described above, were political, economic and academic (the last having been described above). The interested parties (e.g. associations of artists) had pressed for the establishment of an art academy and were involved in the preparation of the bill. There were also economic reasons behind the law since the issue of costs had blocked previous attempts to establish an art college. The law proposes a solution to this issue by allowing for the establishment of a private organisation that would enter into a contractual agreement with the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture on the running of the art academy. It is assumed that parties other than the Government, such as municipalities and private firms, would participate in its funding.

According to the law, the three art colleges that are to constitute the new art academy are to be merged on a trial basis for a period of five years, after which the results are to be evaluated and a decision taken by the Parliament on whether to abolish the separate laws on the existing institutions and legally combine them into one art academy. The time-scale for the implementation is therefore three years. The implementation is to rely heavily on a private organisation to be led by artist associations. Now, three years after the law was passed, this private organisation has been formed, but it has not been able to muster the necessary resources to establish the new art academy.

The second law on the consolidation of higher education institutions was passed by Parliament in December 1997. This law involved the merging of four colleges, The College for Pre-school teachers, the College of Physical Education and the College of Social Pedagogy with the existing University College of Education.

The law was based on the recommendations of a committee with representatives from the major teacher training institutions in the country and headed by a representative of the Ministry of Education, Science

and Culture. The stated reasons for the proposals were mainly academic as well as economic. Creating one strong institution was seen as a way of strengthening teacher training in the country. Raising teacher training in all areas to university level would strengthen research in the area of education and thus improve the professional training of teachers. One institution instead of four would lead to economies of scale and the more efficient use of buildings and infrastructure.

To an extent, this law on a new University College of Education can be seen as a response to increased demand for higher education by students. This has pushed institutions that were previously at upper-secondary level to upgrade their programmes to seek the status of higher education institutions.

The implementation of the law was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture that set up committees to revise the curriculum for teacher training, synthesise the programmes and degrees of the four institutions and prepare for the changes in infrastructure, buildings, etc. The implementation of the law once it was in effect was well planned beforehand and was therefore relatively smooth. The time-scale for the implementation was also relatively short as the administration was formally consolidated immediately after the law was enacted and the operations are to be coordinated in one year.

A comparison between the implementation of the law on the University College of Education and the art academy gives some insight into the differences between merging state institutions, as in the former case, or establishing private institutions by consolidating private and state institutions as in the latter. The consolidation of the state institutions went smoothly and was accomplished in a short time frame, but the privatisation and consolidation of higher education institutions for arts has still not been finalised three years after the law permitted it.

The major reform to the higher education system during the last fifteen years was instituted with a law on higher education, which was passed by the Parliament in December of 1997. This legislation sets the general framework for the operations of higher education institutions. Their independence is to be increased and, at the same time, they are to be made more accountable. This includes greater independence in financial affairs, but a financial contract is to be made between each institution and the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. The Minister also negotiates with the institutions, whether and to what extent they are to engage in research. The lines of administrative authority are clarified in the law and the influence of external parties is increased as two members outside the university are to take a seat in the university council. According to the legislation, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture is to set rules on quality evaluation and certification of degrees.

The reasons for the legislation are a mix of political, economic, and demographic factors. Politically, the policy of the Government has been to lessen the direct government involvement in the running of higher education institutions and provide them with greater independence. At the same time there has been an emphasis on making the institutions more accountable and clarifying the lines of authority between the Government and the institutions. As the number of students seeking higher education has increased, so has the variety of institutions at the higher education level. The law sets the framework for the operations and financing of the increasing number of higher education institutions and clarifies, for example, the rules for private institutions and financial agreements between them and the State.

The new law on the higher education system also relates to other developments at higher education level such as the consolidation of higher education institutions and the upgrading of institutions from upper-secondary to higher education level. Even though institutions still have their own separate laws, these have to be adjusted and take into account the general legislation which sets the standards and rules for higher education. The time-scale for the implementation of the law is two years. During this time, the laws for the respective institutions will have to be changed. Many of the provisions in the general legislation are implemented through regulations set by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. This includes rules on internal and external quality assessment.

Since 1980, some developments have taken place at higher education level that have not been explicitly formulated in policy or formalised in reform acts. Rather gradual changes have been made in laws and regulation to accommodate developments within higher education. Such changes include, for example, the establishment of postgraduate programmes within universities, of which the number has grown at a steady rate in recent years. At the same time, changes have been made in the system for student financial support. Grants for postgraduate studies have been taken up and rules for student loans have been changed so that greater emphasis is put on student progress in studies and repayment rules are made more stringent. Another trend that has been apparent in recent years is the establishing of private institutions that are privately administered, but to a large extent funded by the state. The legal status of these private institutions was clarified in the new general legislation for the higher education system.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

The basic principle for the governance of universities in Iceland has traditionally been that of collegial governance, i.e. they are self-governed by an academic community of members who are equal, and that they are independent in all academic matters and research. The governance of smaller colleges has been characterised by the administrative structures of the upper secondary level, with external school boards as the highest governing body, and greater control by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Recent legislation on the higher education system brought about changes in these traditional forms of governance. Constitutionally, the state institutions of higher education are directly responsible to the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. Governing councils of higher education institutions are to include external members appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. The new law distinguishes more clearly between the levels of authority both within the institutions and between the institutions and the Ministry. According to the new legislation, each faculty does not automatically have representatives on the university council and the deans of faculties are not to sit on the council. The university council is to have ten members, five representatives of faculty, two chosen from among students, two external members appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture and the rector (vice-chancellor) of the institution.

The university council has the final authority in matters of the university and its affiliated institutions unless otherwise specified in its statutes. It works on strengthening and developing them and follows their policy. The rector (or vice-chancellor) of the university is appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture on the recommendation of the university council.

Where higher education institutions are divided into faculties or departments the administration of these units is in the hands of deans, faculty meetings and faculty councils. The role of the faculties and departments is further defined in the individual statutes for each institution. Faculties at university higher education institutions have significant authority in managing their finances and in setting the curriculum.

The administrative structure differs somewhat between the different institutions, but the following description applies to the University of Iceland, which is by far the largest institution. There, administrative directors of the central administration are appointed by the university council for the term of 5 years. The central administrative offices are: finance, academic affairs, research, public relations and international affairs, personnel, building and construction.

The university council appoints (for 3-year terms) several standing Committees. Their task is to advise the council and assist it in policy-making, as well as to work on particular projects or themes designed by the council. They consist (in most cases) of one member from the council, 5 representatives elected by the council after nominations from the individual faculties, one student and the director of the relevant

central administrative office. These committees are: administration and governance, development and planning, finance, academic affairs, research, international affairs, buildings and construction, personnel, public relations, legal affairs and regulation, and appeal and conciliation.

The Faculty General Meeting is the highest authority within each faculty chaired by the dean. All permanent members of academic staff are obliged to attend the Faculty General Meeting along with 3 students (elected from members of the faculty student society) if the number of faculty members is 12 or less. For each 6 additional staff members exceeding 12, there is one additional student. In large faculties, the Faculty General Meeting gives authority to administer the faculty to a faculty council composed of the faculty dean and vice-dean, heads of departments and usually two or three student representatives elected from those elected to the Faculty General Meeting. In all faculties, there are permanent study committees in each department with equal numbers of staff and students. These study committees discuss curriculum development and other matters related to individual courses and study programmes and give advice to the Faculty General Meeting. Each faculty has considerable financial autonomy and total academic autonomy in the design and development of the curriculum and the teaching and research within the faculty.

All permanent academic staff members are appointed after being judged competent to hold the post by a committee consisting of one member appointed by the university council, one appointed by the Minister of Culture and Education and one (the Chairman) appointed by the respective faculty. The proposal of the committee must be adopted by a Faculty General Meeting (students do not have a vote in these cases).

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Apart from some private colleges, higher education institutions in Iceland are almost exclusively financed by the State. They receive government funding in the form of a block grant from the national budget. The spending of their budget is their own responsibility. Exceptionally, the University of Iceland has substantial income from a lottery which is earmarked for new buildings and building maintenance.

Before 1997, institutional budgets were calculated on the basis of historic costs per student in different fields of study. According to the new general law, the financial needs of higher education institutions are based on three types of costs: teaching, research and buildings. Registration fees from students are not taken into account. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture sets the rules for the weighting of each factor and decides whether the institution in question is to receive funding for research.

In the new general legislation on the higher education system, the Minister can enter into a contract with individual institutions on services or special tasks and payments for these in order to increase the institution's responsibility for operations.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The new law on higher education further states that the Minister of Education, Science and Culture is to set rules regarding how each institution is to fulfil its obligations in evaluating the quality of teaching and staff and how external supervision of quality is conducted. For institutions with research responsibilities the Minister is also to set rules on the external supervision of research and use of research money. The Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is responsible for the certification of courses and publishes a list of certified degrees and diplomas.

There is no long tradition of quality or programme evaluation within the higher education system. In recent years, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture has taken the responsibility in cooperation with higher education institution, of organising programme evaluations and evaluation of particular subject areas using self-evaluation and external peer review. With the new general law on the higher education system, these tasks are formalised and the Ministry given a more explicit role in defining the rules for quality evaluation and quality control.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

In general, the admission requirements for institutions at the higher education level are the passing of a matriculation examination or equivalent education. In some cases, applicants with substantial work experience, but who have not done the matriculation examination may be admitted. For the vocational and technical colleges, practical experience in an appropriate field of study is usually required. For all the institutions except the University of Iceland admission is based on selection. The art colleges hold entrance examinations.

As stated before, the University of Iceland, which admits two thirds of students in higher education, does not have general restrictions on admission for those who have passed the matriculation examination. However, in the faculty of medicine, departments of medicine, nursing and physiotherapy, and in the faculty of dentistry, the number of students who are allowed to continue after a competitive examination at the end of the first semester is limited. Also, for the department of pharmacy and the faculty of science, students are required to have come from a mathematics, physics, or natural sciences branch of study of an upper secondary school.

The recent general legislation on higher education includes new provisions that allow all institutions to set their own criteria for admission. In recent as well as older legislation, there are provisions for admission of students without traditional qualifications. Admission to university programmes may also be granted to those who have completed studies abroad, on evidence of sufficient preparation for university studies to the same extent as the Icelandic matriculation examination or equivalent. Universities may also grant admission to students who have completed other studies in Iceland, which the faculties in question consider sufficient preparation for further studies at the institution.

No overall reforms have been made to reduce wastage or dropout. Rather, changes have been gradual and institutions have addressed this problem separately, for example by strengthening counselling and other support services for students. Much has been done to improve the services for handicapped students and the University of Iceland now has a specific policy in this area.

Within teacher training, access for students without traditional qualifications has been facilitated through the introduction of distance education. Available both for pre-school and compulsory school teachers, distance education has provided access to training, for example, for teachers without the required teaching certification in geographically remote regions.

Indirect measures to reduce wastage and dropout in higher education have included the raising of the registration fees for universities and changing the rules for student loans. In 1993, the registration fee for higher education institutions was raised and as a consequence registration has better reflected the number of active students and wastage has been reduced. Changes in the rules concerning the Government Student Loan Fund, whereby students only receive loans after they have passed the required examination each semester, have also increased the number of active students, shortening the time students take to finish a degree.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

The most prevalent form of financial assistance in Iceland is student loans issued by the Icelandic Government Student Loan Fund, which was established in 1961. All students at the higher education level in Iceland are eligible to apply for student loans. Student loans are also available for some vocational programmes at the upper secondary level. The purpose of the Loan Fund is to provide students with the opportunity to undertake studies (mainly at the higher education level) irrespective of their economic status.

In line with its purpose, the Student Loan Fund provides loans to cover subsistence taking into account the student's family situation and personal income. There is no fixed upper limit for subsistence loans, which are dependent on the student's family size. Loans are available for studies abroad, both for subsistence and tuition fees. Student loans are linked to a price index and carry interest of up to 3% from the date of completion of studies. Repayments commence two years after the completion of studies.

Since the introduction of the current student loan system, the State has subsidised loans to students through low interest rates. Before the last reform of the financial aid system in 1992, it was calculated that 10-20% of the loans would not be repaid. In 1992, major revisions of the student loan system were undertaken. The financial terms were made stricter by increasing the proportion of income earmarked for loan repayments and a real rate of interest was applied, in addition to indexing the capital. These changes were in response to the worsening financial state of the Student Loan Fund. The demand for student loans increased rapidly during the 1980s, due to an increase in the number of students.

The reforms of 1992 involved the following main changes in the student loan system:

- Student loans are granted only at the end of each term and after successful completion of the required examinations.
- The proportion of income which must go towards loan repayment was increased from 3.75% to 5% in the first five years of repayment, and to 7% thereafter.
- Student loans are to be fully repaid, with payment starting two years after the successful completion of studies. There is no time limit on repayment: previously loans had a maximum repayment period of forty years.
- Interest is now paid on student loans. The law stipulates a maximum rate of 3%, subject to the discretion of the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

As it turned out, the reform had a dramatic effect on the number of students applying for student loans. In 1991, the number of students receiving loans was 8,124, which was a 1% increase on the previous year. In 1992, the number of student loans dropped to 5,777 and has remained close to 6,000 since then. From 1990 to 1995, the number of students receiving loans from the Student Loan Fund decreased by 25%. This does not mean that fewer students were studying at institutions eligible for student loans. On the contrary, during the same period the number of students increased by 17.8%.

In 1993, the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture established a fund to provide grants for postgraduate studies. Grants are issued through the Research Fund for Postgraduate Students, governed by a board appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture and managed by the Icelandic Research Council.

The grants are awarded for postgraduate studies on the basis of a research proposal submitted jointly by a student and a professor. The research proposal must be approved by the respective university department. Grants can be awarded to the student for subsistence and/or directly to the university

institution to provide services to a particular student. In order to receive grants, students have to be registered for postgraduate studies. The main rule is that these studies should be conducted under the guidance of a professor at an Icelandic university. Part of the study may take place at a university abroad.

Grants are awarded on the basis of a selection made by the Fund's board. In evaluating the application, the selection committee considers the student's academic qualifications, the previous research activity of the mentor/professor, the scientific value of the proposed research and its relation to the previous research of the professor. The scientific value of the proposed study is evaluated by a scientific committee.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The structure of higher education courses in Iceland can be viewed on three main levels. The first is the level of education that does not lead to formal university degrees and is mainly provided within small vocationally-oriented colleges. However, universities may also offer short courses of study that lead to a diploma. The second level is education that leads to a first university degree and mainly takes place within universities or university colleges. A first university degree is of two types: the Bachelor's degree and the *candidatus* degree. The third level is postgraduate education which is solely provided within universities or university colleges and leads to a second university degree (below the doctoral level) or a doctoral degree.

Most of the institutions providing courses leading to a diploma are specialised in vocational studies or artistic disciplines. These include institutions oriented towards business or technology that offer short programmes in computer science, management, construction and mechanical engineering technology. Some of these schools operate both at the upper secondary and higher education levels. There are also colleges for music, drama, and the art and crafts. Most of these institutions are small with the number of students ranging from 50 to 400.

Of the institutions offering first university degrees, the University of Iceland is the largest and offers the widest range of studies. It presently registers 70% of all students in higher education in nine faculties. Other institutions are specialised and have a greater vocational emphasis.

At the University of Iceland, most programmes offered are three- to four-year BA or BS degree programmes in a single subject or a combination of two subjects (major/minor). Programmes that lead to BA or BS degrees are offered in the traditional university subjects within humanities, and natural and social sciences. Professional programmes of five to six years are offered in medicine, theology, law, pharmacy and dentistry leading to professional degrees. Engineering and business administration are four-year professional programmes, and physiotherapy and nursing are four-year BS programmes.

The *candidatus* degree is only offered at the University of Iceland and qualifies the holder for a special office or profession. It is an academic/professional degree in the fields of theology, medicine, pharmacy, law, business administration, engineering and dentistry. The degree *candidatus/candidata* is followed by the Latin title for the relevant field, thus, *cand.theol.* in theology, *cand.juris* in law, *cand.med. et chir.* in medicine, *cand.odont.* in dentistry, *cand.pharm.* in pharmacy, *cand.scient.* in engineering and *cand.oecon.* in business administration.

At the University of Iceland, one-year postgraduate diploma programmes are offered in journalism and mass communication, and educational counselling and one-year programmes leading to certification are offered in social work, teacher training for upper secondary schools, and deacon studies.

The tendency has been for smaller vocational or paraprofessional schools that were previously upper secondary level to be integrated into larger higher education institutions. Thus nursing was integrated into the University of Iceland in 1972, but was previously offered in a separate institution on the upper secondary level. Similar trends can be observed with vocational courses for pre-school teachers, physical education teachers and social pedagogy that were merged with a university college of education on 1 January 1998. Attempts have been made to merge art colleges into a university level institution.

For the colleges offering shorter programmes towards a diploma, the content of the courses tends to be specific to each institution and highly oriented towards practical training.

The university higher education institutions offer a large number of degree courses of different types and levels in a wide range of subjects. Specialisation in a subject begins right at the start of university studies, i.e. university studies do not include a general studies component. This general studies background knowledge is obtained in upper secondary schools.

The BA and BS degree courses are either concentrated on one major area of study or 2/3 of the course concerns a major and 1/3 a minor area of study. The number of elective course units varies between programmes.

The professional degree courses are either structured so that there are no or a very limited number of elective courses or so that students can choose between areas of specialisation and take courses within that area.

Most of the postgraduate programmes in Iceland have been introduced recently and the curriculum is still being developed. All of the master's programmes are research oriented and are now offered in most academic subjects. With the exception of engineering, the graduate programmes consist of sixty credits and the length of study is two years. Each credit is calculated to equal approximately 60 hours of student work. A research project and a thesis can amount to 15, 30 or 45 credits out of the 60 credits required for a degree.

Organised doctoral studies are presently only offered in the faculty of arts at the University of Iceland. The duration of the doctoral programme is 3-4 years and it is mainly a research programme. There are both compulsory courses and courses to be selected by the student and approved by the supervisor. One year is devoted to compulsory studies and research abroad at a university recognised by the faculty.

5.2. TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching on courses of study leading to a diploma is generally subject-oriented. Emphasis is placed on practical training, and the integration of theory and practice into teaching. The form of the courses alternates between lectures, class instruction, individual tutoring, student projects, group projects, practical experience or specialised practical work. Class attendance is usually compulsory. In some business administration programmes, courses are organised around a module system, with an emphasis on groupwork and projects in cooperation with businesses.

In courses leading to a university degree, teaching methods are mainly lectures, seminars, laboratory work, individual assignments, groupwork and practical training. Lectures are predominant among these methods, and the teaching is mainly subject-oriented.

Changes in teaching methods are uneven across fields. In many traditional programmes such as law and philosophy, lectures and seminars are still predominant. In newer programmes in the areas of business and mass communication, increasing emphasis has been placed on practical training and the hands-on-experience of students. Much of this development also involves the use of computers and new technologies. For example, in the field of mass communication new multimedia techniques have greatly expanded the opportunities for students to engage in experimentation with new technologies. In languages, the use of computer programmes has been integrated into teaching as well as new laboratory techniques.

Changes that cut across all fields involve greater use of the Internet. Professors have increasingly made use of this new technology in order to put assignments and lecture notes on the world wide web and students also have the opportunity to exchange ideas and notes on the Internet.

Within teacher training, distance education has been introduced to expand the programmes to non-traditional students. Distance education is organised around the communication between the professor and student through the Internet and the exchange of information and assignments through the same medium. Intensive on-site teaching at teaching training colleges is provided around Christmas and during the summer to supplement distance teaching. Attempts have been made to break down the barrier between distance and on-site education by increasing the communication between professors and students by Internet for regular students.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

Higher education in Iceland has in a sense always been highly internationalised. The small size of the higher education system and the limited supply of postgraduate programmes has meant that many students seek education abroad. Presently, around 17% of Icelandic students in higher education are studying abroad. Most professors in universities have received their postgraduate education abroad and maintain international relations through, for example, research cooperation after they move back home. In universities, support for professors to go on sabbatical abroad is fairly generous, which encourages the maintenance of international links.

Disciplines differ in terms of their international exposure and there are also differences between large and small institutions. The disciplines of Icelandic language and law have traditionally had relatively little international exposure. The natural and social sciences, engineering and foreign languages have maintained more international ties, mainly through exchange of faculty and international research cooperation. Small colleges, due to the fact their teachers have not had research obligations, have generally had less international exposure. There are, however, notable exceptions as some have entered into agreements with corresponding institutions in other countries so that students can start their studies in Iceland and then go abroad for one year to finish a degree.

Traditionally, the highest proportion of Icelandic students studying abroad have travelled to the Nordic countries. Iceland's participation in the Socrates programme has had the effect of directing students to other countries in Europe. This has meant more exposure to countries in Central and Southern Europe. Nearly half of all Erasmus students have travelled to Germany and France during the last five years, which is a significant change from previous patterns.

With the Erasmus programme, a new dimension of internationalisation has developed with more foreign students coming to Iceland. Even though the numbers are not great (371 Erasmus students have come to Iceland between the 1992/93 and 1998/99 academic years), they have been increasing and are high relative to the small size of the student population in Iceland. They have thus had a significant impact. The influence of the growing number of foreign students is for example apparent in the increasing number of courses in English that are now being offered at Icelandic universities. These courses are geared towards Erasmus students as well as foreign students who come via other avenues.

The growing internationalisation of higher education has had an impact on the organisation of postgraduate studies in Iceland. The number of postgraduate programmes has been steadily increasing during the last five years. The problem with establishing postgraduate programmes in a small country is that there are not enough students to sustain the necessary specialised courses. In addition, there is the understanding among higher education institution authorities that postgraduate students should follow part of their education abroad. Many postgraduate programmes have therefore been organised so that students can take part of their courses abroad, in some cases as Erasmus students.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

During the last two decades there has been a marked tendency within the Icelandic system towards greater convergence as small institutions have been merged with larger university institutions. Only one new state higher education institution has been established since 1970, and some others upgraded from upper-secondary to higher education level and then merged with existing university institutions. The system has remained unitary and no clear legal framework has been established for non-university institutions. As a consequence, diversification of the system has been rather limited. New private institutions have contributed somewhat to institutional diversity.

The growth in the number of students at the University of Iceland, which has during the last decade enrolled around two thirds of students in higher education has stabilised in the last few years. The development in recent years is therefore likely to be towards a greater diversification outside this one large university as more students enrol in other institutions. The increasing demand for services made on higher education institutions, however, places limits on the degree of diversification as the institutions have to be able to establish the necessary infrastructure. With increasing internationalisation, greater demand for computer equipment, student support and other services, it is becoming more difficult for small institutions to operate at higher education level.

At the same time, smaller regions are seeking to establish higher education institutions to support their economic and social development. As these regions do not have the population base to support such institutions, they are looking towards distance education in order to provide higher education opportunities to people in the region. Lifelong learning and distance education are likely to become of great concern in the formulation of policy for higher education in the near future. Closely linked to this is the development of new computer and multimedia technologies, which call for new teaching methods and ways of learning to incorporate them.

Financial stringency at the higher education level is likely to continue as the number of students increases along with the overall demand for services on higher education institutions. Traditionally, the majority of graduates of higher education have become state employees, particularly in the area of welfare services. Jobs in research and development have also been concentrated within the state sector. This is, however, changing as the proportion of research and development conducted by the State has declined from 67% in 1973 to 40% in 1993 and the share of private companies has increased correspondingly.

This development suggests that in the future the tendency will be towards stronger links between higher education institutions and the private sector. As the economy becomes more diversified and internationalised, the demand from the private sector for a well-educated workforce is likely to increase. This raises new issues in relation to the financing of higher education, both as concerns the contributions of private enterprises to higher education and of students through student fees. Under recent legislative changes, higher education institutions already have more opportunities to enter into contracts with private enterprises to finance research or teaching in certain fields. University research is therefore more likely to be carried out in closer cooperation with the private sector. This trend is already apparent in the growing number of university research institutes that carry out contracted research with the private sector.

The issue of the introduction of tuition fees is likely to be centre stage in debates on higher education reform. As more university graduates go to work in the private sector the question of individual versus public gain from higher education is likely to come to the forefront. Financing of higher education and whether students should carry more of the cost of higher education is likely to be addressed in future reforms. In a recent review of the educational system in Iceland (OECD, 1997) it is recommended that tuition fees should be introduced at Icelandic higher education institutions.

The new law on higher education does not make a clear distinction between higher education institutions with or without a research role. The issue of the relationship between teaching and research and the division of labour within and between institutions with regard to the teaching and research roles is likely to play an important part in future policy debates on higher education. This also relates to the expansion of postgraduate education within the country.

The fact that women are now in the vast majority in higher education in Iceland is also likely to enter future policy debates. Women tend to study in the fields of humanities and social sciences, but few of them go into technical fields and engineering. A discussion on what should be done to even out the distribution of the sexes across academic fields is thus likely.

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Eurydice
The Information Network
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**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

LIECHTENSTEIN

National description

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LIECHTENSTEIN

INTRODUCTION

The tertiary education sector is a relatively recent development in Liechtenstein. This description is therefore primarily concerned with the higher education sector in general rather than the reform of this area during the 1970s and 1980s.

The tertiary education sector in Liechtenstein comprises:

- the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein*;
- the *Internationale Akademie für Philosophie* (International Academy of Philosophy) - university level;
- the *Liechtenstein-Institut* (Liechtenstein Institute) - a research institute.

The range of courses of study and student places offered at these institutions is, however, very restricted and falls far short of actual demand. Liechtenstein very much depends on the understanding and goodwill of neighbouring countries in this regard. For this reason, agreements have been reached with Switzerland and Austria within the context of endeavours to ensure recognition of the Liechtenstein *Maturität* (upper-secondary school-leaving certificate) which guarantees students from Liechtenstein free access to Swiss and Austrian higher-education institutions.

- a) The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* was established in 1961 under the name *Abendtechnikum Vaduz* (evening technical college) on the initiative of regional industry and commerce. In 1988, it was renamed the *Liechtensteinische Ingenieurschule (LIS)* (Liechtenstein School of Engineering). Since 1993, the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* has been recognised as a European higher education institution.

The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* offers courses of study in architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and industrial IT. As a result of a restructuring process, the first courses at higher education level were launched as early as the winter semester of 1992/93. Besides the new industrial IT course, the post-diploma courses of study for persons in employment, covering the fields of process automation, economic engineering, the environment and logistics, have been continued successfully.

The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* is a state-recognised institution supported by the State, commerce and industry

- b) The International Academy of Philosophy, also known in the abbreviated form of *IAP* or simply the Academy, was founded in Schaan in 1986. Its official legal status is that of a private foundation under Liechtenstein law governing private individuals and companies. The *IAP* is a higher-education institution that offers students academic studies in philosophy as well as the opportunity of studying psychology, literature, etc. as subsidiary subjects.

Study organisation is aligned to that offered at Austrian universities. The *Diplomstudium* comprises two study stages each lasting a minimum of four semesters. Doctoral studies comprise a minimum of four further semesters and are completed with the submission of a thesis.

- c) The Liechtenstein Institute, which was established in 1986 and commenced operation in Bendern in 1987, is a higher education academic and scientific research institute as well as an academic teaching institution. It conducts and promotes research relevant to Liechtenstein in the fields of jurisprudence, political science, economics and social sciences, as well as history. Its official legal status is that of a private, non-profit-making association.

In the course of its 10 years of activity, 14 research assignments, each lasting several years, have been awarded to applicants with doctoral or post-doctoral teaching qualifications (*Habilitation*). Several research projects in the form of theses have also been supported. The research results are made accessible to the public at large by means of publications as well as through teaching, i.e. lectures, seminars and courses. In addition, the Liechtenstein Institute provides a forum for academic talks, series of lectures by different speakers, symposiums etc.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

It is only since 1992 that Liechtenstein has formally had its own appropriately modestly-sized higher education institutions and a law (*LGBI* no. 106/1992) to regulate the affairs of *Fachhochschulen*, higher education and research institutions.

This law was amended only recently, on 11 July 1997 (*LGBI* no. 133/1997), since which time the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* has been fully recognised as a *Fachhochschule* with the legal status of a foundation under public law. This is a significant step for Liechtenstein in the higher education sector.

The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* was previously subject to the Regulations Governing the Structure and Organisation of the Liechtenstein School of Engineering (*LIS*), *Fachhochschule* (*LGBI* no. 52/1993).

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

In the view of the Government, a liberally constituted education system should always allow for the establishment of private schools. This is in keeping with the intentions of Art. 16 of the Constitution and has already been put into effect accordingly for the non-higher education sector in the law governing schools. The Law on Schools (*Schulgesetz*) does, however, foresee a licensing obligation for private schools. However, the government will only grant a licence when certain restrictive criteria guaranteeing the quality of the school are met. This provision, which has proven very effective for primary and secondary schools, was extended to the higher education sector in 1992.

- a) With regard to the legal status of *Fachhochschulen*, Art. 2, Par. 1 of *LGBI* no. 107/1996 stipulates that such schools must be either institutions or foundations under public law or a legal entity under private law. This provision makes it clear that *Fachhochschulen* must display legal autonomy in the eyes of the legislature. Art. 2, Par. 2, accordingly, grants the *Fachhochschulen* the right to self-management. Furthermore, they can organise their own academic examinations, confer academic degrees and appoint their own personnel. With regard to educational mandate, the law defines autonomy as guaranteeing the freedom of research and teaching within the scope of what is ethically acceptable (Art. 3).
- b) The *IAP* was established in 1986 as a private higher-education institution for philosophy as well as a research centre. It is a private higher-education institute supported by patrons and endowments. In April 1994, a special Foundation to Support the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality of Liechtenstein was set up in Vaduz to secure and support the economic basis and cultural aura of the Academy.

The Liechtenstein Government has the supervisory right to examine compliance with relevant legal provisions as well as with the academic standards customary at European universities.

c) The Liechtenstein Institute is a private, non-profit-making and independent organisation. It has decision-making powers in relation to the awarding of research assignments, the specifying of subject areas for teaching as well as academic organisation in general. These functions and tasks are incumbent on the extended Academic Council in cooperation with the Institute's management board.

2.1. FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Financially, the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* can rely on the following income: the state contribution, tuition fees, income from further education courses and events, fees arising from technology transfer, applied research and development, as well as services, contributions based on international agreements, payments from third parties, donations, bequests and other income.

Of these different forms of income, the state contribution is and will continue to be the most important. Through the statutory mandate in the areas of further education and technology transfer, approximately one third of expenditure is covered by income from the institution's own services. Its status as a higher education institution for training parallel to employment means that increasing numbers of projects are also being financed by third parties.

The *IAP* is a foundation financed by private funds (donations, research-project funding, etc.). Tuition fees are CHF 2,500 per student per semester. Extra-mural students (*Gasthörer*) pay CHF 250 per lecture attended. The *IAP* itself has access to a number of public and private bodies which provide scholarships or study grants for particularly gifted or needy students. The State of Liechtenstein awards five scholarships under an Eastern European Aid Programme.

The Liechtenstein Institute is financed by private donations, by the State, by the local authorities and via academic support funds. Further income flows from membership contributions, lecture and course fees as well as remuneration for special assignments.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The Government exercises supervisory control over the entire education system.

The quality of teaching and research at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* is permanently assessed, internally and externally. Agencies appointed by the Government or the *Fachhochschule* Council supervise requirements, procedures and assessments at undergraduate (*Vordiplom*) and graduate (*Diplom*) examinations. Certified procedures ensure that the development and implementation of educational and other services meet the requirements of high quality.

The procedure for the evaluation of teaching and research at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* is characterised by four qualitative and quantitative criteria:

- Regular surveys (written and oral) among students and graduates.
- Surveys of employers and interest groups.
- Surveys of lecturers and assistant lecturers.
- Establishment of performance indicators (actual/target comparison).

Being a private institution, the *IAP* is itself responsible for quality control and evaluation of the various study programmes. The relevant bodies of the *IAP* (senate, board of trustees, rector, director of studies etc.) undertake the quality control of the course offer and student attainments.

At the Liechtenstein Institute, the Institute's Academic Council is responsible for quality control. This interdisciplinary body is made up of academically qualified national representatives as well as professors from Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

- a) Students now admitted to *Diplom* degree courses of study at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* are those who can furnish evidence of previous education in the form of a successfully completed apprenticeship plus the *Fachhochschulreife* (specific upper-secondary school-leaving certificate entitling entry to a *Fachhochschule*) or the *Berufsmatura* (upper vocational school leaving certificate), or the subject-specific *Hochschulreife* (*HTL, HAK*), or the general *Hochschulreife* (general upper-secondary school-leaving certificate) in conjunction with professional experience.
- b) No reform has taken place at the *IAP* in this regard. The same provisions have applied since its inauguration in 1986, i.e. requirements for entry are the successful completion of schooling with the upper-secondary school-leaving certificate (*Matura* or equivalent), possibly certificates from other higher education institutions at which the applicant has studied, two letters of recommendation from previous professors concerning the preparation required by the applicant to study philosophy, as well as a piece of written work (preferably on a philosophical topic). American students need a B.A. majoring in philosophy.
- c) Persons with higher education qualifications and possibly a post-doctoral teaching qualification (*Habilitation*) in one of the four relevant subject areas are eligible to apply for research assignments at the Liechtenstein Institute. In addition, people who can furnish proof of appropriate occupational experience and have also successfully completed a course of higher education studies may work on certain research projects at the Liechtenstein Institute on a freelance basis.

Lectures at the Liechtenstein Institute are generally public and are directed predominantly at academics, teachers of different levels, private and public sector managers, civil servants as well as persons attending adult education courses. In exceptional cases, however, classes can also be reserved for particular professional groups or other groups of persons.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

The law on grants is based on the legislation governing training assistance (*LGBI* no. 33/1972) and its amendments passed between 1974 and 1992, the decree set out in *LGBI* no. 50/1977 concerning that legislation, and the decree regarding tax relief for remuneration of apprentices (*LGBI* no. 51/1992).

To promote the training of the young in Liechtenstein and as a supplement to the training opportunities available at publicly-run schools in Liechtenstein, the State awards financial support for studies which cannot be pursued in the country itself.

Assistance is provided in the form of grants, loans and contributions towards expenses. In calculating the level of such assistance, income from employment, as well as the financial situation of parents and/or the applicants themselves is taken into account.

Citizens from EEA countries resident in Liechtenstein and citizens of Liechtenstein living abroad are entitled to educational support, provided they do not enjoy any financial benefits in their country of residence approximately equivalent to the educational assistance provided by the State of

Liechtenstein. In addition, foreign nationals can also claim educational support if their mother or spouse is a citizen of Liechtenstein, or if the applicant has been resident in Liechtenstein for at least five years. This period can be reduced to two years where the country of origin in question offers Liechtenstein citizens the same advantages.

The Government nominates a five-member Grants Commission every four years to implement the law on grants and scholarships. Its powers are defined in the law on financial support for students. Applications for support are processed by the *Schulamt* (Educational Authority).

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

5.1. COURSE PLANNING, STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

a) Established on the initiative of regional industry and commerce, the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* is interested in closely linking academic education with vocational training.

In adopting the Law on *Fachhochschulen* and Higher Education and Research Institutions (no. 106/1992) on 17 September 1992, the Government created the legal basis for converting the *LIS* into a *Fachhochschule*. Since then, the *LIS* has been continuously restructured and expanded into a *Fachhochschule*. This has been carried out in accordance with the following clear-cut principles and objectives.

- The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* is part of tertiary education. It is equivalent to a university.
- *Diplom* degree studies can be completed parallel to employment in eight semesters. Other forms of study can also be provided for in accordance with the needs of the market.
- Access to these courses of study ensues primarily via the newly introduced *Fachhochschulreife* (*Fachhochschule* entrance qualification) for persons who have obtained their *Berufsmatura* (vocational secondary school leaving certificate) or via a general (plus work experience) or subject-specific higher education entrance qualification (*Matura*).
- Practical relevance and work experience are integral components of courses of study.
- Courses of study are application-oriented.
- Further education, applied research and development, as well as transfer of technology and know-how are integral components of the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein's* education mandate.
- Great importance is attached to cooperation with other educational institutions, as well as with industry and commerce. Where possible, the intention is to institutionalise such cooperation at regional and international level.
- The teaching staff comprises full and part-time teachers, personnel from the areas of art, trades and crafts, as well as full-time assistants devoted to technology transfer.

The range of courses offered at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* has increased as follows.

Since 1961, the original course of studies in mechanical engineering was complemented by courses in architecture and civil engineering as well as post-diploma studies in computer engineering and production engineering (1988-1991).

Since 1992, an additional range of courses has been introduced in the fields of commercial computer science, in-service post-diploma studies in industrial engineering, logistics, construction management (commencing winter semester 1997/98), and environmental studies (1991-1996).

Other higher education courses offered are: innovation and technology management, environment and industry, and architecture.

In addition, various specialist lectures, courses, seminars, workshops, symposia, etc are organised.

Courses leading to the degree of *Diplom* at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* are structured in the form of full-time studies or studies parallel to employment, in keeping with the system of study-integrated practice, and generally last for a minimum of eight semesters.

The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* confers the following degrees: *Dipl. Ing. FH* (degree in engineering), *Dipl. Arch. FH* (degree in architecture), and *Dipl. Ing. Wirtschaftsinformatiker / Dipl. Ing. Wirtschaftsinformatiker FH* (degree in industrial IT).

- b) The *IAP* is a higher education institution that has offered students academic studies in philosophy since 1986, as well as the opportunity of studying the subsidiary subjects psychology (since 1994), and literature, etc.

Study organisation is aligned with that offered at Austrian universities. The *Diplomstudium* (studies leading to the *Diplom* degree) comprises two study stages each lasting a minimum of four semesters. The first study section, *Grundstudium* (basic studies), is completed by sitting the *Baccalaureat* examination. The second stage of studies, *Hauptstudium* (main studies), ends with the *Magister* examination, consisting of an academic dissertation, a written examination and an oral examination.

Doctoral studies comprise a minimum of four further semesters and are completed with the submission of a thesis. Each student must attend at least 15 classes a week in each semester, of which at least two must be in a subsidiary subject. Attendance/performance certificates (*Scheine*) must be obtained in respect of 12 classes per week for each semester. In addition, attendance/performance certificates must be submitted for six classes per week in each section of studies for one subsidiary subject.

- c) The academic departments of the Liechtenstein Institute regularly offer lectures, talks, seminars and courses relevant to Liechtenstein. However, it is not possible to obtain an academic qualification at the Institute.

5.2. TEACHING

- a) *Fachhochschule* teaching staff have a relevant university degree (some possessing doctoral and post-doctoral teaching qualifications (*Habilitation*) as well as many years of professional experience. The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* requires its teaching staff to have basic pedagogical training and to pursue further pedagogical training on an ongoing basis.
- b) The teaching staff at the Academy have a relevant university degree (some with doctoral and post-doctoral teaching qualifications) and many years of professional experience. The *IAP* requires its teaching staff to have basic pedagogical training and pursue further scientific training on an ongoing basis.
- c) Teaching at the Liechtenstein Institute is carried out by research staff, corresponding professors from foreign higher education institutions and other qualified academics. The research staff at the Liechtenstein Institute have a higher education qualification and, if possible, a post-doctoral teaching qualification (*Habilitation*).

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

By virtue of an Austrian-Liechtenstein treaty, since 1990, studies completed at the *IAP* and the academic degrees conferred by it have been recognised by Austria as being 'fully equivalent to courses of study in philosophy and degrees awarded by Austrian universities'. Liechtenstein's accession to the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1995 provides new possibilities regarding recognition of the *IAP*'s courses of study and academic qualifications in the other 23 partner countries. It is, however, incumbent on individual students to check whether and to what extent agreements ratified by their country of origin actually apply in relation to recognition of academic studies and qualifications.

With Liechtenstein's accession to the European Economic Area, the qualifications offered at the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* ensure graduates access to their respective professions and enable them to practice these professions on the same conditions as citizens throughout the entire European Economic Area.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein* designs and organises its projects and course offer with an interdisciplinary orientation and plans to expand its activities consistently towards establishing core areas of competence. It aims, in the future, to offer a range of economy-oriented courses of study with particular regional relevance. The use of multimedia resources in courses of study and a strong international orientation in teaching and research are further aims pursued by the *Fachhochschule Liechtenstein*. In addition, efforts are being made to cover more than half of total expenditure with revenue from its own services, gifts, donations, etc.

Glossary of frequently recurring acronyms

<i>LIS</i>	<i>Liechtensteinische Ingenieurschule</i> (Liechtenstein School of Engineering)
<i>IAP</i>	<i>Internationale Akademie für Philosophie</i> (International Academy of Philosophy)
<i>LGBI</i>	<i>Landesgesetzblatt</i> (State Law Gazette)



Eurydice
The Information Network
on Education in Europe

**TWO DECADES OF REFORM
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EUROPE: 1980 ONWARDS**

NORWAY

National description

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NORWAY

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Norway normally concerns students aged 19 and above, following the upper secondary school leaving examination at the age of 19. The duration of studies varies between 2 years for the shortest vocationally-oriented programmes at state colleges, to 7 years for some of the higher level degree programmes at universities.

In developing the Norwegian system of higher education, a main concern has been to design a system which is comprehensive and diverse, meaning that the approach has been and is coloured by concerns for equality, for social and geographical considerations, for quality, and for wide-ranging measures. An important aim has been to design a system with a great variety of supply both in terms of type and length of study programmes and one which has no 'dead ends', thus facilitating mobility both between institutions and between types of study for the individual student.

A brief history of higher education

Higher education in Norway does not have a long history. Due to its colonial past (four hundred years under Danish rule until 1814, immediately followed by a union with Sweden until 1905), it only goes back to the early decades of the 19th century. The first university was established in Oslo in 1811 followed by the first teacher training institutions (*seminars*) in 1826 and the 1830s, which survive to the present day. It was an important time for the promoters of Norwegian independence when Norway got its own university.

A few higher education institutions were established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it was only after World War II that the sector began to grow significantly, starting with the establishment of the University of Bergen in 1946.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a considerable expansion of the higher education sector with increased student enrolment and the establishment of Tromsø University in 1969 (making four with Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim). Regional colleges, a new kind of degree-awarding institution, were created, offering new types of study programmes in new subjects areas, as well as multi-disciplinary programmes. The regional colleges were spread out across the country, due to a general concern for local development. Parallel to this was the trend in state policy towards taking over vocational post-secondary schools from counties and municipalities, which became most pronounced in the 1970s and 1980s.

Until the early 1990s, non-university higher education institutions were subject to quite detailed state regulations. To allow more discretionary decision-making powers to be delegated to these institutions, it was considered necessary to create larger and more comprehensive institutions through reorganisation and mergers. Consequently, on 1 August 1994, 98 former regional and vocational colleges were reorganised and merged to form 26 larger state colleges, and on 1 August 1996, 7 colleges and academies of arts, crafts and design were merged into two new institutions, one in Oslo and one in Bergen. In addition, a few minor mergers have taken place.

A new law for all state higher education institutions, Act no. 22 of 12 May 1995 on Universities and Colleges, became applicable as of 1 January 1996. This law gives the institutions of higher education a considerable degree of academic and administrative autonomy, while leaving decisions on overall organisation to the Ministry.

The policy of encouraging equal opportunities with respect to access to higher education, irrespective of social, economic and/or geographic background is perhaps most strongly reflected in the legislation concerning loans and grants for students. The State Educational Loan Fund was established in 1947 to give financial assistance to students, and thereby facilitate access to higher education for young people from all walks of life. Loans and grants are awarded following Act no. 21 of 26 April 1985 on financial support to pupils and students, which was subject to subsequent amendments. The provision of student welfare (i.e. student housing, canteens, kindergartens, medical services, sports facilities and so on) is also of great importance for equality in recruitment of students to higher education, and the latest legislation in this field is Act no. 54. of 28 June 1996.

The role and structure of higher education

The role of higher education can be defined in a variety of ways, one being through the aims set for the sector by national authorities, another being through its importance as measured in terms of student numbers.

The aims of national higher education policy were defined through the parliamentary debate on the 1991 White Paper on Higher Education (*St meld nr 40 (1990-91) Fra visjon til virke*).¹ These aims have been reiterated in all the ensuing budget proposals, including the 1998 one, and are as follows:

- to contribute to using the capacities and abilities of the population in such a way that account is taken both of the interests of individuals and of the country's need for a highly educated work force;
- to improve quality in higher education and research;
- to ensure that applicants to higher education institutions are given equal treatment (with respect to access);
- to promote conditions at universities and colleges that are favourable to the development and dissemination of new knowledge;
- to use the resources of the sector more effectively;
- to reduce the time taken by students to reach graduation, so that actual study completion times correspond more closely to those formally prescribed;
- to encourage increased international cooperation in higher education and research.

Higher education in Norway is mainly provided by state institutions where tuition is free. In 1996, out of a total of 166,221 registered students, only 13,932, or 8.4%, attended private higher education institutions. There are 38 state higher education institutions in Norway, including 4 universities, 6 university colleges (national higher education institutions specialising in specific fields of study), 26 state colleges, and 2 colleges/academies of arts and crafts. In addition, there are 26 private higher education institutions with recognised study programmes, of which 19 receive state funding for (a part of) their activities. In the period 1990 to 1996, the number of higher level degrees awarded by universities increased from 892 to 2,294.

As a result of the growth in enrolment and graduation, it is estimated that the proportion of the workforce with a higher education background will increase from today's 25% to around 36% in 2010, thus increasing the relative impact of the sector on the workforce.

In addition to the institutions it consists of, the structure of higher education in Norway can be described in terms of the degree system. The most important feature is that all state higher education institutions, and some of the private ones, can award the first, or lower level, degree called *cand. mag.*

¹ For in-depth information see 'Recommendation to the *Storting* of 13 June 1991 by the Standing Committee of the *Storting*' (*Innst S nr 230 (1990-91)*).

(*candidata/candidatus magisterii*), on the basis of a large variety of study programmes normally requiring 3 1/2 to 4 years of study. Inter-institutional student mobility is encouraged through the degree system, and through the legal requirement that all institutions under the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act must recognise each other's study programmes.

1. LEGISLATION FOR CHANGE

1.1. BACKGROUND - LEGISLATION ON HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE 1980

The first university act in Norway dates from 1824, and was replaced by a new act in 1905 and in 1955. Before this, the first three universities, Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim and most of the university colleges (i.e. national higher education institutions that can award doctoral degrees in their respective fields of specialisation) used to have their own acts.

It is not, and has not been, significant for the activities or the status of state higher education institutions whether they were established by a separate law or by royal decree. In later years, in a concern for simplification of legislation, the laws relating to individual institutions have gradually been replaced by more comprehensive laws, applicable to several institutions.

Act no. 58 of 19 June 1970 on examinations and degrees constituted a first step towards a more integrated system of higher education, in that it introduced common legislation for the regulation of examinations and degrees at the universities and the university colleges.

Through Royal Decree of 20 February 1981, the 1970 Act on examinations and degrees was extended to the regional colleges, the colleges of engineering, teacher education, social work, journalism and library studies, and a few years later to the conservatories of music, as well as to the colleges of arts, crafts and design (the latter by Royal Decree of 19 May 1989). These extensions meant that the institutions concerned became degree-awarding higher education institutions, and that completed study programmes, examinations and degrees from these institutions were recognised and approved by all the other institutions under the law.

1.2. LEGISLATION ON STATE HIGHER EDUCATION AFTER 1980

At the end of the 1980s, a decision was taken to review various aspects of higher education, and three different Royal Commissions submitted reports on the following areas: i) the national structure and organisation of higher education and research, ii) teacher training, and iii) conditions for foreign students in Norway. The most influential of these was the Royal Commission on Universities and Colleges, set up by Royal Decree of 22 July 1987, in order to assess political priorities, aims, and the overall national structure and organisation of higher education and research for the years 2000 to 2010.

The result of the work of the Royal Commission was submitted on 9 September 1988 in the form of a Green Paper (*NOU 1988:28 Med viten og vilje*). It was widely circulated, and contained proposals for a large number of changes. The most important of these proposals concerned the establishment of Network Norway (see section 6: Internationalisation), the merging of institutions, and the delegation of the right to appoint staff from the Ministry to higher education institutions.

The 1989 Universities and University Colleges Act

The Government decided to propose a new law for university sector institutions on the basis of the above-mentioned Green Paper, a law which would leave much scope for institutional self-governance, while at the same time assuring national authorities sufficient decision-making power. The Universities

and University Colleges Act (the University Act) was formally approved on 16 June 1989 and put into effect on 1 January 1990. It applied to the 4 universities (in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø) and to the 6 university colleges, i.e. the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, the Norwegian College of Agriculture, the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, the Norwegian College of Physical Education and Sport, the Norwegian State Academy of Music, and the Oslo School of Architecture. It replaced 9 other laws, including laws applicable to individual institutions and the 1970 Act on examinations and degrees.

The 1970 Act on examinations and degrees was replaced by Chapter 11 of the University Act, 'On degrees and examinations' which, by Royal Decree of 17 January 1990, was also extended to all the colleges previously subject to the 1970 Act on examinations and degrees. The process of upgrading non-university higher education institutions to degree-awarding institutions was continued under the new law and, one year later (in 1991), a new royal decree made Chapter 11 of the University Act applicable to the maritime colleges, the college of hotel management, and the colleges of nursing and of other health/paramedical professions.

The 1991 White Paper on Higher Education

A new Government took office in November 1990, in which Professor Gudmund Hernes, former head of the Royal Commission on Universities and Colleges, became Minister of Education, Research and Church Affairs. Already in June 1991, the Government had presented a new White Paper on Higher Education (*St.meld. nr. 40 for 1990-91 Fra visjon til virke. Om h gre utdanning*).

The most important proposals of the 1991 White Paper on Higher Education were:

- the establishment of Network Norway, a national research and higher education network based on the principles of specialisation, cooperation, and communication;
- a reduction in the number of colleges in the non-university sector from around 110 to about 30, by reorganising and merging existing colleges;
- an increase in the numbers of those going on to higher education from upper secondary school to about 40% of annual cohorts;
- a strengthening of core school subjects in teacher training, without extending the length of study;
- the extension of the length of study from 1/2 to 1 year in practical and didactic training for future teachers graduating from universities and university-type college studies;
- increased decision-making power and responsibility for the management units within the system of higher education, and development of better evaluation procedures;
- the creation of a National Academic Information Centre (NAIC);
- stronger emphasis on internationalisation of higher education, for instance through an increase in the number of short-term student exchanges between Norwegian and foreign universities and colleges;
- the creation of more similar systems of qualification requirements and titles for teaching staff at institutions in the university and non-university sectors.

The Standing Committee on Education and Church Affairs of the *Storting* (National Assembly) presented its Recommendation on the White Paper on 13 June 1991 (*in Innst. S. nr. 230 for 1990-91*). The *Storting* supported most of the proposals, and asked the Government to present a proposal for a common law for all of higher education, including both the university and the non-university sectors.

As a consequence of a follow-up decision made by Royal Decree of 7 May 1993, and as preparation for the new law on higher education and the development of Network Norway, the non-university sector was reorganised as of 1 August 1994, a process through which 98 regional and vocational colleges were merged into 26 state colleges.

Royal Commission on Legislation in Higher Education

On 7 February 1992, the Government appointed a Royal Commission with the task of proposing a new act for universities, university colleges, regional and vocational colleges (i.e. all the state higher education institutions except the small art colleges and academies). The 7 Commission members, of which 2 were students, were all representatives of the higher education sector. The Commission was chaired by a professor of law, Professor Jan Fridtjof Bernt of the University of Bergen. The Commission presented its report on 28 June 1993, (*NOU 1993:24 Lov om universiteter og høgskoler* - Universities and Colleges Act).

The new act was approved by the *Storting* on 6 April 1995 and sanctioned by the King on 12 May 1995. The new Universities and Colleges Act entered into force on 1 January 1996 and, from the same date, the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1989 was repealed. The most important objective in drafting the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act was the establishment of a common legal basis for the university and the non-university sectors. In June 1997, an amendment to the 1995 Act also made it applicable to the two art colleges/academies (*kunsthøgskoler*).

1.3. LEGISLATION ON PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION

In addition to the above-mentioned legislation on state institutions, there is also separate legislation on private higher education. Although never very important in numbers, there have been private institutions at various levels in Norway since the mid-19th century. Comprehensive separate legislation for private higher education was first introduced through the Act of 11 July 1986 no. 53 concerning the recognition of study programmes at private higher education institutions and the state funding of these institutions. The aim of the 1986 Law, the implementation of which is entirely in the hands of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, was to give more security to private higher education institutions, particularly academically, by introducing a system for the recognition of study programmes at such institutions. Under this law, if a study programme at a private institution is the same level as one provided at a state higher education institution, the programme should be approved by state institutions, and the graduates awarded the same title as those graduating from comparable programmes at state institutions. In terms of financial support, private higher education institutions may only receive state funding for recognised study programmes, but they are not automatically entitled to such support.

1.4. TIMESCALE AND MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION

During the past decade, the legislation on higher education has undergone great changes. The Universities and University Colleges Act of 16 June 1989 constituted an important step towards a rationalisation of higher education legislation, in that it replaced 9 other laws, whereas Act no 22 of 12 May 1995 on Universities and Colleges can be seen as a possible final step towards such rationalisation, in that it is the first common law for all state higher education institutions, universities, university colleges, state colleges and, from 1997, art colleges/academies.

The merging and reorganisation of the 98 regional and vocational colleges into 26 state colleges in 1994, as well as the merging of the 7 academies and colleges of arts, crafts and design into 2 new institutions (*kunsthøgskoler*) in 1996 was part of the process of preparing the institutions of the non-university sector administratively and managerially for the increased self-governance and increased scope for discretionary decision-making powers that were to come with the 1995 Act. At the same time, a structured framework for cooperation and communication among the institutions is gradually being built through the linking of the institutions in an integrated network, Network Norway.

2. MANAGEMENT, FINANCE AND CONTROL

All state higher education institutions are administered by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs and follow the provisions laid down in Act no. 22 of 12 May 1995 on Universities and Colleges, as well as the general laws, agreements and provisions applicable to all state institutions. The Universities and Colleges Act lists the duties of the board and of the director, and in fact explicitly provides for discretionary decisions in strategic policy, general management, daily administration, and the management of teaching and research, on the condition that laws, regulations, and national policies are adhered to.

The system of governance at the state higher education institutions is laid down in the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act. Following this act, the institutions have been governed by a board and, as a rule, also by a university or college council. (The Ministry may, however, exempt an institution from the obligation of having such a council. In such cases, the role of this council must be taken care of by other bodies at the institution.)

The university or college board is the highest governing body of the institution. It is responsible for maintaining a high standard of academic activity, and for ensuring that the institution is run efficiently and in accordance with the applicable laws, regulations and provisions, and within the limits and targets laid down by the national authorities. The board should draw up the strategy for the institution's education, research and other academic activities, and make plans for its scientific development in accordance with the goals established by the authorities for the sector and for the institution.

The university/college board has 9, 11, or 13 members, i.e. the rector, the pro rector, between 2 and 5 members elected from among the academic staff, one or 2 members elected from among the technical and administrative staff, 2 or 3 members elected from among the students, and from 2 to 4 external members. The rector is the chairman of the board. On behalf of the board, the rector has overall responsibility for the institution's activities, managing and supervising them.

External board members and their deputies are nominated in equal numbers by the institution's own council and by the County Council of the county in which the institution is located. The Ministry appoints the members and their deputies.

The university or college council advises the board on matters relating to the overall development of the institution's activities, or raises important questions of principle relating to them. Such questions are, for example, the long-term planning of activities, the guidelines and principles for the use of the resources of the institution, the long-term and annual budget proposals to be submitted by the institution to the Ministry, the principles underlying the development of new study programmes, and major organisational changes.

The board, the rector, and the pro rector may ask for the advice of the council on any question. On request, the council can also have any matter submitted to it for comment, with the exception of appointments and other specific questions concerning individuals.

The importance of the council lies in its representativeness of the institution as a whole. The intention of the legislature was that the council, being more proportionally representative of the various groups of students and professionals (academic, technical, administrative) at the institutions, should have an important function as a forum for discussions of principles, especially at the newly reorganised and merged institutions.

It is worth noting that students must have at least two representatives in all collegiate bodies that are given decision-making powers, unless the delegating body unanimously - i.e. including the student representatives - decides otherwise. The students of an institution can establish a student body to safeguard the interests of the students, and to present their views to the board and to the council. Similarly, students can also establish student bodies at faculty and/or basic unit (department/institute) level, if deemed necessary. The student bodies are legally entitled to be heard on all questions relating to students at the level concerned.

Higher education institutions appoint their own staff. Provisions relating to the appointment of staff to academic, technical and administrative posts are laid down in the Universities and Colleges Act. This act also prescribes adaptation of the provisions of the Civil Service Act (Act no 3 of 4 March 1983) relating to appointment procedures, dismissal, notice, suspension or disciplinary punishment. In addition, following consultations with the trade unions of the sector, the Ministry has made rules concerning the qualification and assessment criteria for appointment to the various categories of academic posts, which are valid for all of the higher education institutions (Ordinance of 1 February 1995, in Circular F-14-95 on Common Appointments Structure). There cannot be any deviation from academic qualifications requirements. Appointments to academic posts are made on the basis of expert assessment in the light of the requirements stated in the job advertisement and the job description. Both sexes should be represented among the experts.

For internal control at the institutions, the university or college board has the overall responsibility. Outside the institutions, the Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs, other Ministries, the Office of the Auditor General, as well as the *Storting's* Ombudsman for Public Administration and the Office for the Gender Equality, Ombud, all have control functions.

All higher education institutions report directly to the Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs for all their activities.

2.1. FINANCING OF INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutions are funded directly by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, generally in the form of framework allocations. The institutions have a large degree of freedom concerning detailed internal allocations and expenditure, as long as the set goals (the stipulated levels of activity) are achieved, and they are free to transfer allocated state funds between budget items within the limits laid down in the relevant general regulations for state institutions. The total amount of funding to be granted directly by the State is determined by the *Storting* as part of the annual budget (approximately NOK 12,950 million in 1998), and is meant to cover most of the expenditure necessary for the running of the institutions. All institutions make annual budget proposals to the Ministry, including activity reports, and report their expenditure on a regular basis. As from 1991, the budgetary reports from the state higher education institutions are transmitted electronically.

With the Royal Decree of 26 January 1996, a new set of regulations became applicable for the financial management of state funds, implying more specific and strict requirements concerning the management, reporting and control of funds for all state institutions, including those of higher education.

Research, development work and dissemination of knowledge are defined as inherent activities of all higher education institutions, and the freedom of institutions concerning the content of research is described in the Universities and Colleges Act. Funding for research is thus part of the annual framework allocation to the institutions from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. In addition, all the higher education institutions may apply for additional research funds for specific projects from the Research Council of Norway and other research institutes.

2.2. QUALITY CONTROL AND EVALUATION

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs is responsible for monitoring academic aspects and state funding of private higher education institutions.

As far as evaluation of quality is concerned, higher education institutions have the main responsibility for quality evaluation and assurance at their own institution, including evaluation of teaching, research, other academic activities and the learning environment in general. As of 1998, a new advisory body, the Network Norway Council, will be responsible for the coordination of evaluation and quality assessment in higher education.

3. ACCESS AND WASTAGE

The main political aims of the 1990s concerning admissions to higher education are set out in the Proposition to the *Storting* no. 67 (1995/96) of 10 May 1996 on admission to universities in the academic year 1996/97:

- to admit the largest possible number of qualified applicants (i.e. applicants that satisfy the minimum admission requirements), in accordance with individual wishes and the country's need for a highly educated workforce;
- to ensure the quality of study programmes and learning environments;
- to enable a larger proportion of students to complete their studies within the prescribed study periods.

Before 1990, admission regulations and requirements varied quite significantly between fields of study and types of higher education institutions. In order to simplify procedures and information for potential applicants, as well as to improve the overall coordination of student admission, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (*Samordna opptak*) was established in 1991. Starting with applications for teacher education and social work, the scope of its activities has been gradually enlarged and, at present, the Admissions Service processes applications to all state institutions (except those of art) and some of the private higher education institutions. After applications are registered and processed by the Admissions Service, higher education institutions assess those from students whose first choice is to follow programmes at their particular institution.

The early 1990s saw a gradual simplification of rules and procedures relating to admission to higher education, and, under the Regulation of 20 November 1995, a general matriculation standard was introduced with effect from the academic year 1996/97. A possible final step in this process was reached when, in June 1997, the *Storting* approved a White Paper on the ranking of applicants which will apply to all state higher education institutions from the academic year 2000/2001. (Exceptions will only be made for study programmes requiring special entrance tests, for instance in the arts.)

For many fields of study in higher education admission is competitive, since demand exceeds the number of places available. Provisions regarding a *numerus clausus* for specific study programmes or faculties are open to revision on a yearly basis, and are decided by the *Storting* for universities, and by the Government for colleges.

It is seen as an objective by the Government and *Storting* alike, however, that lower level degree studies in the humanities and in natural and social sciences at universities and colleges should be open to all qualified applicants on a national basis. This system is called 'national access' and was introduced for universities with effect from the academic year 1995/96. Since then, all qualified applicants have been given a place at the kind of faculty they applied to, but not necessarily at the university of their choice.

This is to ensure access for all and to avoid too much pressure on the most popular institutions. Since 1996/97, the system has also applied to state colleges teaching the relevant subjects.

With the developments in application and admission to higher education in Norway in the 1990s, overall student enrolment has increased. This is reflected both in the number of applicants to higher education and in the number of students admitted.

In 1997, the number of applicants to higher education dropped significantly. This is partly due to a reduced number of 19 year-olds in the population (down by 2,420 from 1996 to 1997 - dropping from 55,286 to 52,866), and partly to a reform of upper secondary education (Reform 94) which has led to the greatly increased popularity of vocational courses. At the same time, the total capacity of the sector has increased, thus reducing the number of qualified applicants without any offer of a place from 25,514 (1994) to 5,272 (1997).

Entrance delay: 'backwater'

Many Norwegian students do not go on to universities or colleges directly after leaving upper secondary school, and the Norwegian student population is therefore relatively old. In 1996, 25.2% of applicants to higher education were over 24 years old, compared with 27% in 1995.

In recent years, this phenomenon, caused by the regulations concerning admission to higher education, has been counteracted at state colleges by the creation of a quota reserved for applicants between the ages of 19 and 21. As for medicine and veterinary science, there is also a quota for applicants with original school diplomas, i.e. with no improved exams results from upper secondary school.

'Through-flow' (progression) of students in higher education

A recognised problem concerning the overall productivity of the higher education system is that a lot of students at universities, particularly those undertaking programmes of a broader nature (the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and law), take more than the prescribed time to complete their studies. This is partly due to students taking up paid work in addition to their studies, but it could also be due to aspects of university organisation or the size of the student population.

To counteract these problems, and in order to encourage better productivity in the sector, some allocations based on student performance have been introduced into the state funding of higher education institutions. Since 1995, universities thus compete for their respective share of a reserved sum, (NOK 150 million in 1995, NOK 200 million in 1996, NOK 250 million in 1997, and NOK 350 million in 1998) allocated on the basis of the average number of credits obtained by students at each of the universities.

4. FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Data and information in this regard is available in the comparative analysis by the European Commission, Eurydice, *Key Topics in Education, Volume 1, Financial Support for Students in Higher Education in Europe, 1999*.

5. CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

The recognition of professional and educational programmes and of degrees is regulated by Act no 22 of 12 May 1995 on Universities and Colleges. The degrees and titles that each institution can award,

their professional and educational programmes, as well as the duration and specific requirements concerning the breadth and depth of these are all laid down in royal decrees, of which the most important is Royal Decree of 10 May 1996.

At **state colleges** shorter, vocationally-oriented study programmes can lead to one of the specific college degrees:

- *høgskolekandidat* (college graduate, 2-4 years), or
- *høgskoleingeniør* (college engineer, 3 years).

All the state colleges may also confer the *cand. mag.* degree for combinations of two or more of these degrees or their other study programmes, on the basis of four years of study (see university sector, below). Some state colleges in addition have higher level degree programmes, mostly in cooperation with universities, and professional degree programmes in business administration (4 years) and engineering (5 years).

In the **university sector**, universities offer degree programmes at three levels in the humanities, social and natural sciences:

- The lower level university degree, *cand. mag.*, normally obtained after 3 1/2 to 4 years of full-time study.
- The higher level university degrees generally consisting of 1 1/2 to 2 additional years of study, including the writing of a thesis - *cand. philol.* (humanities), *cand. scient.* (natural sciences), *cand. polit.* (social sciences), *cand. san.* (paramedical/health education).

In some subjects, there is an alternative higher level degree with a more comprehensive thesis called *mag. art.*

- The doctoral degree programmes, consisting of 3 years of study after completion of the higher level degree, leads to the degrees *dr. artium* (humanities), *dr. scient.* (natural sciences), and *dr. polit.* (social sciences). There is also a traditional general doctoral degree, *dr. philos.*

In addition, some university faculties and the university colleges offer professional degree programmes requiring 4 to 6 years of study, eg. in agricultural sciences, business administration, economics, psychology, medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, theology, as well as 3-year doctoral degree programmes in these subjects (excepting *dr. oecon.* which is 2 years).

As a means of facilitating and encouraging student mobility between higher education institutions in the country, degrees (most often *cand. mag.*) can be conferred on the basis of studies undertaken at a combination of higher education institutions. This system generally implies reciprocal recognition of study programmes between higher education institutions based on prescribed study times.

Act no. 22 of 12 May 1995 on Universities and Colleges does not regulate teaching activities in much detail. On the contrary, it states clearly that 'institutions cannot be instructed as to the content of their teaching, research, or artistic or scientific development work'. The only related provision is that the institutions to which the law applies should 'offer higher education based on the most advanced scientific research, artistic development and empirical knowledge', and cooperate in Network Norway.

5.1. NETWORK NORWAY

Following the reorganisation of 98 regional and vocational colleges into 26 state colleges in 1994 and the coming into effect of the Universities and Colleges Act on 1 January 1996, all higher education in Norway is offered within a common framework of research-based training. This meant a change, especially for the vocational colleges (colleges of education, engineering, nursing, social work etc.) which existed until 1994. They became part of larger institutions, merged with other subjects/units with a much stronger research tradition and corresponding qualifications among the staff. The resulting tensions are still visible at different levels. Concerning the subjects themselves, such tensions concern the degree of vocational compared to academic orientation. Within the institutions where they are taught, they relate to matters such as the allocation of research funds to different subjects. Tensions between different types of institutions are also evident, especially with regard to the scope and types of research to be carried out by state colleges rather than universities.

All the institutions are regarded as part of one system, known as Network Norway, and are required by law to cooperate and complement one another. The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs plays a coordinating role by deciding the overall distribution of study programmes as well as setting targets for admissions and overall student numbers. With relatively few exceptions, the requirements for admission are the same irrespective of course and type of institution, although it may of course be necessary to have better grades to get into some courses than others. The same types of academic posts and titles are used in all institutions, with identical requirements, criteria and procedures for appointment, although, as might be expected, there is a much higher percentage of professors in the university sector than in the state colleges.

5.2. INTRODUCTION OF ORGANISED RESEARCH TRAINING

Another reform which should be mentioned is the introduction of organised research training as the final step in the degree structure, which took place on a large scale around 1990. It happened for the same reasons in Norway as in other European countries. People working towards doctoral degrees were previously largely left to themselves and consequently took far too long to finish (if they finished at all). Their knowledge of subject areas outside their own narrow specialisation was unpredictable and there was insufficient financial support available. During the 1980s, both the institutions and the authorities realised that unless something was done, there would soon be a serious shortage of candidates for academic jobs. In 1991, the *Storting* decided to increase the number of junior research fellowships by 180 per year over the following four years. As a result, the number of doctoral degrees undertaken per year has more than doubled since 1987, when the total was 253. At the same time, the percentage of women candidates has been steadily increasing.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION

In accordance with the White Paper on higher education (*St.meld. nr. 40, 1990-91 Fra visjon til virke. Om høgre utdanning*) Chapter 6, one of the overall aims of the sector is to intensify international cooperation within the field of higher education and research, also stated in the budget proposal for 1999 (*St.prp. nr 1, 1998-99*). The purpose of cooperating with international institutions of higher education and research is to strengthen the quality of Norwegian research and higher education. By participating in research environments abroad with a strong qualitative orientation, Norwegian research environments and enterprises seek to benefit from new knowledge and technology.

Internationalisation in the higher education sector includes the following elements (*St.meld. nr. 40, 1990-91, Chapter 6*):

- student exchanges;

- curriculum development;
- knowledge of international affairs;
- making use of international literature;
- international research cooperation;
- profile of study programmes;
- shorter studies abroad as an integral part of Norwegian study programmes;
- agreements/contracts with foreign higher education institutions on student and teacher exchanges;
- a simple and comparable system of grades and degrees.

Participation in the EU programmes on education and training, such as Socrates and Leonardo, is important in the internationalisation process of universities and colleges since it may nurture future positive attitudes towards international cooperation and help build useful alliances.

Although the evidence shows that institutions have put internationalisation on the agenda, there is still more to be done before the overall aims above are met.

6.1. PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

In order for the Ministry to obtain more up-to-date information on the internationalisation of higher education in Norway, the *Norsk institutt for studier av forskning og utdanning* (The Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education), *NIFU*, has been asked to undertake a study of the internationalisation process at universities and colleges in the course of 1998. In this context, 4 universities, 6 university colleges, 26 state colleges, and 7 private colleges were asked (in March 1998) to update their data on their international student and teacher exchange programmes as well as research contracts and activities. Institutional differences regarding registration routines have caused some problems in obtaining the exact figures on individual cooperative research and exchange programmes. In addition to Socrates and Leonardo, institutions were asked to report on their cooperation within these other programmes:

- Nordplus: a kind of Erasmus programme for Nordic students financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.
- QUOTA Programme: a special programme introduced in 1994 to enable citizens of certain Central and Eastern European and developing countries to study in Norway with financial support from the State Education Loan Fund on specific conditions. The programme has a fixed ceiling for the number of students eligible for support.
- NUFU, *Det norske universitetsråds utvalg for utviklingsrelatert forskning og utdanning* (Norwegian Council of Universities' Committee for Development Research and Cooperation): supports institutional cooperation between universities, university colleges and research institutions in Norway and in developing countries.
- NORAD (Norwegian Agency of Development Cooperation): concerns programmes with developing countries.
- Central & Eastern Europe Programme: mainly a bilateral programme to promote democracy and sustainable economic development.
- Barents Programme: part of the Central & Eastern Europe Programme focusing on bilateral cooperation with the Russian part of the Barents Region and some multinational projects.

The institutions were also asked to indicate the number of students sent and received through the above cooperative programmes. It should be noted that exact numbers for 1997 are difficult to obtain due to the institutions' various registration routines. Furthermore, some institutions gave numbers for 1997/98.

In addition, many students are travelling outside the formalised programmes, and consequently normally not registered.

At the university colleges, the number of Socrates students going abroad balances the number of incoming students. The Norwegian College of Agriculture is the only higher education institution participating in sending and receiving students through the stipendium programme NORAD, and this is the institution's main share of student exchange. Regarding state colleges, more students are going abroad than coming to Norway. Two of the colleges, Oslo College and Agder College, are characterised by a very high student mobility within the Socrates programmes. The most active college within the Nordplus programme is Stavanger College, followed by Oslo College and Bergen College. Stavanger College is most active in the Central and Eastern Europe programme, and Narvik College within the QUOTA programme. Concerning the private colleges, most Erasmus students come to the Norwegian School of Management. The Norwegian College of Mission does not participate in Socrates or Nordplus, but is at the top of the list regarding QUOTA students, due to its long standing cooperation with higher education institutions in developing countries.

6.2. RESEARCH COOPERATION

Norway fully participated in the EU's Fourth Framework Programme regarding research and an evaluation concluded that this participation had been beneficial. Industry is getting more and more involved in the projects and businesses are participating in one third of them. Most Norwegian research contracts are concluded with Eastern Europe and developing countries, according to an NIFU survey. Only four bilateral contracts have been signed with Nordic partners. The extensive cooperation between Norwegian researchers and research institutions in the US is normally not formalised in contracts, and consequently difficult to confirm by statistics.

Cooperation contracts with developing countries dominate among the university colleges and the Norwegian College of Agriculture is in the lead. 4 out of 6 university colleges have no formalised cooperation contracts at the institutional level. Furthermore, it should be noticed that 30% of the contracts are multilateral. Regarding state colleges, formal cooperation is mainly focused on other European higher education institutions. 81 out of 116 international cooperative agreements on research are signed with Nordic and European partners. As to the character of state colleges' cooperation with US institutions, it is more formalised than that of the universities and the research colleges. Only 10% are multilateral agreements.

6.3. INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMMES, DIPLOMAS AND DEGREES

With growing internationalisation in higher education, efforts are made to facilitate the transfer of diplomas and course credits. Consequently, most Norwegian higher education institutions have implemented, or are implementing, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) within Socrates/Erasmus.

In addition, special courses have been created for the purpose of internationalisation. At Norwegian universities and university colleges, Master's programmes are being introduced for that reason (the normal degree system does not involve such a degree). So far, the Master's programmes have been developed primarily to accommodate QUOTA students from the Third World and Eastern Europe.

Thirteen Master's programmes have been established at the University of Oslo (*UiO*) of which three are reserved for QUOTA students, one for Erasmus students, and 8 for Norwegian students. The *UiO* is cooperating with three Norwegian universities and a number of foreign institutions concerning in-depth studies on Master's programmes' for Norwegian students. The same university is collaborating on

various subjects with approximately 15 institutions participating in EU programmes. These cooperative projects have contributed to new study programmes at the *UiO*, and to common study programmes at the *UiO* and the partner institutions. Research, teacher and student exchanges, as well as student placements at the *UiO* for candidates from the cooperating institutions, are included in these programmes.

At the University of Bergen (*UiB*), 27 Master's programmes have been established, of which two are open to Norwegian students as continuing education programmes for doctors and dentists respectively. A number of the Master's programmes are copies of the Norwegian *hovedfag* (main subject at postgraduate level), both in terms of structure and content. Each faculty decides to which category of students M.Phil. and M.Sc. degrees are awarded, but a prerequisite is enrolment on a programme delivered in English.

Seven Master's programmes have been established at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (*NTNU*), of which six are reserved for QUOTA students and for NORAD scholarship holders, and one is open to Norwegian students. The *NTNU* is also cooperating with one Norwegian and one foreign institution on Master's programmes in technology management. At the University of Tromsø (*UiTø*) eight Master's programmes are established, and they are all open also to Norwegian students. State colleges and private colleges do not normally have permission to offer Master's programmes, but two state colleges have been granted it as part of an experiment, and there are some Master's programme options which have been established through cooperation with foreign higher education institutions. A survey reveals that several institutions are considering or planning to establish Master's programmes.

6.4. CURRICULAR REFORMS

The largest curriculum changes in connection with internationalisation were initiated through the old Erasmus programme with the curricular development in subjects like law, social science and geology. In general, internationalisation has led to curriculum changes, but to a varying degree depending on the institution. It should be noted, however, that there is a growing tendency to make the curriculum more international.

At the *UiO*, the influence on the internationalisation of curriculum is in particular due to the QUOTA programmes introduced in 1994, which made institutions offer programmes delivered in English at graduate and postgraduate levels. These programmes are interdisciplinary and mainly focused on development and/or culture (presenting Norwegian culture) and they often have comparative elements. Curriculum changes have also taken place at the *UiB*. These changes are mainly related to the Socrates programme. To some extent, a special teaching programme in English has been developed to meet the needs of exchange students (Scandinavian Area Studies). An increase in the number of courses and subjects offered in English has taken place. Furthermore, more courses and subjects are tailored towards foreign students and the implementation of ECTS.

Internationalisation has also influenced the curricula at the *NTNU* and the *UiTø*. The extent to which other higher education institutions are becoming more internationalised varies from institution to institution, not least because of differences in subject areas. However, many institutions have made adjustments or have established special courses to meet the needs of a more diversified and international student population.

The extent of provision for foreign students varies from one institution to another. Such provision may include language courses, lodging, special information meetings, courses in Norwegian culture and history and the assignment of a sponsor or mentor.

7. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

The student population in Norway increased by 68% from approximately 103,000 students in 1988 to 173,000 students in 1997, due to temporary increased unemployment in the early 1990s as well as a change in general attitudes towards undertaking higher education. As demand for higher education seems to be flattening out or even decreasing, the present challenges for the sector are less concerned with growth, and more with capacity adjustments in various fields, consolidation of the new institutional structures, further development of Network Norway, and measures to ensure quality education.

Norway's present overall capacity in higher education is enough to accommodate roughly 50% of annual cohorts for 6 years. The policy at the moment is to achieve stabilisation at approximately the present level, so that increases in admission to some study programmes should, at least to a certain extent be off-set by reductions in others. In terms of available places, Norway has developed a sufficient overall capacity in higher education, though adjustments will be necessary to regulate the prevailing mismatch between demand and provision for a number of vocational programmes. In order to develop an improved basis for decisions in this area, the Government presented a White Paper in spring 1999 on the capacity needs in higher education until the year 2010. The discussion will not be based on forecasts, as experience has shown that these tend to fail, but rather on rougher needs estimates based on the labour market, demographic developments and modest economic growth.

Based on a Green Paper of 1 October 1997 called *New Competence*, the Government presented a White Paper on lifelong learning to the *Storting* in spring 1998. Higher education institutions should therefore be preparing to participate in the forthcoming reform of continuing education and training for adults.

From 1998, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs has been advised by a special body, the Network Norway Council, on a more permanent basis on questions relating to the development of higher education, in particular on long-term cross-institutional and national issues. The activities of the Council mainly relate to the distribution of disciplines and study programmes between higher education institutions, quality assessment in higher education, academic assessment of applications for the recognition of private higher education offers, and information on higher education in general.

The changes in Norwegian higher education in the past decade have been important, with a new institutional structure, a large increase in student enrolment and a new legal framework. The Government therefore sees the need to discuss the future developments and perspectives for the sector in a larger context. In spring 1998, a new Royal Commission on higher education was appointed to analyse the situation for Norwegian universities and colleges as institutions of teaching and of research after the year 2000. The Commission is looking at aspects other than those concerning institutional structure and Network Norway. It is concentrating on the need for change in the higher education sector in the light of legal requirements as well as the new demands of students and society at large. The Commission is focusing, in particular, on measures to promote quality in both teaching and research, and discussing requirements deriving from a more pronounced policy of lifelong learning (cf. *New Competence* above). Moreover, the Commission will consider the desirability, expressed in the OECD report on the first years of tertiary education, of closer links between the education system and industry. Possible changes in the degree system and measures to improve the progression ('through-flow') of students will also be discussed, as well as capacity needs in various fields on the basis of the forthcoming White Paper. The Commission will be expected to finalise its main report in spring 2000. In addition, the Commission was asked to submit a special report on the economic and legislative framework regulating higher education institutions' accessing of additional funding through teaching, research and development activities, and their cooperation with research institutes and the institutions or organisations from which they earn such funds. The latter report is to be submitted in spring 1999.

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