

SURVEY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

This purpose of this survey is to present, as a service to members and others interested, concise information about the systems of higher education in countries where IMHE has members. By 1 July 2004 the drafts concerning 16 of the 35 concerned countries had been checked by national expertise and could thus be presented here. When the surveys of further countries have gone through the same procedure, the current version of the material will be amended.

For each country, as far as it has been possible to retrieve, information is presented about

- Higher Education structure
- Institutional system
- Admission requirements
- Student evaluation
- Main legal framework
- Public and private sector
- Finance systems
- Tuition fees and student maintenance
- Governance
- Authorities and organisations
- Quality Assessment

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AUSTRIA

Higher education structure

University sector

Austria has fifteen universities of sciences and six universities of art and music. Since 1999, foreign universities and private Austrian institutions can apply for accreditation as a private university (see Private institutions, below). Until now, seven private universities have been accredited.

Non-university sector

The *Fachhochschulen* are more professionally oriented than the more pre-professional scientific and artistic university sector. The scope of their study programmes, which originally limited to technology and economics, has been widened. Practical training is part of the education. Graduates, after 7-8 semesters, are entitled to enrol in doctoral programmes at universities. Accreditation of a study programme is decided by the *Fachhochschule* Council.

The non-university sector also comprises Colleges and Institutes of Education, of Religious Education, of Vocational Training and of Agricultural and Forestry Education, of Social Work and for Medical Technicians and Midwifery. College training courses usually take three years.

Continuing education sector

The University for Continuing Education Krems is the centre for continuing education offering postgraduate further and continuing education. It is funded by the federal government and the provincial government of Lower Austria.

Legal framework

The first important law in modern times was the University Organisation Law of 1975. Among other things, it gave students and staff places in the collegial decision-making bodies.

With the 1993 University Organisation Act (UOG '93), autonomy through decentralisation and deregulation was increased.

In 1994 legislation introducing a new vocationally oriented HE sector comprising *Fachhochschulen* was adopted.

The University Study Law of 1997 (UniStG '97) meant more autonomy, deregulation and decentralised competence for the design of study programmes. An amendment to the law in 1999 provided the basis for the introduction of the bachelor and master degrees in accordance with the intention of the Bologna declaration and its urge for the development of a European higher education space.

Schools of Art and Music were upgraded to universities of the arts in 1998 with the enactment of the Universities of the Arts Organisation Act. The purpose was to achieve more flexible study opportunities, broader pre-professional education, and reduced duration of studies.

The University Law 2002 introduced full autonomy in the whole HEI-sector, global budgets and performance contracts for three year periods. Universities are now judicially independent, their staff is no longer civil servants and the institutions are expected to become more managerially oriented. They shall also be able to diversify their funding arrangements.

Furthermore, three special medical universities were created by separation of the medical faculties from their old universities. Tuition fees were first introduced in 2001, and their existence was confirmed by the University Law 2002.

Degree structure

The University Law 2002 lays down which types of studies can be established at universities. The law also defines requirements concerning admissions, examinations and academic degrees. It provides for two types of studies (degree programmes ending with a diploma, bachelor and master programmes, and doctoral programmes) and higher education courses. There are also academic degrees for graduates of higher education courses (postgraduate further education), for instance the Master of Business Administration (MBA).

According to the University Law 2002, all newly established study programmes must follow the two cycle Bologna structure. Bachelor programmes have to be comprised of 180 ECTS, master programmes of at least 120 ECTS. Existing diploma programmes may retain their structure as long as there is no change in curriculum. Exceptions are made for programmes leading to a secondary school teaching certificate, which may only be organised as diploma studies concluding with a master's degree (9 semesters minimum required time of study). In addition, medical and dental programmes will remain diploma programmes concluding with a doctoral degree (minimum of 12 semesters).

Graduates of bachelor programmes are awarded a *Bakkalaureus/Bakkalaurea* degree, both diploma programmes as well as master programmes lead to the *Magister/Magistra* degree. Diploma or master programmes require a diploma (master) thesis or a corresponding piece of documentation.

The law foresees two types of doctoral studies. A “traditional” doctorate comprising 120 ECTS, and a more “advanced” doctorate comprising 240 ECTS. The former leads to a *Doktorat*, for the latter, the “Doctor of Philosophy” degree (“PhD”) may be awarded.

The *Habilitation* is acquired within the University system and is based on special research achievements after the doctorate and production of a research monograph. It is awarded with the title *Privatdozent/Privatdozentin*. This is not an academic degree, but a special university qualification. Appointment as a professor requires a *Habilitation* or a commensurate form of scholarly, scientific or artistic qualification and a call by the responsible organs of the university.

Access to higher education

Admission to higher education is usually based on the secondary school exam *Reifeprüfung/Matura* or on a special test, the *Studienberechtigungsprüfung* for non-secondary school leavers.

Governance structure

The University Law 2002 increased the possibilities of university self-organisation by transferring decision-making powers to the HEI head. It also provided for the establishment of University councils, *Universitätsräte*, for strategic planning and development issues. Half of a University council's 5, 7 or 9 members minus one are appointed by the Senate, the other half by the Federal Government. Together these two groups are electing the last person.

The University Senate has the responsibility for the overall educational matters, the amendment of the statutes and proposals for the election of rectors and vice-rectors (Rektorat). The University Council appoints the rector and vice-rectors.

The rectorate is the main executive management function of the institution, carrying out the decisions made by Council and Senate and responsible for all operational matters related to finance, human resources, etc.

HE authorities and organisations

The universities remain largely state-funded. According to the University Law 2002, there remains a basic obligation by the federal government to fund the universities. As of 2004, federal funding is disbursed in lump sums.

The Science Council is a body which advises the Federal Minister and the universities on all aspects of university development.

The Austrian Rectors' Conference, formerly a public institution, ceased to exist in this legal status on December 31, 2003. It has been re-established as an association of private law that represents the interests of Austrian universities. In that capacity it sets up proposals and gives expert opinion on HE policy and advice on cross-university issues. It also supports the activities of rectors and vice rectors.

The Austrian National Union of Students represents students at public and private universities as well as those at colleges and in the arts sector.

The *Österreichischer Akkreditierungsrat* has among its tasks to accredit private universities.

The *Fachhochschulrat*, the FH Council, is the state authority responsible for the initial accreditation, the evaluation and the extension of accreditation of FH degree programmes). www.fhr.ac.at

The *Fachhochschule* Conference is the association of providers of study programmes and the heads of study programmes.

Finance structure, external funding and student fees

HEIs are mainly funded by the Federal government. The higher education budget comprises global amounts to institutions for personnel costs and other operating expenses, expenditures for buildings, contributions to university clinics, support of research and social security benefits mainly for students, and the federal financial share to cover expenses at *Fachhochschulen*.

Of each institutional budget, 20 % of the funding is related to result indicators. The remaining 80 % are subject to negotiations with the ministry concerning criteria, on the basis of a proposal from the institution.

The amounts received for contractual work, commissioned research, etc., are gaining in importance, especially in the fields of technology, agriculture and medicine.

Fachhochschulen are financed partly by the federal government, partly by the *Länder* and to some extent by corporations and industry. The federal government grants a subsidy per study place and academic year. The costs of investments have to be borne by the provider.

Tuition fees for Austrian, EU and Swiss citizens currently amount to 363 Euros. Students from other countries pay 726 Euros per semester.

Hence the national government is no longer the exclusive financier of higher education.

Student support

Support is regulated by the Study Support Act (1992). It comprises a set of measures, the most important being the study grants.

Parents are obliged by law to pay maintenance for studying children. However, a system of financial support was introduced with the Study Support Act of 1992. Grants are thus available, depending on parents' income and academic record. The maximum grant is 5.814 Euros per year singles and 7.272 Euros for mature students who have supported themselves for at least four year previously to applying for the grant.

Other kinds of direct support are scholarships for academic excellence, studies abroad, completion of studies and to compensate for social hardships or special needs.

The most important indirect educational support are family allowances paid to all who have studying children under 27 years of age, regardless of social needs. There is also a general tax credit for children who are studying.

Finally, the Ministry supports student canteens and residence halls.

Private institutions

The University Accreditation Law (*UniAkkG*) offers the legal framework for the establishment of private universities. The range of higher education providers has therefore been broadened. Private universities cannot receive any funding from the national government, with the exception of contract-based support for certain learning or research objectives. According to the *UniAkkG*, only institutions established in Austria may be accredited as private universities.

Quality control

In October 2003, the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) was established as a non-profit association under Austrian private law. Its start-up financing as well as an annual basic funding will be provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

The agency offers HEIs the certification of their institutional QA mechanisms based on institutional audits. This certification is meant to function as an institutional quality “label“, that institutions may seek should they wish to. It does not function as accreditation, i.e. as having legal consequences. Austrian HEIs are not obliged by law to use the services of the new national agency, but are free to commission non-Austrian quality assurance agencies as part of their quality management. In addition to the certification or “label“, the agency conducts external quality assessments both on the institutional as well as programme/discipline level and offers advice and information on all aspects of quality assurance in higher education.

Moreover, the agency shall represent Austrian HEIs in international/European QA networks and associations. It is charged with actively seeking co-operations on the European level and thus contributing to the European dimension of quality assurance.

Also in the *Fachhochschulen* sector, quality assurance is built into the system. Before a programme can be approved, an evaluation of the need for it and of the study requirements takes place. Approval is for a maximum of five years only. After that, an evaluation is carried out and a possible extension depends on the results of that.

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World Class Reform of Universities in Austria. Barbara Sporn, International Higher Education, Boston College. 2002

BELGIUM (FRENCH COMMUNITY)

Higher education system and institutional structure

A distinction may be drawn between university and non-university HEIs. Non-university and university courses do not form a continuous path. Students in one or the other are involved in two distinctly different kinds of provision. This is reflected in differing course structures and teaching methods. However, it is possible to transfer from one to the other.

Non-university higher education courses are mainly provided in the *Hautes écoles*. They can be short or long, and in the latter case, of the same level as university courses.

Admission requirements

The basic requirement is the certificate of upper secondary education, *Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur (CESS)* or an equivalent diploma. Those who do not have it can take a special university entrance exam.

Admission to first-cycle courses in applied science is subject to an entrance examination.

The French Community does not apply a *numerus clausus* system. However, measures to limit access have been introduced in medicine and dentistry. Examinations for selection purposes are held on completion of the second cycle of studies in medicine and dentistry.

For veterinary studies an examination is organised to limit the access to the first cycle.

Degree structure

- *Non-university institutions*

Short non-university higher education comprises a first professionally oriented cycle. It leads in 3 and 4 years (*180 and 240 credits*), to a qualification called *bachelier* in different areas of professionally oriented fields of study.

Long courses prepare students for further qualifications of different kinds. It is organised in two cycles.

The first cycle called “de transition” leads to a qualification of *bachelier* in 3 years and 180 credits.

The second cycle leads to the award of a *master* after 1 year (60 credits) and after 2 years (120 credits)

- Universities

University education leads to the award of the *bachelor* degree, the *master* degree, the *master complémentaire* (postgraduate degree) and third-cycle degrees or doctorates:

- 1st cycle: bachelier (1er cycle de transition) 3 years (180 credits)
- 2nd cycle: master... (2ème cycle initial) 1 (60 credits), 2 (120 credits), 3 (veterinary, 180credits) , or 4 (medicine 240 credits) years

In each master, different objectives (finalités) are organised : specialised objectives, research objectives and/or educational objective.

- AESS (aggregation de l'enseignement Secondaire supérieur)
- -master complémentaire (postgraduate studies)
- 3rd cycle: Doctorat avec thèse

Tuition fees and student maintenance

Enrolment at an institution of tertiary education is subject to payment of a registration fee. The amount is fixed by law.

Each institution receives a social subsidy for students who have financial difficulties. Each institution has its student assistance system and an office that looks after matters concerning registration fees, grants, housing and counselling service.

Student grants and loans are available, depending on pedagogical and financial conditions.

Governance structure

As for non-university education, each *Haute École* has a Steering Committee, a Pedagogical Council and a Social Council.

In universities, the academic authorities are the Rector, the Academic Council, and the Executive Board. Among the senior management offices are: the vice chairman of the Executive Board, the vice education officer, the deans of the faculties, the secretary of the council and of the executive board, the directors of the departments.

Main legal framework

The Mission Decree of 24 July 1997

The Decree on the funding of university education of 1998

The Decree on the conferring of academic degrees of 1994

The Decree on learning in High school of 5 août 1995

The Charter for the Future of 26 September 2001

The Action plan of 31 January 2002.

The Decree of 31 mars 2004

Authorities and organisations

The Government of the French Community is the highest authority for education in the Community. It is also responsible for the funding of tertiary education institutions.

The Interuniversity Council of the French Community (CIUF) has among its duties to work for co-ordination, consultation and collaboration activities www.ciuf.cfwb.be

The University commission for the development (CUD) coordinates university activated connected with development issues.

The General Council on the *Hautes Ecoles* and the Rector council are consultative bodies

The Council on Education and Training (CEF) is made up of representatives from all levels of education.

Quality assessment

The universities and the polytechnics, *Hautes écoles*, are also subject to the broad oversight of French Community government commissioners and an inspector of finance who ensure compliance with financial laws and regulations.

Since 2004 the Government of the French Community has set up a quality agency. The aim of the Agency is to evaluate the quality of the courses organised in the universities and High schools in the French Community.

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www.ciuf.cfwb.be

Eurydice Summary Sheets on Education Systems in Europe: French Community of Belgium.
<http://www.eurydice.org/>

Eurydice: Eurobase www.eurydice.org

SURVEY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS BRAZIL

Higher education system

Brazilian higher education is developing quickly but participation is far behind the other Latin America countries. Brazil has a 12% participation of the 18-24 years cohort, while Argentina and Uruguay have a participation of more than 30%. The National Plan of Education (Law nº 10172/2001) establishes that by 2010 the Brazilian participation will be at the same level of those countries, reaching 30%. That would add some 3.0 million students to the 3.5 million that are already enrolled in HE.

More than two thirds (2.4 million) of the HE students are enrolled in over 1,400 institutions of the private sector. The other 1, 1 million students are enrolled in 200 public institutions.

The HE system comprises:

- Under-graduate studies (“graduação”)
- Graduate studies (*stricto sensu* – “mestrado e doutorado”)
- Graduate studies (*lato sensu* – “especialização”)

Admission system

The general system of admission is based on an entrance exam (“exame vestibular”), that is very competitive, especially in the public sector. This system is gradually changing in the direction of a greater integration with the high school system, with the proposition of a new system of admission based on the academic record of the students.

Each institution is free to establish its own admission criteria and the number of students to be admitted each year.

Tuition fees and student support

The public sector is free for all under-graduate and *stricto sensu* graduate students and the private sector charges tuition fees for all study levels. There are state and federal funds that finance the studies through a system of loans. The federal fund, “Programa de Financiamento Estudantil – FIES”, is meant to assist students on full-time enrolment institutions that are recognised by the system and are charging tuition fees. The 2002 fiscal year closed with some 218,000 students concerned.

In the public sector, the needy students are supported by an aid system that comprises grants, housing and university restaurants. In the for non-profit private sector there is a compulsory system of scholarships for the poor students.

Main legal framework

The Brazilian Constitution defines a university as the higher education institution that has three missions: teaching, research and services to the community (“extensão”). The same Act establishes the university autonomy concerning academic, administrative and financial matters.

Two laws complete the main legal framework of the HE Brazilian system: Federal Law nº 9394/1996 and Federal Law nº 10172/2001.

Governance

Universities are autonomous and are free to establish programmes and curricula, research and interaction activities themselves. They may also establish and reform their own statutes.

Institutions can independently sign contracts, engage in investments, receive incomes from various sides and administrate their own assets, but the public universities must follow all the general public accounting rules.

The non-university institutions must ask approval for new courses and new institutions must be accredited by the Ministry of Education and approved by the National Council for Education. Also, new graduate courses have to be accredited by Capes. Various criteria are specified for each main area of studies and lists of approved courses at each university and in each subject area are published on the Capes website.

Authority and organisations

- Ministério da Educação – www.mec.gov.br
- Secretaria de Educação Superior – www.mec.gov.br/sesu
- Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Capes – www.capes.gov.br
- Conselho Nacional de Educação – www.mec.gov.br/cne

Quality assessment

There are two types of quality assessment in Brazilian under-graduate courses: the annual evaluation by the Ministry of Education and the self-assessment made by the institutions as a continued process.

The official evaluation comprises the quality of the courses and the adequacy of the “offer conditions” (quality of the teaching staff, curricula and infrastructure, especially libraries and laboratories).

External evaluation and some benchmarking exercises with the help of foreign university associations normally complete the institutional self-evaluation.

Capes evaluate the graduate courses (“mestrado e doutorado”). There is a seven levels classification and the funding and scholarships depend on it. Graduate programmes classified as 6 and 7 levels must have quality and performance measured by international standards.

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Ministério da Educação – www.mec.gov.br

Lei nº 9394/1996

Lei nº 10172/2001

Constituição Federal (1988)

CHINA - HONG KONG

Higher education structure

The higher education system has gone through a process of massification with a significant increase in the rate of participation in tertiary level education in the 1980s-90s. Currently, the Government has been providing first-year-first-degree (FYFD) places to about 18% of the relevant age group (age 17-20) of the population. Hong Kong's academics have also become more integrated into the global academy and their engagement with academics in the Mainland has grown in a significant extent since Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997. There has also been an increasingly stronger linkage between Hong Kong and the Mainland in respect of student exchange activities and admission of Mainland students to tertiary institutions in Hong Kong.

HE institution system

Hong Kong has eleven degree-awarding institutions of higher education. Eight of these institutions are under the aegis of the University Grants Committee, including seven universities and a teaching training institution (the Hong Kong Institute of Education). The other three degree-awarding institutions are the Academy of Performing Arts, the Hong Kong Shue Yan College and the Open University of Hong Kong. All except the last two of the institutions are almost fully government funded.

A total of about 70,000 students are taking publicly-funded programmes at different levels at the eight UGC-funded institutions in the 2003/04 academic year. The student enrolments for sub-degree, undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate programmes are respectively around 11,000, 48,000, 5,600 and 5,000. The sub-degree sector is experiencing expansion in the recent years as the needs for higher education continue to rise in transforming Hong Kong into a knowledge-based economy. Non-local students are also on the rise. In 2003/04, there are about 3,100 non-local students studying in Hong Kong. To reap the cultural and educational benefits brought about by non-local students, the Government has decided to further relax the enrolment quota so that institutions could recruit non-local students up to 8% of its undergraduate and taught postgraduate publicly funded places with effect from 2005/06.

In addition, all of the UGC-funded institutions have established extension arms or divisions to provide quality continuing education and life-long learning courses for professional practice, retraining and self-development with a view to responding to community needs and changes. Such programmes are usually self-financed and different programme levels are offered.

Degree structures

In recent years, a credit unit system has been introduced in the UGC-funded institutions. Most of the undergraduate programmes are of three-year duration, except for some professional disciplines (e.g. architecture and medicine) that require a longer study period ranged from four to five years.

However, there have been ongoing discussions among the academics and within the society about moving undergraduate study generally to a four-year duration of study.

Admission system

Almost all of the students pursuing publicly-funded undergraduate programmes are admitted via a joint admission mechanism - the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). JUPAS is a centralized admission system in which all of the eight UGC-funded institutions are participating. Each institution sets its own entry requirements and applying students are considered for admission on the strength of their Hong Kong Advanced Level (HKAL) Examination results. Nevertheless, in order to widen participation and explore more diversified potentials, the criteria used for admission have gradually been reformed and non-academic achievements are also considered now.

A new Early Admission Scheme was introduced in 2002/03 to allow a small number (240 in 2002/03 and some 400 in 2003/04) of outstanding secondary six students to gain access to tertiary education earlier. These students must fulfil the admission criteria set by the institutions themselves which are mainly based on their results in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCEE) Examination.

It is customary for institutions to charge a non-refundable application fee.

Tuition fees

- Tertiary students studying government funded programmes are required to pay tuition fees. The fee level for publicly-funded degree courses is set with reference to a pre-determined cost-recovery target rate (i.e. 18% of recurrent student unit cost). Tuition fee levels for undergraduates and postgraduates student are the same, whereas fees for publicly-funded sub-degree courses are set at 75% of the fees for degree courses.
- The existing indicative fee levels for full-time UGC-funded degree and sub-degree programmes for the academic year 2003/04 are HK\$42,100 and HK\$31,575 respectively.

Financial assistance for students

When a student is admitted to a local tertiary education institution, the Government can provide him/her with financial assistance when in need by means of financial aid from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) (www.info.gov.hk/sfaa) so that no students in Hong Kong will be denied access to education because of lack of means.

A number of publicly-funded financial assistance are administered by SFAA, including the following:

- Local Student Finance Scheme
- Financial Assistance Scheme for Post-secondary Students
- Student Finance Assistance Scheme
- Non-means Tested Loan Scheme

Main legal framework

In July 1997 Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

The legal system of the Hong Kong SAR is based on the rule of law and the independence of the Judiciary. The constitutional framework for the legal system is provided by the Basic Law which came into effect on 1 July 1997. Under the principle of 'one country, two systems', the HKSAR legal system, which is different from that of Mainland China, is based on the common law, supplemented by local legislation.

Authorities and organisations

The highest authority in Hong Kong is the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (www.info.gov.hk), of which the Education and Manpower Bureau (www.emb.gov.hk) is responsible for the formulation of policies and the introduction of legislation to ensure that quality education is being provided for Hong Kong people, and that the manpower needs of different sectors of the community are factored in human resources planning and development.

The Education Commission (www.e-c.edu.hk) is a non-statutory body which offers advice to the SAR Government on the overall development of education in the light of Hong Kong's community needs.

The University Grants Committee (UGC) is appointed by the Chief Executive of HKSAR as the principal advisory committee responsible for advising the SAR Government on the developmental and funding needs of higher education institutions in Hong Kong. It comprises eminent local and overseas academics and prominent lay members from the Hong Kong community. The Committee will adopt a strategic approach in developing the local higher education sector. In 2004, the UGC published two documents, "Hong Kong Higher Education: To Make a Difference, To Move with the Times" and "Hong Kong Higher Education: Integration Matters", with a view to developing the Hong Kong Higher Education sector as an interlocking yet differentiated system and making Hong Kong the education hub of the region. (www.ugc.edu.hk)[http://](http://www.ugc.edu.hk)

Governance structure

Institutions under the aegis of UGC are independent bodies governed by their respective Ordinances with governing councils. They all enjoy a high degree of autonomy in their internal governance and academic activities. Each institution determines its own establishment, structure and operation and has the authority to grant degrees. The primary responsibility for assuring the quality of their governance and educational provisions rests with the institutions themselves.

At institutional level, organisational structure is not unlike that of many western HE institutions. The major governing bodies of the Hong Kong institutions are their Council which exercises the powers and duties of the institution as provided in the relevant ordinances. They are empowered by law to make statutes or regulations to underpin respective governing ordinances and provide for orderly conduct of day-to-day operations. The Council also confers degrees and other academic awards. The Senate of an institution is the principal academic body which is responsible for setting academic policies, academic planning and development. Under which there may also be Boards of Studies and some other committees to look into issues like teaching, and quality assurance, etc. The chief executive of a Hong Kong institution is the Vice-Chancellor/President who is responsible to the

Council for the management, conduct and administration of the institution and the discipline of students. The institution also has a number of Pro-Vice-Chancellors or vice-presidents and each will have different specific responsibilities.

While the UGC-funded institutions enjoy a very high degree of autonomy in their operation, since they are mainly supported by public funds, the UGC takes on the role of an intermediary to ensure both academic freedom and autonomy for the institutions as well as public accountability and value for money. The UGC has therefore a key role to play in steering the development of the institutions under its aegis and ensuring the value-for-money of their work. The UGC has broad oversight responsibility in respect of the institutions' development, quality assurance and their general academic and administrative operations. This has been discharged mainly through the conduct of reviews on different aspects of institutional activities, such as management, teaching and learning, etc.

Financing system

In Hong Kong, public funding accounts for over 80 percent of the universities' operating budget. For the UGC-funded institutions, the bulk of the recurrent grants are disbursed on a triennial basis to tie in with the academic planning cycle and in the form of a block grant to provide institutions with maximum flexibility. Separately, non-recurrent funding is also provided to institutions on a project basis to finance major capital works projects and minor campus improvement works.

With a view to encouraging diversification of source of funding, the government has set up a \$1 billion dollar-for-dollar Matching Grant Scheme in 2003 for those UGC-funded institutions that succeed in securing private donations for teaching and research purposes.

The principle of public and financial accountability is emphasised in that the distribution of public funds is based on quality assurance outcomes in terms of teaching and research. In the 2001-2004 triennium, the UGC introduced a Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme under which a portion of the recurrent funding were tied with institutions' performance against their respective roles. In order to further encourage institutions to adhere to their roles, a second round exercise of the Scheme is now being conducted.

Quality assessment

The UGC also has a vital role in assuring the overall quality of higher education under its aegis. The Committee in recent years conducted a series of objective reviews/assessment exercises to work jointly with institutions in promoting quality in higher education, e.g. the Research Assessment Exercise, Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews, and Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme, etc. Since the 2001-04 triennium, the UGC has also established an increasingly stronger link between funding for institutions and their performance against role. The second round of Performance and Role-related Funding Scheme is being conducted to recognize institutions' good performance and quality of educational provisions as well as encourage performance against their respective role.

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CZECH REPUBLIC

Introduction

The transition to democracy and market economy has had a pronounced influence on higher education. Among other things it has meant less political control of institutions and new methods of funding their operations. The democratization and modernization of the education and research system has been reflected in new legislation (Higher Education Acts of 1990 and 1998, see Legislative framework, below).

Many important changes have taken place, at various levels. Institutions and their programmes have become more diversified and adaptive to the needs of the economy. With regard to participation, the implementation of bachelor's programmes has contributed to an expansion of student enrolment.

Higher education structure

At the present time (May 2004), 62 higher education institutions belong to the Czech higher education system. There are 24 public institutions, 2 state higher education institutions, and 36 private higher education institutions. The activities of the state higher education institutions are partially regulated by the legislation of the appropriate Ministry, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior.

The public and state higher education institutions are university-type institutions. Charles University established in 1348 with relatively new institutions established during several years after political changes in 1989. It is expected that several bright new public higher education institutions of non-university type will come into existence within one or two years. The private higher education institutions are all non-university type institutions primarily due to the fact that they all have been established only recently (after 1999).

Numbers of students in academic year 2002/03	248 756
Bachelor and master study programmes	227 664
Doctoral study programmes	21 092

Numbers of graduates in academic year 2002/03	32 651
Bachelor study programmes	8 507
Master study programmes	22 665
Doctoral study programmes	1 479

Institutional structure

Public and state higher education institutions can be established and dissolved by an Act of the Parliament. Also any changes through merger, amalgamation (only with other public higher education institutions) or division may be implemented by the same way.

Legal entities with their domicile in the Czech Republic and other countries of the EU are authorized to act as private higher education institutions if granted state permission by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (further Ministry).

Higher education institutions, which are legal entities, are traditionally divided into faculties. The Act stipulates matters in which faculties have the right to make decisions or act on behalf of the higher education institution. Higher education institutions of non-university type are not divided into faculties.

The rector is the head of a public higher education institution. He/she is appointed by the President of the Czech Republic on the proposal of the institution's academic senate.

The academic senates, the scientific councils, and newly established disciplinary commissions are self-governing academic bodies. The composition of self-governing bodies is left almost completely in the competence of the institution itself. The Act stipulates the minimum and maximum representation of students in the senate (from one third up to one half of the total number of members) and the minimum (one third) representation of external members in the scientific council.

The academic senate is an independent democratic and representative academic body; its members are elected from the academic community. The senate is a very important and powerful body. Its main decision-making duties/rights are to approve the annual budget presented by the rector, to decide on the establishment of new units of the institution, to approve the internal regulations of the institution and its constituent parts, and to approve the long-term plan for institutional development. The Act establishes a list of additional matters which should be approved by the senate, and other matters to which the senate's assent is needed before they are approved by another body (rector or scientific council).

Members of the scientific council are appointed and dismissed by the rector, who presides it. Its main duty is to perform the procedures for the appointment of professors and procedures for obtaining "venium docendi" (habilitation) as required by the Act.

The Act states the duty of public higher education institutions to establish a board of trustees. The members of the board of trustees are appointed by the Minister, after consultation with the rector, for a period of six years. The members must not be from the respective higher education institution, they should be appropriate representatives from public life, local government and state administration.

There is a similar management structure at faculty level, with the exception of the board of trustees, which exists only at institutional level.

Private higher education institutions are in no way affected by the Act, as far as their internal management is concerned. Their structure is left open. The Ministry, however, reserves the right to register the statutes of private higher education institutions in the same way as in case of public higher education institutions.

Degree structure

Higher education involves study in one of three types of accredited study programmes – bachelor, master and doctoral programmes.

In the framework of the Bologna process, bachelor study programmes are being introduced as the obligatory first stage of higher education enabling their graduates either to enter the job market or to continue their studies (immediately, or after some work experience).

A bachelor study programme lasts at least 3 and at most 4 years. The academic degree of “Bakalář” (Bachelor) is awarded on the basis of due completion of a study programme by a state final examination. Part of this examination usually involves the presentation of a bachelor project or thesis. The bachelor study programmes are offered in many fields except medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy and some other subjects, which cover only specific study fields and run in parallel with the former not-divided master study programmes.

Master study programme is aimed at presenting new theoretical findings based on scientific knowledge, research and development. Students are required to master the application of these findings and to develop skills for creative and scientific activities. Master study programme is completed by a state final examination and in most cases by presentation of a diploma thesis.

In principle a master study programme is based on two-tier construction. The length of a continuing master study programme (after completion a bachelor study programme) is 1-3 years. In exceptional cases (only with the approval of the Accreditation Commission), the so-called “long” master study programme takes in average 5 years (6 years in medicine, veterinary medicine) and does not require previously completed bachelor study programme. The most common degree is “Magistr” (for humanities, sciences etc.). Graduates in the field of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine are awarded the degree “doktor” while “inženýr” is a degree awarded in the field of engineering.

The third type of study programme, at doctoral level, follows an individual study plan under the guidance of a supervisor. The entrance condition is the graduation from a master programme. Doctoral study programmes are aimed at scientific research and independent creative activity. This programme has a nominal length of three years. The programme is finished with the state doctoral examination and the presentation of a dissertation in which the applicant demonstrates his/her independent research skills, theoretical knowledge or independent theoretical and artistic creativity (in relevant fields). These programmes lead to “PhD” academic degree.

Admission requirements

Access to a bachelor study programme or to some study fields (exceptional cases) with 4 to 6 year master study programme is conditional on completing a gymnasium or a secondary vocational school by the “Maturita” examination (the age of graduates is 19 years). Applicants for art education may in exceptional cases also be admitted without a completed secondary education. To access to a continuing master programme, graduation from a relevant bachelor study programme, or equivalent, is required.

There is no uniform admission procedure at higher education institutions in the Czech Republic, either for home students or for foreign students. According to the Act, an applicant should demonstrate not only the required degree of education but also the necessary ability and motivation to pursue higher education studies. Methods of examining and selection are in the competence of the faculty or of the higher education institution if the higher education institution is not divided into faculties or programmes are offered by the institution. In practice, there is usually a written examination, an interview, or both. For art schools, faculties of architecture, faculties of education, sports studies and dentistry, part of the examination is a test of talent or practical skills.

There are no stipulated restrictions on admission (“numerus clausus”) to higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. Entrance examinations are however administered due to limited capacity of a given higher education institution or faculty and available financial means.

Admission to a doctoral study programme is conditional on graduation from a master study programme; doctoral students in the field of the art must hold an academic degree. Applicants are required to take a special entrance examination or an interview.

Student evaluation

The study and examination rules form part of the internal regulations of each higher education institution or faculty. Study results are evaluated by examinations, supervised written work, project work or colloquia. Examinations may be oral, written or combined.

Each higher education institution uses some kind of credit system. The systems have not yet been standardized, though there is a considerable interest in the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) or a system, which can be easily converted into ECTS. To achieve unity is a major goal of the long-term strategic plans of both the Ministry and the individual institutions.

State examinations take place in front of a board of examiners; the course of a state examination and its results are open to the public. They shall be conducted only by professors, associate professors and specialists approved by the pertinent Scientific Council. The Ministry is to appoint remaining members of the board of examiners from distinguished specialists in the relevant field.

Main legal framework

Extensive autonomy, academic freedom, democratic internal mechanisms and broad space for rapid development have been given to the higher education institutions by the Higher Education Act of 1990 and approved by the Higher Education Act of 1998 and its Amendment of 2001.

The legal provisions give quite broad opportunities for institutional and programme diversification, including the possibility to establish private higher education institutions. The former state higher education institutions were transformed into public legal bodies with their own property and consequently changed management, and with the open way to multi-source financing.

The Act gives relatively free legal framework for the functioning of higher education institutions. It describes the way of a higher education institution foundation, its organisation, governance, economic issues and internal regulations. Similarly, main parts of higher education institutions of university type are described – faculties, while the institutions of non-university type are not composed of faculties. Other parts of the Act stipulate the types and forms of study programmes, they deal with studies and students’ affairs and academic staff, they describe the academic titles and relevant procedures, one section is devoted to accreditation, evaluation and Accreditation Commission, its establishment and responsibilities. The last section stipulates clearly the rights and responsibilities of the state administration including financing and describes the role of higher education representation composed of two important bodies – Czech Rectors’ Conference and Council of Higher Education Institutions.

Other important laws which play the role in higher education are: a) law on research and development support which regulates the ways of financial support of all research institutions including higher education, b) the general labour code which should be considered in making contracts with academic staff.

Public and private sector

The Act of 1998 allowed establishment of private higher education institutions. It is obvious that they significantly differ from public (and state) higher education institutions, first of all by their experience. Consequently to the date of their establishment, they are mostly quite small, focused preferably on very attractive fields of study, usually those which are relatively cheap and mainly with accredited bachelor study programmes which means that they are non-university type institutions of higher education.

In spite of the fact that they can change their status during the time and they may increase significantly in number of students, the private sector is considered as a complementary part of the Czech higher education system. Private higher education institutions are expected to create competitive conditions for public sector (in a positive way) and to fill the gap in study fields that public institutions have not yet offered for whatever reason.

These institutions are subordinated to the same Act as public institutions while some regulations are valid for them only partly and some of them not at all. They are required first of all to accept the same obligations as regards accreditation of study programmes and quality of their activities in general, to have their own internal regulations, to elaborate long term plans of their activities as well as their annual updates and to issue public annual reports.

Financing higher education

Any public higher education institution is entitled to a state subsidy, with limits defining what this subsidy may be used for.

It is presumed that the basic part of the budget of a public higher education institution will continue to consist of a state subsidy. This should be supplemented by multi-sources funding: incomes from complementary activities of higher education institutions, yields from property, and other income from the state budget (from state funds and the community budget), yields from auxiliary activities, incomes from gifts and bequests, and from various study-related fees (see below). The auxiliary activities should serve for more effective use of human resources and property, but must not threaten the quality, extent and accessibility of the activities for which the public higher education institution was established.

The practice has been accepted that the amount of funding from the state budget to individual higher education institutions is fixed by a mutual agreement mechanism between the Representative Commission and the Ministry. The Commission (composed of representatives of the Ministry, the Czech Rectors' Conference, the Council of Higher Education Institutions and the registrars) deals very seriously and intensively with budgetary regulations, and tries to adjust them in a way that is as desirable as possible and is suited as much as possible to both all higher education institutions and the state policy.

The main part of the budget for teaching is derived from the volume of teaching activity, and it is calculated as a product of the number of students of a particular higher education institution and the normative (cost of study) of a study programme. It is anticipated that for several years this part of the teaching budget will continue to be the major element. The other part, which should continuously increase, is based on a contract depending on the harmony/correspondence between the long-term institutional and the long-term state plans. Only a small part of the teaching budget is allocated on non-normative rules. In principle, an institution is provided by the budget for teaching in the form of the lump sum.

The research budget consists basically of three parts: a part related to so-called specified research connected to teaching activities, and two parts devoted to research activities in general (research plans and research centres).

The grant for specified research is allocated on the basis of a formula taking into consideration research money received from various projects, number of professors and associate professors and number of students and graduates of master and doctoral study programmes.

Institutional money for research plans refers to grants (in average for 5 years), which should gradually harmonise supported research and development with the relevant situation in EU countries. Grants are allocated on the basis of competition, projects are evaluated *ex ante* by home and foreign experts and the quality of results may influence the next application for grant.

The Research Centres programme is aimed at enhancement of still inadequate co-operation among different sectors of R&D (institutions of the Academy of Sciences of the CR, higher education institutions, other research institutions, and industry). Efforts are directed toward collaboration in research training for PhD students, young researchers and the involvement in international research networks.

State higher education institutions are entitled to the state subsidy. The allocation of money and relevant rules are subordinated to appropriate ministries (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior).

Private higher education institutions are obliged to ensure funding for their activities. They are not financed by the state (only those institutions which have the form of non-profit organisations may ask for the state support; similar criteria to those valid for a public higher education institution are used to determine the level of the subsidy in such a case), they should approve their own financial sources and they are not limited by the Act as regards students tuition fees.

Tuition fees and student maintenance

In principle, higher education provided by public higher education institutions is free of charge. There have been introduced so call study-related fees by the Act of 1998. The institutions can charge the entrance fees, which is aimed to cover the needed administrative costs and its maximum level is determined by the Act.

Students, who stay more than one year longer than the study programme is intended to last, are required to pay fees; the minimum is prescribed by the Act but the maximum is left to the discretion of the institution itself.

A public higher education institution shall set an annual study fee not exceeding the limited amount for a graduate of a bachelor or a master study programme being enrolled in another bachelor or master study programme; this provision is not applicable to graduates of a bachelor study programme who are enrolled in a subsequent master study programme, or several regular study programmes not exceeding the standard length of study of a study programme.

All mentioned types of study-related fees are aimed as the income of the scholarships fund. The Rector is at the liberty to reduce, waive or defer the due date of study-related fees taking into account the study results and social standing of a student in accordance with provisions of the statute of the institution.

Another fee connected with studies is required in programmes taught in a foreign language. To settle the level of this type of fee is left to an institution.

Tuition fees at a private higher education institution are set by the private higher education institution itself by means of its internal regulations and they are not influenced by the Act.

Ministry may provide the public higher education institutions with a subsidy for the support of student accommodation and student boarding. It is intended to transform this support into the direct support provided to students in the form of special scholarship. The aim is to enable students to use possible private offer of accommodation and to decrease too high demand on student dormitories.

Governance

Higher education institutions are governed primarily by the provisions of the Higher Education Act from 1998, by the act on research and development and are obliged to consider all general legal norms which are connected with their functioning.

The Ministry represents the state in relation to higher education institutions. One of the main tasks of the Ministry is to allocate funding to individual higher education institutions from the state budget, and to monitor their proper use. The Ministry should also arrange favourable conditions for the development of higher education institutions and should co-ordinate their activities. The above mentioned authorities and the scope of additional ones are clearly stipulated by the Act.

Authorities and organisations

In the field of quality of higher education the Accreditation Commission is the most important body (see below). This is considered as the “hard” advisory (buffer) body as its expert view is highly binding for all decisions (accreditation, state permission) issued by the Ministry.

The Ministry is obliged to discuss all important measures regarding higher education with its representation. In fact both parts of the representation – the Czech Rectors Conference (representatives of higher education institutions) and Council of Higher Education Institutions (members of academic communities of higher education institutions delegated by their representative academic bodies) are also some types of “hard” advisory bodies. It has been up to current time very usual that ministerial decisions were taken only after some kind of agreement or compromise with the representation.

Quality assessment

The quality assurance is the responsibility of the Accreditation Commission which is an expert body composed of 21 members; academic and professional experts are appointed by the Czech Government and nominated by the Minister of Education. The Minister discusses the nomination with representatives of higher education institutions, the Research and Development Council (the unit of the Government of the Czech Republic) and the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

All types of study programmes are subject to accreditation. The award of accreditation is a task within the competence of the Ministry. In case of a study programme which is not accredited, the institution is not allowed to admit any applicants for study, to hold lectures and examinations and award academic degrees. Accreditation is issued on the basis of expert evaluation submitted by the Accreditation Commission. The Ministry is bound by the Act not to award accreditation in case of a negative evaluation of a study programme. In case of a positive evaluation it is bound by an explicit list of grounds on basis of which it may refuse to award accreditation. Accreditation of a study

programme is awarded for a limited period of time (usually for twice as long time as the standard length of the programme, in case of doctoral study programmes not longer than ten years).

A higher education institution or its unit may carry out procedures for obtaining “venium docendi” (habilitation) and procedures for the appointment of a professor only on basis of accreditation process. A similar mechanism to that for study programmes also applies in case of both above mentioned procedures.

The Accreditation Commission is required to issue its expert opinion in connection with an application for state permission to establish private higher education institution. It is the responsibility of the Ministry to award the state permission which is also in this case, similarly as in the awarding accreditation to a study programme, bound by the Act to follow the opinion of the Accreditation Commission.

The Accreditation Commission’s task is to observe the quality of higher education and perform comprehensive evaluation of educational, academic, research, developmental, artistic and other creative activities of higher education institutions. The evaluation focuses on the overall activity of the institution or its part (usually faculty). Evaluation is preferably an improvement-oriented procedure providing institutions with enough time to improve the negative findings before issuing any unfavourable decision. Public reports, including details of the strengths and weaknesses together with relevant recommendations, are considered to be important issues for further improvement and development.

All higher education institutions are obliged to provide regular internal evaluation and to make the results public. The framework of this obligation is very open, and it is left to the entire institution how to provide the evaluation and how to use its results.

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DENMARK

Higher education structure and legislative framework

The higher education system comprises:

- Short-cycle non-university programmes (KVU), i.e. further technical, commercial and agriculture education: The Act of 1997 authorised the Ministry to lay down regulation.
- Medium-cycle non-university education (MVU): Act of 2000 authorisation to regulate and develop.
- Medium- and long-cycle university education (LVU) and Post-graduate university education, i.e. Ph.D. and doctorate): University Act of 1993 gave authorisation as above and defined functions of governing bodies. The 2003 Act revised the governance system at institutional, faculty and department level.
- Part-time further education for adult (open education) (VFV Law)

Most HEIs are public institutions but a number of HEIs are autonomous. Their activities, however, are also publicly funded.

Degree structure

Nowadays, university qualifications in most cases are following the 3+2+3 system.

Medium-cycle: The Bachelor's degree (B.A. /B.Sc.) is awarded after 3 years of study. Programmes qualify both for occupational functions and for further studies.

Long-cycle: The *Candidatus* (*Cand* + field of study) is awarded after a further two years of study, which includes a half year preparation of a thesis. The degree in medicine, however, takes a total of 6, 5 years). These programmes qualify students for professional and scientific work.

A Ph.D. degree can be awarded after a total of approximately 8 years of higher education and research, including the preparation and defence of a thesis.

Advanced Adult Education is offered at universities on a part time basis. Most programmes consist of two years of part-time study, equivalent to one year of full-time study. Institutions offering such programmes can apply to have them approved as Master programmes in further education for adults. Admission requirements: Relevant educational qualification and minimum two years of relevant work experience.

College qualifications are professionally oriented (for teaching, social work, paramedical and technological functions, etc.). Short-cycle programmes take two years, medium-cycle qualifications are awarded after 3-4 years of studies, including practical training. Most medium-cycle programmes

give access to further studies in the same field. Professional bachelor's degrees are awarded on completion of programmes that meet certain criteria, such as links to research and development.

Admission system

Key elements are: Centrally determined admission requirements and capacity of the annual intake as well as admission control in case of imbalance between applications and capacity.

Admission requirements are specified in decrees. The normal entrance qualifications for higher education are: the Upper Secondary Leaving Examination, the Higher Preparatory Examination (HF), the Higher Commercial Examination (HHX) and the Higher Technical Examination (HTX). Study places are distributed through two quota systems. In the first quota, places are allocated to applicants according to the marks obtained in the above examination. In the second quota, places are distributed according to individual assessment by the institution. This includes applicants with an alternative background (work experience, etc.) or an international or foreign qualifying examination.

Every year, the Government limits the overall number of places available at universities through the imposition of entrance restrictions on some programmes.

Marking system

Marks are given according to a 13-point marking scale. Marks 10-13 are for excellent performance, 6-9 for good performance and 0-5 for poor performance.

Governance structure (universities)

Since the passing of the 2003 Act, which abolished some of the previous collegial bodies, the highest body is no longer the Senate but the Board. It has a majority of external members but the scientific and the technical and administrative staff and the students as well as the contracted Ph.D. students are also represented.

The board appoints the rector, who handles the day-to-day management of the institution.

The academic councils see to the academic interests of the main area. They are set up by the board with deans as chair-persons and other scientific staff and students also represented.

The departments are run by a head of department appointed by the dean. The head of department sets up an organisation with representation of students, scientific staff and technical and administrative staff.

Study Boards are set up to handle issues related to the one or more study programme. They comprise an equal number of students and teachers elected by the students of each study programme and by the scientific staff, respectively. The chairperson is elected among the scientific staff on the board and the deputy chairman among the students. The study board recommends a study director to the dean.

Financing of higher education

The Danish State finances higher education and research. Since 1994, the universities have been awarded a lump sum grant each year. They are free to determine their own priorities between departments and between education and research. The lump sum consists of a basic amount and a

substantial part that consists of the so-called “taximeter” grant per active student. There are 12 different taximeter levels. These funding units are politically established entities rather than amounts based on cost calculations. They reflect priorities and differences between activities. They are also intended to provide for equality in financing and to make financial comparisons possible between different areas of HE and institutions.

The model comprises three basic units, for teaching, for general expenditures and for buildings. This division has significance only for the calculation of the total funding, but not for the activities for which the individual HEI decides to use the funding.

Universities are free to secure extra income by offering special courses and selling know-how. For some HEIs, external funding, primarily of research is of great importance.

University development contracts

The first round of development contracts expires in 2003 and, after a parliamentary agreement on the issue, the Ministry has launched a second generation of such contracts. The existing contracts place focus on structural development, quality assurance mechanisms, internal reporting systems, and publication of results and key figures. The new contracts are intended to render visible focus areas and visions of each institution by using a combination of overall qualitative targets and quantitative measurements. The intention is to make boards and rectors responsible for fulfilling the targets. International benchmarking is also introduced: each university is to develop models for comparing their activities with those of universities abroad.

Tuition fees and student maintenance

Ordinary fulltime education is free of tuition fees. Part-time, Open University type of education, are partly financed by student fees but the majority of the costs are covered by public funding.

The student support system consists of grants and loans through the State Educational Grant and Loan Scheme (*SU-Styrelsen*). It is a voucher system, where students get up to seventy vouchers, each equating to a month's study. The grant in 2004 is 4.519 DKK/month (602 Euros) for students living by themselves, half for those living with their parents. The loan is 2313 DKK/month (308 Euros) www.su.dk

Quality assessment system

To protect students and to secure an even level of quality between students and institutions a nation-wide corps of external examination evaluators (*censors*) is established. Rules about this system and of examinations are established by the Ministry.

Quality assessment of HEI study programmes is undertaken by The Danish Evaluation Institute, a national centre that develops methods for quality assessment of teaching and learning at all levels. It undertakes systematic evaluation of HE study programmes, on a nation-wide basis or institution/faculty specifically. Furthermore, the Institute advises authorities on quality issues.

The Ministry exercises some control over the institutions via the co-ordinated admission system (KOT). From this, the Ministry currently receives information about demand, admission and free study places both at each institution and per study programme.

The Danish Evaluation Institute has as its task to ensure quality in education at all levels. It develops models of assessment and undertakes evaluations of programmes and institutions.

Authorities and organisations

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation is responsible for long-cycle research based tertiary education (universities) www.vtu.dk

The Ministry of Education is responsible for vocational HE (short and medium length tertiary education) and study guidance. www.uvm.dk

The Ministry of Culture has the responsibility for the HEIs in the visual and performing arts, architecture, etc. www.kum.dk

The Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, CVUU, gives guidance to holders of qualifications acquired outside Denmark who wish to continue towards a job or further studies in Denmark. <http://cvuu.uvm.dk/en>

The Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility in Education and Training, CIRIUS, has among its tasks to give information about education and training in Denmark and to co-ordinate the major educational programmes of the European Union. <http://www.ciriisonline.dk/>

The Danish Rectors' Conference furthers dialogue between HEIs in relation to national HE and research, and with regard to international co-operation. It also raises discussions on questions of common interest to members and gives advice to the Ministry and other authorities. www.rks.dk

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GERMANY

Higher education structure

German higher education comprises

- University education, and
- Non-university higher education

Higher education is the responsibility of the *Länder*, but the federal Government gives support to it by co-financing new buildings and other infrastructure investments (see Financing system, below). The current distribution of tasks will be reviewed in the commission work, which the federal Government (*Bundesrat*) and Parliament (*Bundestag*) has decided to undertake with the purpose of achieving a Federation reform with a more clear distribution of tasks between the federal and the *Land* level.

Often when the origins of the German research traditions and university organisation are characterised, reference is made to the Humboldt brothers. The study of nature is connected with universal scientist Alexander von Humboldt, and Wilhelm von Humboldt is linked with a type of university organisation, which has had influence on the systems in many countries. This system is characterised by large, state-run and -controlled, research-based, multi-faculty institutions. However, in Germany as well as in most other countries, universities have been supplemented with other kinds of HEIs, and about 1/3 of all Germans students currently are enrolled in non-university higher education.

HE institution system

In 2002 Germany had a total of 345 HEIs.

There are the following types of institutions:

- Universities and comprehensive universities (*Gesamthochschulen*), 92
- Universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*), 183
- Teacher training colleges (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*), 6
- Theological colleges (*Theologische Hochschulen*), 18
- Colleges of art and music (*Kunst- und Musikhochschulen*), 46.

Universities offer a range of subjects and are entitled to award doctorates. Comprehensive universities (*Gesamthochschulen*) bring together the different functions otherwise carried out by universities, *Fachhochschulen* and sometimes colleges of art and music. *Fachhochschulen* offer academic education mainly in engineering, economics, business studies, agriculture, social science, library and documentation science and design. The education provided is application-

oriented and geared to the demands of professional practice. Teacher training college train teachers for the lower levels (*Grundschule*). All other types of teachers are trained at universities.

Distance education

The Comprehensive University for Distance Studies, *Fernuniversität-Gesamthochschule* in Hagen, provides university courses of study leading up to *Diplom* and *Magister* degrees. There are distance university centres in many German cities as well, and branches in Austria, Hungary and Switzerland. Other arrangements have been made, notably through distance learning associations set up between *Fachhochschulen* and through a private organisation, The *Akademiker-Gesellschaft für Erwachsenenfortbildung*, which runs private, state-recognised institutions that offer professionally oriented higher education to those in employment.

Degree structure

HEI studies are generally divided into a first stage or *Grundstudium*, at university normally four semesters, leading to an intermediate examination and a second stage or *Hauptstudium*, at university usually 8-10 semesters ending with the final degree examination.

As described on the EU Dialogue with Citizens fact-sheet:

“Higher-education institutions are authorized by law to hold academic examinations (*Hochschulprüfungen*). These examinations, on the basis of which academic degrees are conferred, include:

- the *Diplomprüfung* (Diplom examination), which leads to the *Diplomgrad* (Diplom degree), e.g. *Diplom-ingenieur* (awarded by a university) or *Diplomingenieur* (FH) (awarded by a *Fachhochschule*);
- the *Magisterprüfung* (Magister examination) leading to the *Magistergrad* (Magister degree);
- the *Promotion* (doctorate), leading to the *Doktorgrad* (doctoral degree), e.g. *Doctor philosophiae*.

Some courses leading to professions in which there is a particular public interest end with a *Staatsprüfung* (State examination), e.g. medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, law, teacher training. In the case of law and teacher training, two State examinations are required to obtain the qualification.”

Until recently, doctoral degrees have primarily been awarded after independent research under the supervision of a lecturer and the defense of a thesis. The time stipulated for this award is two to four years. The organization of the doctoral studies in graduate schools is an alternative way which is becoming more and more common. In 1998 around 300 graduate schools – *Graduiertenkollegs* – were established. Some universities are introducing PhD programmes as a pilot project.

Bachelor programmes, three years, and Master’s degree, one to two years more, may be offered alongside the regular above-mentioned traditional degrees. The 1998 University law introduced this possibility and many institutions have introduced this structure. Their existence is reported by the German Rectors’ conference in its publication *Hochschulkompas*.

Admission system

Students who have attended general or vocational secondary schools at upper secondary level (*Hochschulreife* and *Abitur*, or *Fachhochschulreife*), and have chosen the appropriate courses, and passed the necessary leaving examinations are entitled to attend HEIs.

In fields where admission is restricted with *numerus clausus*, places are allocated via a central selection procedure by an agency called *Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen (ZVS)*. The courses included in this procedure may vary from semester to semester. Higher education institutions may also restrict admission locally or in particular subject areas not included in the nation-wide procedure.

Both in the national and the local procedure, selection is mainly based on the average marks received in the *Abitur*, waiting time, aptitude test and social factors.

Tuition fees and student maintenance

Students pay no tuition fees for their first course of study. The exception, in some *Länder*, is the case of students, who have far exceeded the standard period of study and students at a few private institutions. However, students are required to pay a minor social contribution (*Sozialbeitrag*) and, in some *Länder*, a contribution to the administration of student facilities (*Studentenwerksbeitrag*). These fees vary from place to place.

Financial assistance for students is provided through the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, BAFöG*), reformed in 2001. This scheme is jointly financed by the *Bund* (65%) and the *Länder* (35%). All students can apply for financial aid of this type provided their parents' income is below a certain level.

The financial assistance is 50% grant and 50% interest-free loan. The local authority in charge of information about this and other student matters is called *Studentenwerk*.

Main legal framework

The Framework Law on Higher education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz, HRG*) 1998

The Law on financial assistance (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz, BAFöG*) 2001

Hochschulbauförderungsgesetz (HBFG)

Legislation on Higher education of the *Länder*

Authorities and organisations

Federal Ministry for Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung*)
www.bmbf.de/de

Der Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, a forum in which the Ministers from each *Land* meet for discussion and co-ordination.

Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*)

German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (HRK)*) organises 262 HEIs.

Governance structure

Humboldt-Universität, as an example, has a President as its highest chief executive officer and for Vice-Presidents with each their area of general responsibilities which are of a general nature (student affair, international matters, research, budget and administration, etc. The education and research is organised in a number of faculties and departments. Each faculty has a Faculty council with a majority of teaching staff as members and representation of students.

The highest collegial body is the Academic Senate. The university also has a board (*Kuratorium*), with has as members, besides the President and a student representative, an external majority (persons from government, industry and business, cultural sector etc.).

Financing system

The major part of HE funding and student maintenance comes from public sources. As the HEIs are public institutions of the *Länder*, consequently, their current expenditure for research and teaching are primarily funded through the *Länder* budgets.

The Conference of Ministers responsible for higher education in each *Land* has a co-ordinating role and discusses, e.g., whether there Germany should establish Centres of Excellence with extra funding in defined fields.

The primary task for funding from the federal (*Bund*) budget are larger investments (buildings and equipments), the costs of which are shared on a 50/50 basis between *Bund* and *Länder*. Decisions for such funding require recommendations of the Science Council.

Another task for joint funding is the large sector of extra-university research and the central organization for academic research, *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)*, which is the main source of university research funding.

Quality assessment

Current German reform activities include the establishment of evaluation and accreditation system that can satisfy the European quality system plans. According to these plans, all countries participating in the development of the European space for education shall have established by 2005 a structure for internal and external quality insurance systems. In the meantime, regional evaluation agencies and networks are being established in Germany.

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Lacklustre German universities move to stanch brain drain. San Francisco Chronicle, June 23, 2002.
www.sfgate.com/

Humboldt-Universität Berlin. www.hu-berlin.de/hu/org/

Wissenschaftsrat <http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/>

IRELAND

Higher education structure

Higher education is provided mainly by eight universities, 13 institutes of technology and 8 colleges of education. Specialised training in such fields as art, design medicine, theology, music and law is offered by a number of other institutions.

In recent years, higher education capacity has been increase through the opening of new universities, the reform of access systems and the provision of additional places.

A large number of short post-secondary courses are available on completion of second-level education. They are organised mainly in vocational schools and offer a wide variety from repeat Leaving Certificate (see Admission) courses, vocational preparation courses, pre-third level and Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLCs). These were introduced as link programmes from school to work or further education.

Distance study is organised from, among others, The National Distance Education Centre (NDEC) in Dublin. Distance degree courses are available in Information Technology and Humanities (2000).

Degree system

The duration of study for the first degree, the Bachelor's degree, is three or four years. This concerns Arts and Humanities, the Social Sciences, Law and Commerce/Business Studies. First-degree courses in Engineering, Agriculture and Science generally take four years. Five years are required for Architecture, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry. Finally, Medicine in most cases takes six years.

The first postgraduate degree, the Master's degree, requires another one to three years of study. It can be taken either by thesis or by examination and minor thesis.

A further two years at least are normally required for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, PhD. Doctoral degree may also be awarded on the basis of publications, e.g. Doctor of Science, DSc, or Doctor of Literature, DLitt.

About a third of primary degree graduates proceed to further study, which includes postgraduate degrees, teacher training and other professional training.

Since the early 1990s, work has been going on in order to introduce modularisation and semesters and to facilitate credit transfer through the adoption of the ECTS system. A report from the HEA suggested that modules and semesters could be best implemented together. This report also suggested that the module and semester duration should be nationally agreed. A semester should be from 15 to 17 weeks and each semester should give 30 credits. This process is being progressively implemented.

Concerning the Bachelor degree, a distinction is made between General degrees and Honours degrees.

General degrees do not involve as much specialisation as Honours degrees, and may therefore cover a broader range of subjects. They are awarded in the classes: distinction, credit, or pass.

An Honours degree generally needs more in-depth study and it can involve more optional courses, project work or a dissertation. It usually has a longer course duration, four years,

Honours degree may be awarded in the following classes: First Class Honours, Second Class Honours grade I and II, Third Class Honours, or Pass.

Legislative framework

Legislation goes back to Royal Charters from the 16th and 19th centuries. The most recent acts of a more general character are the Irish Universities Act (1908), the Universities Act (1997) and the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. The establishment of new universities has also been preceded by the adoption of specific Acts. A complete list of Acts available at www.heai.ie.

As for the non-university sector, the Vocational Act (1930) established Vocational Education Committees throughout the country and gave these committees the responsibility for the provision of “technical and continuation education”.

Common to both sectors is the Higher Education Grants Act (1968).

Private sector

The private sector colleges are managed and funded through their own system. Some of their exams are validated by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, others by professional institutions and in some cases by universities in the United Kingdom. They receive no state financial support. The most frequented courses are those in business studies, law, languages, business technology and Montessori training.

Admission

The main entry requirement for higher education is the Leaving Certificate, which is taken after 13 years of schooling. Most pupils are 17 or 18 years old on leaving school. Because of competition for places, a student with Leaving Certificate is not automatically entitled to a place at a university.

Each institution decides how many students it will admit to its undergraduate programmes. Where necessary, places are allocated in order of merit on the basis of qualifications in the secondary school-leaving examination.

The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes applications to most institutions providing undergraduate study programmes. On the same form applicants may choose, in order of preference, up to 10 courses from the degree list and up to 10 courses from the diploma/certificate list.

Applications for postgraduate courses are made directly to the relevant institution.

As for admission of non-EU students are accepted on the basis of examination performance. Individual applications are assessed by the institution.

Authorities and organisations

At national level, the Department of Education and Science has the overall responsibility for the administration of higher education. The Department directly funds the Institutes of Technology, whereas the Universities and other HEIs are funded from the Higher Education Authority. This Authority is a planning and budgetary agency with specific responsibilities for the universities and certain designated institutions.

The role of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) is to develop a national framework of qualifications, generally outside the universities, which ensures standards, facilitates learning and progression to further qualifications. NQAI also has functions related to the recognition of qualifications obtained abroad since it serves as national agent for academic recognition information centre (NARIC). Decisions on recognition are taken on an individual basis by the colleges after consulting relevant department/faculty.

The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), funded by NQAI, is the qualifications awarding body for HEIs outside the universities. The awards now include certificates, diplomas and degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) promotes quality awards in further education and validates the quality of programmes. The Central Applications Office (CAO) processes applications for universities, institutes of technology, colleges of education and other specialised HEIs.

The Conference of the Heads of Irish Universities (CHIU) is the organisation of university presidents and university college heads for discussion of university affairs and liaison with HE authorities.

The Conference of Irish University Administrators holds meetings and conferences to discuss issues of common interest and promote staff development programmes.

The Irish Council for Science Technology and Innovation (ICSTI) gives advice to government on planning aspects.

Finance structure

Most higher education is provided in institutions that are supported by the State. Universities and institutes of technology receive more than 90% of their income from public sources.

Tuition fees and student support

Tuition fees for EU nationals attending full-time undergraduate courses in state funded HEIs were abolished in 1996. Such students do pay a registration charge (c. € 700 in 2004). Non-EU students pay tuition fees at a premium rate (up to 300%).

Needs-related student maintenance grants are provided to a large number of new entrants to higher education. Some students have received European Social Fund awards, mostly for technological studies. Furthermore an additional section of students were given local authority grants for university and other degree courses.

Quality assessment

The Higher Education Authority continually evaluates higher education and has advisory functions relating to the sector. It is also responsible for monitoring the quality audit systems within individual institutions. Furthermore, self-evaluation, which is required by law to be cyclical, is continuously undertaken by the individual colleges. External examiners are involved in monitoring standards for the award of degrees. Arrangements are being made for the implementation of evaluation findings and the development of performance indicators. A joint working group of university presidents and authority representatives have been established for this.

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Higher Education Authority www.heai.ie/system!system1.htm

ISRAEL

Higher education system

Israel's higher education system comprises close to 60 accredited institutions (2004) and can be broken down into seven categories:

- Universities, serving the dual purpose of teaching and research. The universities maintain a variety of programs of study that have been approved by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) and they are authorized to award all academic degrees - bachelor's, master's and the doctorate.
- Arts Academies, non-university institutions of higher education and their main activity is teaching combined with creative work in workshops. The academies maintain programs of study leading to the bachelor's and master's degrees.
- Comprehensive Academic Colleges, maintaining programs of study leading to the bachelor's degree and, in increasing instances, to the master's degree.
- Academic Colleges of Engineering, maintaining programs of study leading primarily to the bachelor's degree, in fields of technology and engineering.
- Academic Colleges for the Training of Teachers, maintaining programs of study leading primarily to the bachelor's degree in education.
- Academic Programs under University Auspices in Regional Colleges, offering undergraduate academic programs under the auspices of universities. Students start their undergraduate studies at a regional college and complete their studies at, and receive the degree from the university.
- Extensions or Branches of Foreign Institutions. These extensions or branches must obtain a license from the CHE in order to operate in Israel. They are not accredited by the CHE and they are not Israeli institutions. The degrees they award are academic degrees of the parent institution abroad.

Distance education

The Open University is based on distance learning and part-time studies for bachelor's and master's degrees in various fields of study.

Degree structure

Universities, in general, grant bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Other institutions grant, in general, the bachelor's degree, although an increasing number may now grant a master's degree also.

Legal framework

The framework of the HE system is defined in the Council for Higher Education Law, enacted in 1958.

It defines the status of the institutions and states that they enjoy academic and administrative independence.

A number of important amendments have been added to the Council for Higher Education Law. For instance, Amendment no. 10 (1995) enabled colleges to be recognized as institutions of higher education and amendment no. 11 (1998) brought foreign affiliates within the supervisory purview of the Council for Higher Education and obliged them to obtain a license to operate in Israel.

Governance structure

The governance structure of universities is currently undergoing a transformation. The previous structure was dualistic, with universities headed equally by a President and a Rector, and with a Board of Governors, Executive Committee and Senate. The universities will soon have more hierarchical structures, with the Rector subordinate to the President, who will be the sole head of the university.

Colleges and other higher education institutions are smaller and their organisational structures, consequently, are less comprehensive.

Financing of higher education

All universities, arts academies, academic colleges of engineering, and most comprehensive academic colleges are budgeted through the Planning and Budgeting Committee; the academic colleges for the training of teachers are funded through the Ministry of Education. Some institutions operate without public funding.

In determining the allocation of resources the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) of the Council for Higher Education employs models for evaluation of research and instruction output.

The budget allocation model is based on various components: student numbers, where tariff per student and expected number of graduates in various fields are important elements, research output, and teaching quality criteria.

Tuition fees

Both at publicly supported and non-publicly supported institutions students pay tuition fees. Tuition fees at institutions that are publicly funded are set by the Government, and are approximately \$2000 per year. Non-publicly supported institutions and foreign affiliates set their own tuition fees, which can be much higher than those in publicly supported institutions.

As in some other countries, there is an ongoing discussion about the level of tuition fees.

Authorities and organisations

The Council for Higher Education is the sole statutory body responsible for higher education. Among its functions are - to accredit HEI, to grant permits to run academic programmes and confer degrees, and to license branches and extensions of foreign universities to operate in Israel. A new function of the CHE is quality assurance, of which more below.

The Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) is a permanent subcommittee of the Council and its executive arm, to which the Council for Higher Education has delegated certain responsibilities. The PBC serves as an independent intermediary body between the Government and the institutions of

higher education, in all matters relating to allocations for higher education. Its main functions are - to exclusively allocate the State budget to the institutions of higher education, taking into account the needs of society and the State, while safe-guarding academic freedom and assuring the promotion of research and teaching; to ensure that institutional budgets are balanced and to monitor the financial solvency of the institutions; to draw up plans for the coordinated and efficient development of higher education at the national level; and to submit its recommendations to the CHE concerning requests to open new institutions or new units in existing institutions, after examination of the planning and budgetary implications of their implementation.

Non-publicly supported institutions

In recent years, the demand for higher education has been such that the capacity of the existing institutions has not been sufficient to cover the demands of students in certain fields of study, over and beyond what are considered to be the needs of the economy and society. Because of the high interest of students in the fields of law and management, for instance, institutions that are not publicly funded have been authorized to offer study programmes to anyone who wishes to study these subjects. Because they receive no public funding, financial and planning aspects of new programs or institutions (beyond their financial stability) are not examined. Otherwise, the accreditation process for publicly supported and non-publicly supported institutions is identical.

Quality assessment

Until recently most institutions and programs were evaluated thoroughly before receiving accreditation. However, in June 2003 the CHE decided to establish a national mechanism of quality assurance and assessment in higher education. A new unit in the secretariat of the CHE was set up to implement this decision and to plan, organize and carry out quality reviews in the Israeli higher education system. The decision calls for a regular program of quality reviews on two levels: at the level of the individual program of study, according to specific fields or sectors (i.e. - all programs in a specific field at one time) and at the institutional level. Programs of study are to be assessed once every six years, and entire institutions are to be assessed once every eight years. Program assessments will be based on institutional self-evaluation and on questionnaires and will be carried out by committees of experts in the field, including experts from abroad. Institutional assessments will be based primarily on the results of the subject assessments and will also be carried out by committees appointed by the CHE, including experts from abroad and public representatives.

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THE NETHERLANDS

Higher education structure

The Dutch system education is a binary system that comprises

- higher professional education (*Hoger beroepsonderwijs, HBO*) (1)
- university education (2)

The system also includes

- distance learning at HE-level (3), and
- post-graduate education (4)

Institutional system

(1) In the higher professional education sector there are about 60 *hogescholen* (1999). They vary from large institutions, offering programmes in most sectors of higher education, to smaller institutions for a single specialist field. Together they offer 200 courses. Programmes of a *hogeschool* are comparable to those of the new universities in Britain and to the *Fachhochschulen* in Germany. *Hogescholen* provides theoretical and practical training, and prepare students for specific professions.

(2) As for university level, primarily academic education, the Netherlands has 13 ordinary universities, including three technical universities and one agricultural university. Their focus is on the theory and the generation of knowledge through research.

(3) There is also one establishment providing open higher distance education, the Open University of the Netherlands. (OUNL). It has been turned into a consortium in which universities and *hogescholen* participate: The Dutch Digital University.

In addition, there are 58 private institutions, which fall under the Higher Education and Research Act, for recognition of their degrees, but which do not receive public funding. The institutions have the power to set up and close courses according to demand, provided they take into account the need for an efficient distribution of courses around the country.

(4) As for post-graduate education, the Netherlands is also establishing a system of research schools. They will include all doctoral students under the so-called *assistant in opleiding, AiO*-system, which comprises a four year appointment for research training and to a limited extent, teaching and administration.

There are also 13 institutes for International Education offering post-graduate courses in a wide range of fields. The courses are conducted in English and have been designed with foreign students in mind. For admission to most of the courses, a degree is required as well as several years of practical work experience. Courses at these institutes vary in length. The longer ones lead to a master's degree.

Degree structures

University education

As described by the Netherlands Organization for International Co-operation in Higher Education, Nuffic, www.nuffic.nl, the Dutch HE Act of 1993 has been revised to accommodate a degree structure including bachelor's and master's degrees, and HEIs have organized study programmes accordingly. Students who enrolled while the "old" system was in force will continue to study in the system in which they started, however. This means that both old and new systems will exist simultaneously for several more years.

In the old system, up until 2002, university programmes revolved around one major degree before the doctorate, a degree known in Dutch as the *doctoraal*. A *doctoraal* programme is not divided into an undergraduate and graduate phase, but combines enough depth and breadth to be considered comparable in many countries to a master's degree, and all university graduates can use the title *Master*. University study programmes require four years of full-time study in many fields, or five years of full-time study in engineering math/natural sciences and agriculture. University curricula focus on the major field in which the degree is earned and do not include components that could be classified as liberal arts. These are covered in the university preparatory stream of secondary school known as VWO, which qualifies young people for university study.

Independent research is an important part of every university programme. The *doctoraal* thesis is a major requirement. This is a thesis written on the basis of the student's own original research. The best *doctoraal* theses find their way into scientific journals in abbreviated form, as articles. A *doctoraal* degree confers eligibility for the pursuit of a doctorate through a process known as the *promotie*.

This entails four years of full-time research following the *doctoraal* under the supervision of a *promotor*, who must be a full professor at a university. To earn the title 'doctor', a student must write a dissertation based on his or her own research project, and then successfully defend it in a public ceremony before a committee of professors. The Dutch doctor's degree is considered to be equivalent to a PhD.

Individuals with a *doctoraal* degree use the academic title *Doctorandus (drs.)* unless their field is engineering or agriculture, in which case the title is *ingenieur (ir.)*, or law, in which case the title is *meester (mr.)*.

After 2002: Beginning with the academic year 2002-2003, university degree programmes are organized around a bachelor's or undergraduate phase lasting three years and a master's or graduate phase lasting one of two years, depending on the discipline. Although universities primarily offer programmes with an academic emphasis, the new legislation permits universities to offer programmes in the applied arts and sciences at both undergraduate and graduate levels. All universities will of course continue to award the doctor's degree in the way described above. Master's programmes in engineering, math/natural sciences and agriculture will require two years of study to complete and all other programmes will last one year. A bachelor's programme provides a broad, in-depth exposure to the discipline in question. Some universities require students to complete the requirements not only for a major subject, but in a minor subject as well. Upon completion, students obtain the degree Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science, depending on the discipline. Graduates can opt to continue studying for a master's degree, or terminate their studies and look for employment in their field.

For admission to a master's programme, a bachelor's degree in one of more specified disciplines is required. Universities also offer "top master's" programmes, designed to attract the most qualified students. Admission to these programmes will be based on more selective criteria. A master's degree programme is characterized by increase specialization and the development and implementation of research skills, resulting in a master's thesis. Graduates obtain the degree Master of Arts/Master of Science.

Higher professional education

Before 2002: Like the universities, degree programmes offered in higher professional education up until 2002 revolve around one degree, and all degree programmes require four years to complete. Internships, or periods of work placement in a company or other organization, are important components in these programmes, which are always strongly oriented towards specific careers. Unlike the universities described above, the universities of professional education, *hogescholen*, do not conduct fundamental research and they do not offer possibilities for pursuing a doctorate. Individuals who earn a diploma from a university of professional education may use the title *Baccalaureus (bc.)*, or, in engineering and agriculture, the title *ingenieur (ing.)*. According to Dutch law, all graduates of higher professional education programmes can use the title Bachelor.

After 2002: The introduction of a new bachelor/master degree structure has had less of an impact on undergraduate degree programmes offered by universities of professional education than it has on those offered by universities. Degree programmes last four years, an extensive period of work placement remains an important part of the programme, and students are required to write a major paper of complete a major project in the fourth year. Upon graduation, students receive a bachelor's degree indicating the field of study completed (i.e. Bachelor of Engineering, B Eng, Bachelor of Nursing B Nursing). Although universities of professional education will continue to offer programmes with and emphasis on the applied arts and sciences, the new legislation permits these institutions to offer programmes with an academic focus as well. Universities of professional education will also offer professional master's degree programmes. Many of these are available on a part-time basis, enabling students to combine work and study.

Admission requirements

University education

Applicants must possess an upper secondary school certificate, VWO, sit an HBO foundation course examination in order to get a HBO foundation diploma, or take an entrance examination (*colloquium doctum*).

There is a centralized admission system for allocating places at universities. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decides which courses are to be subject to an admission quota. If a numerus clausus applies, students are selected by lottery.

Higher professional education

Students wishing to enrol must possess a HAVO, VWO or MBO qualification. They may, in addition, be required to have studied specific subjects to a certain level. Furthermore, institutions may impose other requirements related to the particular profession. If interest in a course exceeds the number of places available, a lottery is held.

Main legal framework

The 1985 Open University Act (WOU) gave the statutory framework to the Open University of the Netherlands.

In 1993, the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) was adopted. It comprises regulation of higher professional education, university education, research and distance education.

In 1996, the Quality and Practicability Act was adopted.

In 2002, the above WHW act was changed, making it legally possible for Dutch HEIs to grant Bachelor and Master degrees. Together with this change, a new law on accreditation was also approved and the European Credit Transfer System is implemented.

Authorities and organisations - Private and Public Institutions

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has the overall responsibility for policy-making, finance, recognition and quality assurance. The Ministry's Higher Education and Research Plan (HOOP) sets out the government's intentions regarding HE policy overview for the coming four years.

The SURF Foundation is the HE and research partnership organisation for network services and ICT infrastructure development.

The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education provides information on the system internationally. Other areas of activity are development cooperation and international credential evaluation.

The Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) represents the interests of the 14 Dutch universities.

Association of Universities of Professional Education *HBO-raad* brings together all government-funded universities of professional education (UPEs) in the Netherlands.

Governance structure

In the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) at the same time as it provides a framework regulation on matters as planning, funding, administration and organisation in the HE sector, it also establishes the concept of autonomy is an important element. In fact, detailed governmental regulation has been replaced by more general control provisions and selective intervention.

The main regulations concerning higher education are embedded in the Funding decree and the Implementation Decrees.

Financing system

Once a course is entered in the Central Register of Higher Education, the institution concerned is entitled to funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for that course.

The distribution of government grants to the universities partly depends on such performance indicators as the numbers of diplomas, first-year students and doctoral degrees. Universities may

divide their state aid between 'education' and 'research' as they see fit. Each university bears the cost of its housing and infrastructure.

Institutions for higher professional (HBO) education receive funding from a variety of sources. In addition to government grants, these institutions rely on tuition fees and revenue from external work (primarily contract education). Of the total state contribution, nearly 92% is made available in the form of a lump sum. Also HBO institutions independently decide on the most effective allocation of these funds to cover personnel, materials and housing costs. The government allotment per student, including the other expenses, decreased from € 4,900 in 1996 to € 4,500 in 2000.

University research is financed via three different flows of funds: the central government, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, and other income (from international and national bodies and organisations).

Tuition fees and student maintenance

Students at Dutch higher education institutions have to pay tuition fees. Annual increases are prescribed by statute. Annual tuition fee at HEIs are in the order of 850 Euros per year.

Students up to the age of 27 are entitled to a basic grant. The amount depends on the type of education and on whether or not the student is living away from home. Students can also get a loan which is not repayable if they make enough "points" through exams and papers each year. After the age of 27, all financial support is in the form of interest-bearing loans for a maximum duration of two years. There is also additional financial assistance, depending on the income of the parents and the student's own income. Finally, students are issued a card that gives them free or reduced fare travel on public transport.

Quality assessment system

An independent public system of quality inspection (external review and accreditation) ensures that quality standards are met.

The Higher Education and Research Act contains general provisions applicable to the entire higher education sector and provisions that apply specifically to higher professional education, the universities and the Open University. These relate to the structure of courses and institutions, parameters relating to the organisation such of as entry requirements with regards to previous education and study loads. The Act also contains regulations concerning examinations, students, participation in decision-making, staff, planning and funding as well as provisions concerning co-operation between institutions.

From 1996 to 2002, 1996 the independent Dutch Validation Council validated master programmes offered at *hogescholen*.

For the universities, the above mentioned VSNU association is in charge of the quality work. Each study programme is evaluated by a committee once every six years and each research programme once every five years. The recommendations are, however, never binding. The institutions themselves decide on actions to be taken. Final reports are published and can be downloaded from the VSNU-site a month after presentation (in English for research, often Dutch for education).

A new accreditation system was introduced in 2002. Courses are awarded a hallmark if they meet certain basic standards. The process involves self-evaluation and inspection by a review committee.

The responsibility for the procedure is with the Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO). It decides after receiving the committee's report whether the course will be accredited, i.e. recognized, or not. Only accredited programmes will be eligible for issuing recognized degrees, for government funding and for financial aid to students. Accredited programmes will be listed in the Central Register of Higher Education Study programmes. The NAO plans to review all study programmes by 2006.

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NEW ZEALAND

Higher education system

The Education Act (1989), which covers all levels of education in New Zealand, recognises four categories of public tertiary education institution; universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and *wananga* (which offer education and training in and through Maori traditions, customs and language). The Education Act defines processes under which private education organisations may be recognised and provides for quality assurance to be maintained by a New Zealand Qualifications Authority. The NZQA, in principle, oversees all institutions and all tertiary education programmes. However, the Authority delegates many of its powers where public tertiary education institutions, and especially universities, are concerned.

Both public and private organisations can potentially deliver academic programmes at any level, within a National Qualifications Framework that extends from technical and vocational certificates to doctorates. The Education Act requires that all programmes at degree level and above be delivered mainly by staff members active in research.

The Act was amended in 2002 to establish a Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) responsible for system-wide funding and strategic coordination, and bring industry-based vocational training, as well as that undertaken within education institutions, within the ambit of the Commission.

Tertiary education organisations

There are eight universities, twenty polytechnics and institutes of technology, (one of which, Unitec New Zealand, although legally classified as an institute of technology, is substantially concerned with university-level studies), four colleges of education, and three *wananga*. In addition to these public institutions, over 800 private organisations offer a wide range of programmes, and a few have been authorised by the NZQA to deliver degrees.

Qualifications

A very wide range of certificates and diplomas is available for those engaged in vocational education and training. These include “national” programmes, based on an accumulation of credits granted on the basis of assessment against specific sets of competencies referred to as “unit standards”. Training and assessment for “national” qualifications can be carried out either in the workplace or in a public or private institution. However, most certificates and diplomas are awarded by institutions following structured academic programmes that vary in duration from one semester to six semesters when pursued on a full-time basis.

Undergraduate degrees are available in most public institutions. The programmes normally take six semesters in Arts, Commerce, Science, Agriculture and Horticulture. Programmes in Engineering, Law, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Science, Optometry and Physiotherapy, take eight semesters. Programmes in Architecture and Dentistry take ten semesters while those in Medicine take twelve semesters.

Completion of a six-semester “ordinary” degree programme may be followed by two further semesters of study leading to the award of an “honours” degree. Longer degree programmes lead to qualifications granted “with honours”, often on the basis of extra studies undertaken within the normal compass of the programme.

Masters degrees are offered at universities, Unitec New Zealand and a few other institutions. The normal prerequisite for entrance is an undergraduate degree. These programmes may sometimes be completed in only two semesters when entrants hold an honours degree, but normally take four semesters.

Masters degrees have traditionally been granted on the basis of supervised research leading to publication of a thesis. However, “professional” degrees that involve substantial course-work, supplemented by a project undertaken in the workplace, have become more common. They are often designed to meet the needs of professional practitioners for specialised studies following an initial period of supervised practice.

Doctoral studies, based on original research leading to a published thesis, extend to at least four full-time semesters, with six semesters being the normal minimum, and culminate in the award of a PhD. This degree is available at all universities and at Unitec New Zealand.

Professional doctorates, based on course work extending over two semesters, followed by a substantial research project extending over four semesters and with direct application in the relevant professional area, are becoming more common. Examples include the Doctorates in Business Administration at Massey University, Computing at Unitec New Zealand, Pharmacy at Auckland University and Health Science at Auckland University of Technology.

Higher Doctorates are normally awarded on the basis of published work.

Distance education

The Open Polytechnic provides distance learning at trades, technician and degree levels by correspondence, linked with periodic face-to-face practical instruction. Massey University also provides extensive distance education programmes, mainly at degree and postgraduate level. Most institutions now offer e-learning opportunities to supplement face-to-face study.

Admission standards

In order to gain admission to university, all school leavers must reach a minimum standard in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement. Entrance to high-demand programmes is often selective, with higher standards being required. Other institutions are more flexible in dealing with applications from motivated school leavers, and all institutions can and do apply more than just academic criteria when dealing with applications from mature students.

Grading system

Most institutions use a subject-by-subject grading system based on a scale of nine passing grades (from A+ to C-) and two failing grades (D and E). There is no direct equivalent to the “grade point average” system.

Legal framework

The Education Act provides the basic framework, but institutions are bound by a wide range of regulations made under the Act and by the requirements of other, more general, legislation covering areas such as occupational health and safety, industrial relations, and so forth.

Under the amendments made to the Education Act in 2002, which established the TEC, the government must issue a Tertiary Education Strategy each year setting out broad goals for the sector, and individual institutions are required to prepare Charters and Profiles defining their character and explaining how they will contribute to meeting the goals of that Strategy.

Quality assurance

- The New Zealand Qualifications Authority is responsible for quality assurance throughout the tertiary education system. The authority administers the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), grants “national” competency-based vocational awards, accredits all tertiary providers and programmes, maintains a national register of qualifications, evaluates overseas qualifications for immigration and employment purposes, and provides information and support to countries wishing to establish or review qualifications frameworks or quality assurance systems.

Funding system

For fifteen years following the passage of the Education Act (1989) all institutions, public and private, were essentially funded on the basis of student load. Institutions were free to set and charge tuition fees, which were supplemented by a bulk funding allocation based on student load at subject level, with each subject being assigned to one of more than thirty funding categories. The bulk funding allocation covered all capital expenditure by institutions and, for subjects at degree level and above, included a component intended to cover the costs of the research necessarily undertaken to support teaching and learning.

The system has been modified somewhat as a result of the 2002 reforms. While still free to set and charge tuition fees, institutions must now maintain those fees within certain limits (still established at subject rather than programme level). The research component is being progressively withdrawn from bulk funding, and being reallocated from a Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) based on the outcomes of a periodic research assessment exercise. The government is exploring the possibility of allocating part of the remaining bulk funding on the basis of measures of teaching quality, but this remains a complex and controversial area. Finally, funded enrolments in private providers are now subject to capping, and the capital component has been withdrawn from the bulk funding provided to such organisations.

Tuition fees are covered by a government loan scheme with concessional interest rates (no interest accrues during active study) and income-contingent repayment. Students can also access a living allowance that operates in a similar manner. Grants may be available instead of loans in some cases, but are subject to stringent income and asset tests.

Governance structure

Public institutions are governed by their own Councils, constituted on a representative model, but with a reasonable measure of freedom for the specific needs of institutions to be reflected in the constitutions of their Councils. All institutions in receipt of government funding are subject to public

sector accounting processes. The Council of each institution has power to make statutes governing the conduct of the institution and to decide its strategic directions and priorities, within the constraints of the Charter and Profile negotiated with TEC.

Tuition fees

International students enrolled in undergraduate programmes must pay the full cost of those programmes, and the annual fees can vary considerably depending on the number and level of subjects taken. A typical range might be from around 12,500 NZD for a business degree at a polytechnic to 40,000 NZD for a medical degree at a university. In all cases, additional fees are likely to be charged for course materials, buildings, student services and assistance, amenities and other administrative services. International students must also have insurance to cover health care costs. Some scholarships may be available.

Domestic students pay substantially lower fees, since government provides bulk funding as previously described. High levels of competition within the sector mean that there is much less variation across the sector than might be expected and the imposition of maximum fees will probably cause even tighter grouping in the future. A typical range might be from around 3,500 NZD for a business degree to 10,000 NZD for a medical degree.

In all cases, postgraduate fees will be higher, but substantial scholarships are much more likely to be available than at undergraduate level, at least for research-based programmes.

Authorities and organisations

The *Ministry of Education* is responsible for government policy and monitors the financial performance of public institutions. <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>

The *Tertiary Education Commission* is responsible for funding all tertiary education offered by universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, *wananga*, private providers, foundation education agencies, industry training organisations and adult and community education providers. TEC also oversees the implementation of the Tertiary Education Strategy. <http://www.tec.govt.nz>

The *New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee* promotes the interests of the universities, administers scholarships and fosters international linkages. <http://www.nzvcc.ac.nz>

A body now known as *Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand* (formerly the *Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand*) acts as an advocate for nineteen of the twenty polytechnics and institutes of technology, promotes quality through the sector, and promotes polytechnic education and training. <http://www.itpnz.ac.nz>

Unitec New Zealand is a major dual-sector institution, which does not currently belong to either of the above associations, and should therefore be contacted directly. <http://www.unitec.ac.nz>

The *Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand* is the coordinating body for the colleges of education. <http://www.acenz.ac.nz>

Several bodies have been established to represent the interests of private tertiary education organisations, particularly in their relationships with government and government agencies. The most influential is the *New Zealand Association of Private Education Providers*. <http://www.nzapep.co.nz/>

NORWAY

Higher education system

Higher education consists of courses at universities and university colleges. Entrance to such institutions is normally gained on the basis of upper secondary education. With the exception of some private university colleges, all are state-run, but have considerable academic and administrative autonomy.

Universities

Higher education in Norway is mainly offered at four full-scale universities, six specialised university institutions and two national institutes of the arts and 26 state university colleges, all of them state-owned.

The universities and university colleges of arts and sciences are all engaged in both teaching and research. They offer first and second degree courses varying from four to seven years and also doctoral programmes. Particular efforts are currently being made to encourage students to register for courses in mathematics, science and technology subjects.

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State University Colleges

The aim of the state university colleges is to make higher education more widely available while increasing the amount of academic expertise available to the different regions of Norway. The 26 colleges primarily offer shorter courses of a more vocational orientation than those offered by the universities. Courses normally have a duration of two to four years. In addition to teacher training and courses in engineering, health and social work and other vocational courses of two to four years' duration, the colleges offer undergraduate courses interchangeable with those offered by the universities. These make an important contribution to the decentralisation of higher education. Many students combine courses at the colleges with courses at universities. Some colleges now offer second degree courses. One of the colleges has been given the right to grant doctorates. The university colleges are also engaged in research and development work including development work within the arts.

In addition, there are around 25 private colleges that provide officially recognised higher education with support from the state.

Adult education is offered at various institutions and levels (universities, colleges and organisations).

Degree structure

As described by NOKUT, "the *Høgskolekandidat* degree is obtained after two years of study. This degree may be built upon to obtain a Bachelors degree. The degree is offered at state university

colleges and a few private institutions. The *Bachelor's degree* is awarded by all the state universities, specialized university institutions, state university colleges and some of the other higher education institutions, both private and public. It is obtained after three years of study. The national university institutes of the arts offer a Bachelor's degree of four years' duration.

The *Master's degree* is awarded by the state universities and specialised university institutions. State university colleges and private institutions may on programme by programme accredited basis offer Master degree courses... The degree is obtained after 1 ½ -2 years of study. An important part of this degree is independent research work between 30-60 *studiepoeng*"/ECTS credits (1 to 2 semesters).

For internationalisation purposes, some Master's degree courses with instruction in English have been introduced at universities and state university colleges, and at some private institutions.

Various *professional qualifications* are awarded by all the state higher education institutions and a number of the private higher education institutions. These programmes/degrees are of four to six years' duration and cover both regulated and non-regulated professions.

The *Doctoral degree*, PhD, is awarded after three years of study following completion of a Master's degree or a professional degree/programme. Doctoral programmes, which are essentially research programmes, are offered by all university-level institutions, some state university colleges and a few private institutions have accredited some few doctoral programmes."

Credit system and grading

The academic year normally runs from mid-August to mid-June and lasts for 10 months. Courses are measured in "studiepoeng" according to the ECTS standard (European Credit Transfer System credits). The full-time workload for one academic year is 60 "studiepoeng"/ECTS credits.

Grades for undergraduate and postgraduate examinations are awarded according to a graded scale from A (highest) to F (lowest), with E as the minimum pass grade. A pass/fail mark is given for a number of examinations - (NOKUT).

Admissions

The general admission requirement is successful completion of upper secondary education. Admission can also be based on other qualifications recognised as being on par with the general matriculation standard. Some fields have additional entrance requirements.

Legal framework

The Universities and Colleges Act (No 22), applicable as of January 1st 1996, amended several times, gave a common legal basis for the university and non-university sector.

The Act of 11 June 1986, amended in 2002, regulates private higher education and recognition of study programmes at private colleges

In the beginning of 2004 a proposal for a new Act regulating both public and private higher education is under discussion.

Higher education authorities

All HEIs are subject to the authority of the Ministry of Education and Research <http://odin.dep.no/ufd.engelsk/>

NOKUT is an independent national agency for accreditation and evaluation (see below, Quality assessment). www.nokut.no

The Norwegian Council for Higher Education has the universities, the national schools of higher learning, and the university colleges as members. The aims of the Council are: to develop strategies for the system of HEIs, to promote co-ordination and division of labour within the HE sector, and to serve the members in international co-operation matters. www.uhr.no

The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU) is an administrative agency under the Ministry of Education and Research. It has coordinating functions in the field of internationalisation, exchange and mobility, and it is the Norwegian agency for international programmes. www.socrates.no/vev.nsf/O/About+SIU

Governance structure

Under the 1995 Universities and Colleges Act, the universities and colleges are governed by a board and as a rule, also by a Council. The Ministry may however exempt an institution from having a council, and has done so for many institutions. In such cases, the role of the council must be taken care of by other bodies at the institution. The universities 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 decides of the budget and draws up the strategies for the institution's educational, research and other academic activities. The Board has 11 members, including four lay members appointed by the Ministry, and two student representatives.

Finance Structure

Higher education in Norway is mostly State funded. The Parliament, *Stortinget*, determines, as part of the annual budget procedure, the total amount of State funding for each institution. It is channelled through the Ministry of Education and Research and meant to cover most of the running costs of the institutions. This funding can be divided into three main categories. The first is the budget for salaries and other ordinary costs, the second includes the budget for investments and new equipment, while the third is for other measures such as activities common to several institutions.

For the purpose of national co-ordination of budgetary and academic resources, the Ministry decides which subject areas and professional degrees an institution can offer. Universities may then decide on what programmes they wish to offer including Ph.D. programmes. State university Colleges may decide on what Bachelor programmes they should offer, and may apply to NOKUT for accreditation for Master programmes.

Some decentralisation of the decision-making has, however, taken place. All institutions now have the right to start or to discontinue any courses up to 30 credits (1,5 years of full time study), subject to peer review.

The remaining post secondary education programmes are financed by grants. Such grants are given to county authorities, municipalities, organisations and institutions, companies and national associations of companies, the latter in accordance with the requirements of the Adult Education Act. The study associations may also receive contributions from public funds according to rules set out in the same act.

Tuition Fees

Education including higher education in state institutions is all free in Norway... The students have however, to pay a small term fee for the running of student welfare activities. Private higher education institutions, however, ask tuitions fees from their students depending on the amount of state funding.

Student maintenance

The State Educational Loan Fund provides financial support to students in the form of loans and/or grants for subsistence costs. The support can be obtained by students attending either upper secondary or higher education and it is also available for recognised study programmes abroad. Loans are interest-free during the studies. The grant part is released on the basis of completed term exams.

Quality assurance

From 1998-2002, a semi-independent advisory body to the Ministry, the Network Norway Council had among its tasks to supervise the quality of HE. From 2003 part of this was made into a new National Agency of Educational Quality (NOKUT). The purpose of NOKUT is to help develop the quality of higher education in Norway through evaluation, accreditation and recognition of quality systems, institutions and course provisions. The new agency makes its decisions independently of the Ministry and the HEIs. All state-owned institutions are considered as accredited institutions. NOKUT is authorised to accredit the obligatory Quality Assurance Schemes of Universities and other HEIs, and accredit Master courses at State University Colleges. .

Existing institutions may seek accreditation in a higher category and private institutions have to seek accreditation separately for every programme they wish to offer. They can also apply for institutional accreditation in any of the three categories. The system, thus, is based on a combination of institutional and programme accreditation.

In addition, NOKUT considers individual applications for general recognition of foreign qualifications. It is also the Norwegian ENIC-NARIC centre, providing foreign institutions with information on the educational system and on the recognition systems. www.nokut.no

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RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Higher education structure

Over the last ten years, the system of higher education has undergone considerable change. As observed by Anna Smolentseva (1), significant change has taken place in the following areas:

- “in goals--with an orientation toward the needs of the market, society, and individuals;
- in structure--decentralization (in contrast to Soviet centralized planning);
- in the autonomy of higher educational institutions--the emergence of private higher education, four- and two-year programs along with the traditional five-year program; and the elimination of a bias toward engineering specialties;
- in financing--diversification of financial sources instead of a reliance solely on state financing; and
- in content--increasing the humanitarian components in the curriculum, and diversifying programs and courses

Following the provisions of the 1992 Law on Education and responding to the rising demand and the need to generate revenue the state educational institutions acquired more autonomy, opened new programs and started enrolling commercial students. New non governmental universities and institutions have been set up. By 2002 their number amounted to 384.

At the same time the Russian higher education system remains relatively centralized: the Federal Government provides no less than 50% of all higher education institutional expenditures and keeps all state-owned institutions' funds under strict control through a special system of treasury accounts. It provides accreditation, attestation and licensing of all institutions, private or public. It also establishes considerably detailed unified standards of HE programs defining the curricular and content for all disciplines and has a monopoly on diplomas confirming higher education degree.

HE institution system

At present, the current Russian HE community consists of over 1000 HEIs, 655 which are state institutions. In 1990 there were only about 700 institutions. During the last 10 years, both state and non-state HEIs have created more than 2000 branches. Of these, 64% are registered as state institutions, and 36 % as non-state HEIs.

In 2002/2003, out of 6 million students about 5.2 million or 87% are registered at state HEI. Thus, 36% of non-state institutions enrol about 13% of students. (Образование в Россиiskoy Federacii, Statistical Survey. Ministry of Education of the RF, StateUniversity – Higher School of Economic publication, Moscow, 2003, p.170)

A large number of the faculty members at private universities are full-time employees at public universities. They are employed as part-time staff in private institutions to teach general courses that every university is expected to offer.

Russia has four types of institutions.

- **Universities:** responsible for education and research in a variety of disciplines. There are “classical” and “technical” universities with special attention paid respectively to social sciences and humanities or natural fundamental and applied (engineering) sciences. Unofficial ratings also make a distinction between old “classical” universities and “new” universities, former pedagogical or technical institutions, which have acquired their university status quite recently.
- **Academies:** responsible for education and research. They differ from universities only in that they restrict themselves to a single discipline;
- **Institutes:** multi-discipline oriented. They can be independent structural units, or part of a university or academy and they usually specialize in one field, but pedagogical institutes are responsible for all spectrum of disciplines taught at schools.
- **Private institutions:** present in increasing numbers. They offer degrees in mostly non-engineering fields such as business, culture, sociology and religion. Other popular fields are law and psychology.

Degree structure

Currently there are only two types of diploma (degrees) which are officially recognized as ones of completed higher education – these are diploma of specialist and diploma of magistr (master).

The Bachelor diploma and the certificate of “incomplete higher education” are not regarded as high education degrees. In some cases (mainly at organizations with foreign relations) a bachelor degree suffices for beginners to start a career. Anyway bachelors (or undergraduates) are not allowed to take positions where higher education is necessary by labour law or by custom. Neither can they get the research degree of Candidate of Sciences. Furthermore, male graduates are drafted as soldiers and must serve for two years while specialists and magistrs have half a year shorter conscription period.

It should be noted that Russia has signed Bologna Declaration and by the year 2010 the transition to a two- tier degree structure should be completed. This objective is specified as one of the ultimate goals of the country’s educational reforms.

Admission system

Many students wishing to enrol at a university needs additional preparation to gain admission. Only on-third of students are estimated to enter university relying only on the knowledge acquired in school. Another on-third take special preparatory courses. Others either hire private tutors or educate themselves. The cost of preparing for entrance examination is a heavy economic burden for Russian students and their families. For the HEIs the problem is that many students do not have the qualifications considered necessary for entry to higher education.

Currently the Certificate of Secondary Complete General Education *attestat o srednem (polnom) obshchem obrazovanii*, and the successful passing of university-matriculation exams are required for admission to all kind of higher education.

The Education reform programme aims to promote equity of higher education. The proposed schemes, a unified national test and government individual financial obligations, operate in

conjunction. The Unified National Test is an instrument of the school leavers' knowledge assessment administered at their graduation from secondary education and an external quality control tool of the secondary schools education. The UNT results are used for application and enrolment into the tertiary education institutions. More important, the Government Individual Financial Obligations amount the university entrant receives depends on the individual's performance in the test. GIFO is a new subsidization mechanism allocating resources on an outcome-based principle. Being performance based it shares the responsibility for investment with the learner; administered at the national level the UNT enhances the access opportunities for school leavers; enrolment on the basis of UNT results serves to eliminate corruption; granting to tertiary education institutions freedom to set up the level of requirements to entrants within the UNT score and to price its services, GIFO system encourages the universities to compete for the best students.

There are a lot of heated discussions about the UNT and GIFO. Opponents argue that the test system does not permit to assess all aptitudes and knowledge, that it will be difficult to guarantee confidentiality of the materials and security of the tests administration. The concerns are not groundless, at the same time the truth is that the tests designed and piloted in the past three years do allow a transparent and fair assessment and that the transition period should provide for setting up a Federal - regional infrastructure of the test administration and public control over its transparency which would allow to diminish and eliminate possible malpractice and guarantee the test validity. In 2003 630.000 school leavers from 47 regions of the Russian Federation and 575 Higher Education Institutions participated in the experiment. UNT will become compulsory in 2006.

Tuition fees

The Russian Constitution (article 43, point 3) guarantees everyone the right to get higher education free of charge on a basis of competition. Implementing this norm, the Government allocates funding to pay the tuition fees within an established quota / number of students for each state institution. Traditionally the size of quota varies from institution to institution and from one field (discipline) to another. It depends on the share of state in the institution's budget, demands from state bodies in a region, social programs and other, sometimes rather subjective estimates. Last year nearly 50% of graduates did not pay tuition fees. (Ibid. p. 191)

On top of the quotas described above the universities are free to enrol students on a fee paying basis and they have the right to define the fee according to the market price of their programmes.

Main legal framework

The Constitution of the Russian Federation.

Decrees and orders of the President of the Russian Federation.

Decrees and orders of the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.

The Law on Higher and Post Tertiary level professional education approved by Duma in 1996.

The Regulations on Higher Education Establishments provide institutions with more details of how national plans should be fulfilled at the same time as they incorporate the autonomy and other rights of HEIs.

By the end of 2001 the Government approved the Concept of the Modernization of the Russian Education for Period until 2010. This document has become the framework for all innovations, experiments and reforms enacted in Russia in the education area.

Authorities and organizations

Since spring 2004, when the governmental reform took place, the Ministry of Education and Science is the central body of the federal executive authorities responsible for elaboration of the state policy and legislature regulations in the sphere of education, scientific, technical and innovation activity, intellectual property, social policy related to youth and student support.

Subordinated to the Ministry, The Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Education and The Federal Agency on Education are responsible for implementation of specific policies and regulations.

The cohort of 655 state HEI is split into 572 federal institutions, 55 institutions established by regional authorities (oblasts) and the remaining under local / municipal authorities. (Ibid. 165)

It should be noted that among the 572 federal institutions some are established by and administratively belong to different federal bodies. For example the State University – Moscow Institute of International Relations is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Moscow Technical University of Communication and Informatics has been founded by the Ministry of Communication and Industry. And the Moscow State University is a unique institution as it financed directly from the federal budget.

At regional level, the education management structure consists of the pertinent authorities: committees (departments or ministries) of education, public council organisation and associations, etc. They define and execute regional educational policy. However, as mentioned earlier, all issues related to the content of HEI programs should be agreed and made in compliance with the governmental educational standards.

Governance structure

The individual universities have become much more autonomous than they were in the previous system, but still, present day autonomy can be circumscribed for many reasons and is depending on factors such as: financial stability, leadership and management, political linkage, and institutional culture.

The 1992 Law delegated to the republics, provinces and local education authorities the responsibility for curriculum, textbooks, teaching methods, budgets, construction and equipment. HEIs gained the right to seek income from non-government sources and to engage in commercial activity. The law also confirmed the possible for private institutions to be established.

At institutional level, the management is usually performed by its elected representative body, the Council. As described in The Reform of Education in New Russia (2), "Election procedures are determined by the Charter of the institution which defines the distribution of powers between the Council and the administration; day-to-day management of the institutions is performed by its administration. The management of non-state education institutions is performed directly by the founder of the institution or, if stipulated by the founder, by a board of trustees named by it. In both cases, the board is responsible for material and technical support for the educational process and organising the supply of teaching materials. Education management has considerably increased in

institutions given their new, significant independence. Today an education institution can choose how to organise its educational process, select and hire its own staff, and organise its own research, financial and economic activity.”

Institution’s Boards of Trustees and HEI themselves usually maintain relations with all levels of authorities, business (industry) and communities to diversify the sources of income, generate revenue and get other kinds of support. Whereas the education process is aimed at awarding of state diploma and the research process is connected with award of research degrees, they should comply with the state standards approved by the Federal Government and demands of Russian Academy of Sciences.

Financial system

The existing relative autonomy of HEIs from the Government is based on diversified sources of finances. On average, a Russian state university gets 50-70 % from the Federal Budget directly or through the main founder – government structure; 10-20 % are generated through research activity (fundamental if the contractor is the state or applied in case of industry); 5-10% as grants and overheads; 10-20% from tuition fees and about the same amount from different types of educational services, rent out of facilities and additional services provided for population. Proportions vary from university to university; however, the state share is rarely lower than 40%. This share is the main source for renovation of facilities, equipment, library funds and maintenance of buildings. Income from other sources is used to increase salaries of professors and other staff, purchase of computers and software.

Quality assessment

After the recent governmental reform, the quality assessment will be provided by the Federal Agency for Control and Supervision over Education. It will obviously inherit from the Ministry existing authority and the tools of quality control: accreditation, attestation and licensing.

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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Higher education structure

A distinction is made between

- post-secondary vocational education (at vocational colleges)
- professionally oriented higher education (at universities and single HEIs)
- academic higher education (at faculties and art academies)

Institutional structure

In post-secondary education, programmes are offered at vocational colleges.

Higher education is provided at

- state universities, which are divided into faculties, art academies, and professional colleges.
- single higher education institutions (not belonging to a university) such as public professional colleges, private faculties and professional colleges, private art academies.

Distance education is offered by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics. Expertise in this field of education is provided by the Centre for Distance Education Development at the University of Maribor.

Admission requirements

For post-secondary vocational colleges the entrance requirement is to have completed secondary school, *gimnazija*, or after three years of working practice and an entrance test.

For higher education, applicants must have completed the (five subject) *matura* or taken an appropriate 4-year technical education in the polytechnic sector. Applicants with a (four subject) Vocational Matura, who have supplemented their Matura with a fifth subject have an equal standing when enrolling into study programmes (subject to acceptance of HEIs).

The application procedure starts with the universities and higher education institutions announcing the number of places available, the requirements and the deadlines.

Applications are sent to the Higher education Admissions Office.

The available places in postgraduate courses are also announced, and the universities and single higher education institution handle the applications procedure.

Degree structure

Post secondary vocational colleges offer practically oriented education.

Higher education courses are organised at two levels:

- - undergraduate level studies ending with a diploma (4-6 years).
- - post-graduate level studies leading to either the second degree of *specializacija* or to the academic degree of *Magisterij*. (1-2 years, doctorate 4 years).

Professionally oriented courses usually last 3 years (exceptionally 4 years). Academic undergraduate programmes last from 4 to 6 years. The majority of them last 4 years, but veterinary medicine and theology take 5 years, and medicine and dentistry 6 years. Graduate courses lead to a specialist degree (1 to 2 years), to a Magister degree (2 years) or to a doctoral degree (4 years). Students enrolled in a Magister degree course can complete a doctoral course, and students enrolled in a doctoral course can complete a Magister course.

Students who have completed all courses required for graduation are in principle allowed to maintain their student status for another year (exceptionally more), during which they can take the examinations, fulfil other requirements (practical work) and write a diploma paper (thesis).

Titles

The Professional and Academic Titles Act (*Zakon o strokovnih in znanstvenih naslovih*) governs professional titles (strokovni naslovi) and academic titles (znanstveni naslovi) awarded after successful completion of undergraduate or post-graduate courses. After the completion of professionally oriented courses graduates obtain the professional title of graduate (*diplomirani ...*, abb.: *dipl.*) with the name of profession, in the technical fields graduate engineer (*diplomirani inženir ...*, abb.: *dipl. inž.*) with the name of profession. Students who have completed academic courses obtain the professional title of university graduate (*univerzitetni diplomirani ...*, abb.: *univ. dipl.*) with the name of profession; in technical fields university graduate engineer (*univerzitetni diplomirani inženir ...*, abb. *univ. dipl. inž.*) with the name of profession; in artistic fields *akademski ...* (abb.: *akad.*) with the name of profession; in courses that qualify graduates for teaching the professional title *profesor ...* (*prof.*) with the name of study course; some exceptions exist in medicine, dental medicine, veterinary medicine, pharmacy: graduates earn professional titles of *doktor medicine* (*dr. med.*), *doktor dentalne medicine* (*dr. dent. med.*), *doktor veterinarske medicine* (*dr. vet. med.*) or *magister farmacije* (*mag. farm.*)

The students who have finished post-graduate courses of *specializacija* earn the second professional title of *specialist* (abb. *spec.*).

Students who have finished courses leading to *magisterij* earn academic title (*znanstveni naslov*) of *magister znanosti* or *magister umetnosti* (abb. *mag.*) in artistic fields.

Students who have finished doctoral study and defended their doctoral dissertations earn academic title of *doktor znanosti* (*dr.*). Professional titles follow the graduate's first and last name, academic titles precede the first and last name.

Student evaluation

The assessment scale, examination conditions and rules are determined by the statutes of the university of single HEI. Marks given for knowledge demonstrated in exams, seminars, etc., are as follows: excellent (10), very good (9 and 8), good (7), poor (6), and unsatisfactory (1 through 5). Marks 1 through 5 are failing marks (depending on the statute of the university).

Tuition fees and student maintenance

There are no tuition fees for graduate courses in public institutions or in private institutions with a concession. Students only pay registration fees.

Full-time students in other private higher education institutions, part-time students and post-graduates pay a tuition fee established by the institutions and in accordance to the regulations issued by the Minister.

Financial support for students consist of state scholarship which can be applied for, provided certain financial and academic criteria are met.

Governmental budget appropriations are also used to subsidise meals to all full-time students, and part time students who do not have employment and are not registered as job seekers.

Governance structure

Autonomy is guaranteed by legislation.

The highest professional body of a university is the Senate.

The goals of the Higher Education Act and amendments in 1999 are, among others, to

- Separate professional work administration from university administration.
- Transfer decision-making regarding employment of non-academic staff to the rectors.

Main legal framework

The Constitution recognises the right of universities and other HEIs to act autonomously within the limits set in legislation.

The Higher Education Act (1993) with Amendments 1999 and 2001 regulates the status of HEIs, requirement for carrying out HE, public service in HE and its financial support. It establishes the autonomy of HEIs, public interest, equality in conditions, and competition among institutions by the establishment of private institutions.

The Professional and Academic Titles Act regulates professional and academic titles awarded at state-approved HEIs.

The HE Master Plan, which is adopted by the National Assembly, underlines the public service in higher education. It defines the development strategy and provides for a reform of the system of financing higher education.

The Adult Education Act regulates the conditions for participation, organisation, governance and funding, among other issues.

Financing higher education

Public funding according to the Higher Education Master Plan (see below) is provided through the budget of the Republic of Slovenia.

Authorities and organisations

The Council for Higher Education is a consultative body of the Government with functions related to quality, staff development. It forms commissions and independent group for specific fields, for instance The Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission (HEQAC).

The Association of Rectors of Slovenia is the organisation of executive heads of HEIs www.uni-mb.si

The Council for Science and Technology has consultative function in the field of research and development.

Quality assessment

The responsibility to secure minimum standards lies with the Council for Higher education of the Republic of Slovenia. Among its duties is to accredit new HEIs, to evaluate new study programmes of universities and other institutions. Evaluations are carried out by the specialised commission of the Council, the above mentioned HEQAC.

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Ministry of Education and Sport www.mszs.si/eng/education/system/higher

Eurydice www.eurydice.org/Eurybase

SWEDEN

Higher education structure

The public higher education sector in Sweden comprises 13 universities and 23 university colleges. These higher education institutions are part of the public, central government administration, in terms of both organisation and function. In addition to these, there are 13 private institutions, of which 10 are very small, partly funded by the state and with a right to award certain degrees. The institutions of higher education presently have more than 300 000 students and approximately 50 000 employees. The largest universities, measured in number of students, are those in Uppsala, Lund, Göteborg, Stockholm, Umeå and Linköping. The three larger private institutions are Chalmers University of Technology, University College of Jönköping and Stockholm School of Economics. The universities have a general entitlement to award doctoral degrees within all areas of research. Some of the university colleges have the right to award doctoral degrees in a specific area of research.

Degree structure

Swedish higher education is formally divided into two parts: *grundläggande högskoleutbildning* and *forskarutbildning*. *Grundläggande högskoleutbildning* roughly corresponds to the concepts of undergraduate and graduate studies and *forskarutbildning* corresponds to postgraduate or doctoral studies.

The Swedish degree system is divided into general degrees and professional degrees. The general degrees are:

within *grundläggande högskoleutbildning*

- *högskoleexamen*, at least two years of full-time study (80 credit points),
- *kandidatexamen* (the equivalent of a bachelor degree), at least three years of full-time study (120 credit points),
- *magisterexamen* (the equivalent of a master degree), at least four years of full-time study (160 credit points),
- within *forskarutbildning*
- *licentiatexamen*, normally two years of full-time study, and
- *doktorsexamen* (the equivalent of a PhD degree), normally four years of full-time study.

In addition, there are more than fifty professional degrees (in medicine, teaching, engineering etc.) organised according to a somewhat different structure and varying in duration.

Research schools, which exist in a number of subjects, are characterised by: explicit organisation, focus on supervision, systematic course offerings and collaboration between subjects and among universities and colleges.

Distance education

Distance education has a long tradition in Sweden. Most higher education institutions today offer distance courses of varying scope and orientation in order to meet the societies and the individual's educational needs regardless of place of residence and work or family circumstances.

The Government has decided that the IT-supported distance education provided by institutions of higher education shall be coordinated to form a Swedish Net University. The Net University consists of the courses and programmes that HEIs announce to the agency that is responsible for co-ordinating operations.

Admission system

For admission to higher education at universities or university colleges, applicants must fulfil basic eligibility requirements and, in addition, any special requirements stipulated for a course or a programme. Applicants are eligible for admission if they have completed a national program at an upper secondary school or the equivalent from Swedish or foreign education, or have acquired equivalent knowledge through other activities. When the number of applicants exceeds the number of places on offer, a selection takes place after students having been placed in different selection categories, depending on their qualifications and background. Besides categories for applicants with school-leaving certificates, there are categories those who have gone through adult education, passed the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude test, or have practical work experience.

Legal framework

The Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) regulate the activities of HEIs in Sweden.

The Act provides the framework for the organisation and governance, for the appointment of academic staff and regarding students (eligibility, enrolment, etc.). The Act also stipulates that HEIs shall co-operate with the surrounding community and give information about their activities. Furthermore, activities shall be conducted so that there is close relations between research and education and that the importance of high quality, gender equality and student influence is observed. The principles of free research (selection problems, development of methods and publishing of results) are also mentioned in the law.

The Ordinance defines issues as student influence, equality of opportunity and tuition free education. It also deals with the composition of governing boards and regulations about Vice-chancellors and teaching staff. Furthermore, it stipulates that all HE should consist of courses and courses can be combined into programmes, how students are to be enrolled and a number of related matters (see Governance structure, below).

English translations of both documents, as well as summaries of them, are available at www.hsv.se/en

Private and public institutions

Two of the private institutions of higher education now existing in Sweden came into being in 1994 when two institutions formerly in the state sector, Chalmers University of Technology and Jönköping University College, were converted into foundations with the Swedish state as principal. Each foundation then established its own company, completely owned by the foundation, whose business is the conduct of higher education and research. The Swedish state continues to provide most of the funding via education and research contracts. On account of these contracts, in all essential respects the same regulations and reporting requirements for education and research activities apply as at other institutions of higher education.

Governance structure

The Government issues educational assignments that lay down the objectives for the HEI activities and specify the results required. For instance, these directives state the number of students to be enrolled or objectives for the number of certain types of degrees during a four-year period. The Government also appoints the majority of the members of the government board as well as the chairman. Teachers and students are represented on the governing body. Staff representatives are entitled to attend and speak at its meetings. Furthermore, the government appoints Vice-Chancellors on the proposal of the governing board, which must consult teachers, other employees and students in the manner determined by the board.

Each institution with the right to award doctoral degrees has at least one faculty board responsible for research, doctoral studies and other higher education as well, unless separate bodies are established for the higher education.

Institutions themselves decide how to plan their operation, utilise their resources and organise their programmes. They also appoint all members of staff, including professors.

Finance structure

Since 1993, funding of higher education is based on the results achieved, which means the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students and the number of FTE study results (passed courses) per year. Funds for research and doctoral studies are allocated under special appropriations to each individual university and to those university colleges who have been approved for examination of doctoral students in any area of research. Research is at present divided into four such areas: humanity/social science, medicine, natural science and technology.

HEIs are required to prepare annual reports, interim reports and budget documentation for submission to the Government.

External funding

External funding has increased in later years and now accounts for 55 per cent of research funding. Some of the increase is explained by the establishment of research foundations, using the resources of the so called wage-earners' investment funds.

Student maintenance

Studies are free of tuition fees.

There is a system of study assistance with two components: a grant and a loan. In February 2004, the grant was SEK 582 per week and the maximum loan SEK 1.112 per week. This assistance can be granted students for a maximum of 240 weeks.

Students loans are annuity loans and repayment is made within 25 years, or until the borrower reaches the age of 60. The amount to be repaid is determined by the total debt, interest, etc., and there is a ceiling, which enables the repayable amount to be adjusted according to income.

Quality Control

The National Agency for Higher Education conducts continuous quality evaluation including all levels and all subjects/programmes. It scrutinises the quality assurance activities undertaken by the institutions themselves and it also considers applications for the right to award degrees. Quality evaluation is based on self-evaluation by the institutions followed by assessment by external teams. Shortcomings may lead to withdrawal of the right to award degrees.

Authorities and organisations

The Parliament and the Government decide what regulations apply and how resources are to be allocated.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for policy matters regarding all levels of education, research and study support. It prepares governmental decisions concerning funding, appointment procedures and other issues as outlined in the legislation. <http://utbildning.regeringen.se/inenglish/index.htm>

The National Agency for Higher Education (*Högskoleverket, HSV*) supervises HEIs and issues regulations to supplement and clarify the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. It also houses The Higher Education Board of Appeals and The Higher Education Suspensions Board. www.hsv.se/en

The Swedish National Board of Student Aid (*Centrala studiestödsnämnden, CSN*) is the agency responsible for financial support to students. www.csn.se

The Association of Swedish Higher Education (*SUHF*) is an organisation for institutional co-operation. All 39 universities and university colleges in Sweden are members. It aims at safeguarding the external interests of the institutions and at strengthening their internal co-operation. www.suhf.org

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Eurydice Database on Education in Europe: www.eurydice.org

SWITZERLAND

Higher education structure

Switzerland comprises four main linguistic regions, with residents speaking German (64%), French 19%, Italian 8% and Rheto-Romance 1 % (and others 8%). It is a confederation of 26 cantons. The central government (the Federal Council) is competent in matters such as foreign policy and defence. In other fields, hereunder education, competence is shared with the cantons.

Higher education is provided by ten cantonal universities and two federal institutes of technology. It is also offered by the seven universities of applied Sciences, *Fachhochschulen/Hautes Ecoles Spécialisées*, hereafter FH/HES, and the Advanced Vocational Colleges.

Degree structure

Undergraduate programmes are taken in two stages: basic studies and main studies. Together they last for a minimum of four years and lead to a *Lizentiat/Licence* (roughly corresponding to a Master degree) in Arts, Law and Science, or to a Diploma. Engineering and Medicine require longer studies. Continued, specialised studies and research may lead to a Doctorate. Universities have gradually adopting the 3+2+3 structure of the Bologna process by adjusting their curricula to the bachelor- and master systems.

Continuing education has become a basic task for Swiss HEIs and several universities now offer postgraduate courses in various subjects (above all law, business, health/medicine) finishing with a diploma or a master's degree.

The expansion on the Swiss higher education system by the establishment of the FH/HES aimed at integrating this new type of university as an equal though different partner of the traditional universities. The purpose of this modernisation was to make the system more suited to meet the needs of the students, the scientific community and the modern society, and to make it more compatible with other European educational systems.

Distance higher education

Distance education is offered from study centres in the French, German and Rheto-Romance language areas.

Higher education authorities and organisations

The Swiss Science Agency (GSR/GWF; www.gwf-gsr.ch), headed by the State Secretary for Science and Research, has the task of implementing the strategies developed by the Federal Department of Home Affairs for university education, science and research.

The Federal Office for Education and Science (OFES/BBW; www.bbw.admin.ch) is the central administrative authority, responsible for preparing and implementing laws on education, science and research.[http://](http://www.bbw.admin.ch) It subsidizes the cantonal universities, it finances international cooperation and

participation in EU-programs for research and it coordinates Swiss participation in international organisations.

The ETH Board (ETH-Rat/CEPF; www.eth.rat.ch) is the highest authority for the domain that includes the two Federal Institutes of Technology and the four federal research institutes.

The Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OFFT/BBT; www.bbt.admin.ch), which is part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, is - at the federal level - in charge of the Universities of applied Sciences (FH/HES). It hosts the Federal Commission for the Universities of Applied Sciences.

The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (CDIP/EDK; www.edk.ch) comprises the 26 members of the cantonal governments who are responsible for education and training, including higher education at FH/HES level. It also hosts the Council of the Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulrat/Conseil des HES*).

The Swiss University Conference (CUS; www.cus.ch) is the joint organisation of the cantons and the Confederation for university politics. The CUS consists of the nine directors of public education of the cantons with universities, two representatives of cantons without university, and the Secretary of State for Science and Research and the President of the ETH Board...

The legal basis of its activities is dual: on one hand, the Federal Law on Promotion of the Universities of 8th October 1999, and on the other, the Intercantonal Concordat on Coordination of the Universities of 9th December 1999.

The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS; www.crus.ch) is active in matters related to curricula, degree requirements, admission and international exchanges. Certain long-term co-ordination responsibilities have been transferred to this conference. There is also a Conference of Directors of Universities of Applied Sciences.

The Association of Swiss University Continuing Education (SWISSUNI) promotes university level continuing education. On its database is published all the continuing education courses targeted on professionals. www.swissuni.ch/index.en.html

The Swiss Virtual Campus promotes learning through new information and communication technology by developing accessible teaching modules through the internet for basic and specialised study programmes. www.virtualcampus.ch

The Swiss Science and Technology Council (SWTR; www.swtr.ch) is the advisory body for the Federal Government on matters relating to science, education, research and technology policy.

Other authorities at federal level are the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Federal Commission for Technology and Innovation.

More detailed descriptions can be found at www.bbw.admin.ch.

Finance structure

The new Federal Constitution, effective from 2000, authorises the Confederation to subsidise institutions of higher learning. With the Federal Act on financial aid to the cantonal universities, the

confederation makes use of this constitutional possibility to support the cantonal HEIs and to formulate - together with the cantons - a national university policy.

The federal aid to the cantons in charge of a university can be of different types: basic grants for the operating costs, investment grants to help with major projects concerning construction, furnishing (e.g. laboratories), equipment purchases (e.g. computers), libraries etc. and the project-related grants to support matters of mutual concern to the cantons and the Confederation and which have national significance.

As of 2002, the Confederation covered on average some 20% of the total operating costs and from 30 to 55% of investment expenditures of the universities for which the cantons are in charge.

A performance-related grant mechanism has replaced the previous system of blanket coverage.

Admission

The Swiss secondary school-leaving certificate, the Federal Maturity Certificate, is the basic university admission requirement.

Admission to the FH/HES is granted to students holding a Federal Vocational Maturity Certificate.

For some FH/HES fields with a limited number of places (health, teacher-training, social work, fine arts, music, etc.) entry requirements are more diverse (usually maturity certificate combined with a special aptitude test and practical experience).

Tuition fees and scholarships

In 2002/2003, tuition and semester fees at most universities, institutes of technology and FH/HES ranged from 1000 to 1600 SFR. However, the tuition fee at Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) was 4000. At some institutions, foreigners pay more than Swiss nationals. More information about this is available at: www.crus.ch/engl/study.html

Some scholarships are available through bilateral governmental or institutional agreements and there is a Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students: www.bbw.admin.ch/e/bildung/eskas.html

Quality assessment and accreditation

The Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ; www.oaq.ch) is responsible for the promotion of the quality of teaching and research at the Swiss universities. It accredits public and private institutions as well as programs at university level on the basis of the guidelines introduced by the Swiss University Conference; it defines quality assurance requirements and examines regularly whether these are being met.

The Federal Commission for the FH/HES prepares the decisions of the Federal Government concerning the recognition and federal accreditation of the cantonal FH/HES.

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