

Tertiary Education in Spain

Pointers for policy development

GOVERNANCE, PLANNING AND REGULATION

- Create a strategic planning council at both the national and communities levels for an integrated tertiary education system
- Develop a comprehensive and coherent vision for the future of tertiary education and guide future policy development in harmony with national social and economic objectives
- Improve the integration of higher vocational institutions in the tertiary education system
- Diversify programmes to promote quality professional and vocational education and training within a tertiary sector which is closely linked to labour market needs
- Ensure the outward focus of institutions and institutional autonomy
- Encourage external membership in institutional governing bodies
- Develop steering instruments to achieve accountability and develop competencies of tertiary education authorities in preparation for their new responsibilities of policy steering and performance evaluation
- Use evidence-based information for policy development and implementation
- Pay attention, in teaching and learning, to the balance between general and specialised knowledge, the shift to competency-based teaching and the move to learning-centred teaching
- Achieve co-ordination between secondary and tertiary education systems

FUNDING

- Improve efficiency in the use of resources before increasing funding
- Fund according to principles of cost-sharing and relevance, backed by a comprehensive student support system
- To secure these principles:
 - re-assess whether current cost-sharing reflects the relative private and societal benefits of tertiary education
 - sustain existing efforts to improve the transparency of funds allocated to institutions
 - significantly expand the student support system

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- Set up a system for quality assurance covering all higher education in a nation-wide coherent framework
- Refocus quality assurance to have fewer but more effective evaluation activities

EQUITY

- Reduce inequities in access to, and completion of, tertiary education through initiatives in five areas:
 - schooling policies
 - financial assistance to needy students
 - incentives for tertiary education institutions to widen participation and provide extra support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - diversification of provision and transfers between institutions
 - policies targeted at particular populations

ROLE IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- Assist the universities in the development of their multi-annual plans by:
 - encouraging the diffusion of research results

- improving research management
- designing strategic planning tools
- Assess the impact of the substantial resources going into commercialisation of university R&D results
- Clarify the role of the autonomous communities in defining the national research strategy and its consequent implementation
- Develop further linkages and collaboration between the tertiary education sector and other actors in the research and innovation system
- Encourage further mobility between firms, tertiary institutions and public research organisations and improve the knowledge flows between Spanish universities and industry
- Develop and use a broad range of robust performance indicators to ensure the quality of research in institutions is maintained and enhanced
- Examine the heavy reliance on project-based funding in the long-term development of the research and innovation system
- Develop a vision and appropriate framework for research development in the higher vocational sector to better serve regional development

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Give more autonomy to universities in human resource management, gradually including the following aspects:
 - institutions having some discretion over academic salaries (*e.g.* through salary bonuses)
 - institutions with the freedom to create academic positions in line with their strategy
 - institutions having responsibility to design promotion, assessment and professional development strategies

LINKS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

- Create a policy framework that allows:
 - student enrolment choices to respond to labour market signals
 - educational supply to respond to students' preferences
- Involve labour market actors in the formulation of national and regional tertiary education policies through governance systems
- Create a policy framework where institutions can learn about and adapt to graduate labour market outcomes
- Ensure that the tertiary system offers sufficient opportunities for flexible, work-oriented study

INTERNATIONALISATION

- Accelerate the process of *Europeanization* and encourage institutions to become proactive actors of internationalisation
- Foster internationalisation in the non-university system
- Develop on-campus internationalisation, including specific courses for foreigners, in particular taught in English
- Build world class specialised centres
- Encourage and organise stronger links with Latin America in post graduate and distance education

FURTHER READING

These pointers for policy development are drawn from OECD Reviews of Tertiary Education, Spain published in 2009.

Further information about the Thematic Review of Tertiary Education and *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*, published in 2008 and synthesising the findings of the Review, is available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review.