

Hosted by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
Vienna, Austria

19-20 October 2006

The future of academic research

Expert meeting

Annotated agenda

Location:

19 October: *Room E01* / Federal Ministry / Teinfaltstrasse 8 / A-1010 Vienna

20 October: *Fechtsaal* / Freyung 1 / Federal Ministry /

Objectives of the meeting:

This meeting is part of the ongoing project on the future of higher education carried out at the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). The project aims to offer avenues to reflect upon the strategic questions which decision makers in higher education will have to answer in a 15-20 years time-line. Higher education refers to general and vocational tertiary education (ISCED 5a, 5b and 6); it goes beyond the university sector (for countries whose system is not unified). Besides incrementally developing a set of futures scenarios, the project gives a particular emphasis to 5 (inter-related) themes through a series of thematic meetings that explore key drivers of change for the future of higher education: technology, demography, globalisation, academic research and labour market demand.

The purpose of the present meeting is to identify recent trends and emerging phenomena in science and in higher education (policy) and deepen our understanding of how they might affect the future of academic research. The project has already generated some information on these trends, especially in its analyses of new technologies and of globalization. The meeting will first focus on trends in higher education policy and in academic research. It will then start from trends in science generally and reflect on how they could change the organization of higher education or induce changes in higher education in the future.

The meeting will help the OECD Secretariat identify the main important areas of investigation related to academic research for further analytical work. The discussions could contribute to a book or lead to reference working papers for the project. A second objective is to contribute to the further improvement of its current set of scenarios.

Meeting participants come from different geographical and occupational backgrounds in order to reflect different viewpoints on the issues. They are scientists, social scientists, educational experts, stakeholders, and policy makers.

Thursday 19 October

Location: **Room E01** / Federal Ministry / Teinfaltstrasse 8

9.00-10.3 : Session 1: Introduction, tour de table and trends

Barbara Weitgruber (Austrian Federal Ministry) will open the meeting and Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin (OECD) will introduce the OECD project on the future of higher education and recall the main trends and drivers identified in the background paper. During the tour de table, participants will be asked to identify the 2 most important drivers of change for the future from their perspective.

10.30-10.50: Coffee break

10.50-13.00: Session 2: Trends and drivers of change in academic research

Academic research is increasingly considered as an engine for innovation and growth at the national and regional level. The prestige of institutions also relies a lot on their reputation in research, as shown by recent international rankings of universities. As a result, there is a mounting international competition around academic research, which has been amplified by the emergence of new economies (and potential poles of science) in Asia. At the same time, patterns of governance in the higher education sector are changing, with an increasing use of competition to allocate research funding, the encouragement of the patenting of research, of more links with local industries, etc.

The discussion will be launched by Aldo Geuna (University of Sussex) and Franz Tödting (University of Vienna).

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-15.00: Session 2: Trends and drivers of change in academic research: consolidation

This short session will consolidate and synthesise the results of the previous discussion and determine what are the key drivers and trends to be considered for the future of higher education and what kind of impact they might have.

15.00 16.00: Session 3: Policy and regional responses and their impact on higher education systems (1)

This session will examine how policy makers manage the perceived changes and speculate on the implications for higher education. Recent observable trends lay in the creation of “centres of excellence”, the willingness to create a few “world class universities”, to concentrate research and research funding in a small number of institutions, and to make researchers more accountable and productive.

One of the important question will be about the concentration of research: 1) might academic research be marginalised compared to other research sectors in the near future, and under what conditions? 2) will academic research become more concentrated in a few institutions in the future (or carried out by a specialised staff within institutions) and will the distinction between “research” and “scholarship” spread in the future? 3) how might this affect the profiles of research in different countries?

The discussion will be launched from a country/regional perspective with 3 brief introductions by Diane Jones (Executive Office of the President, United States), Shinishi Yamamoto (University of Hiroshima) and René Bugge Bertramsen (Denmark).

16.00-16.20: Coffee break

16.20-17.30: Session 3: Policy and regional responses and their impact on higher education systems (2)

This session will be devoted to a general discussion of the same issues.

17.30-18.00: Session 4: Conclusion of the first day

Carl Tham, former Swedish Minister of education, will wrap up and react to the first day of the meeting from a policy-making perspective.

19.00: Reception hosted by the University of Vienna

Senatssaal
Dr. Karl-Lueger-Ring 1
A-1010 Vienna

Friday 20 October

Location: **Fechtsaal** / Freyung 1 / Federal Ministry

9.00-11.00: Session 5: The future of science and its impact on the future of academic research

This session will start to examine the changes and drivers for change in the practice of science and speculate from there how this might change academic research: will it still be possible to carry out all types of research within the higher education sector? What new ways of doing academic research can (or will have to) emerge? The impact of technology (computing power and ICT), the convergence of some scientific fields and inter-disciplinarity are some of the questions to be discussed, as well as how this could affect social science and humanities.

Stephen Emmott (Microsoft) will present the results of the *Science 2020* project (<http://research.microsoft.com/towards2020science/downloads.htm>). Verena Winiwarter (University of Vienna) and Al Teich (AAAS) will briefly respond to his introduction.

11.00-11.15: Coffee

11.15-13.00: Session 6: Scenario building exercise (break out)

The group will split in two sub-groups to build 2-4 futures scenarios for the future of academic research.

13.00-14.00: Lunch

14.00-15.00: Session 6: Scenarios: report back (plenary)

The group will resume in plenary and present and discuss the scenarios.

15.00-16.00: Session 7: Conclusion

This last session will aim at consolidating the main results of the meeting and identify areas for further research for the higher education project and provide feedback on the Secretariat's current set of scenarios.

End & Coffee: 16.00

**Participants list for OECD expert meeting
The Future of academic research
Vienna, Austria**

19 – 20 October 2006

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