Fostering Equity in Higher Education

Compendium of Practical Case Studies

FOSTERING INCLUSION OF DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

March 2014
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 4

AUSTRALIA ........................................................................................................................... 5
  Australian Government Department of Education ................................................................. 5
  University of Newcastle ...................................................................................................... 5

BELGIUM ............................................................................................................................. 7
  Ghent University ................................................................................................................ 7

BRAZIL .................................................................................................................................. 9
  University of Campinas ...................................................................................................... 9

CROATIA ............................................................................................................................... 9
  The Agency for Science and Higher Education .................................................................. 9

DENMARK ............................................................................................................................ 10
  Aalborg University ............................................................................................................ 10

FINLAND .............................................................................................................................. 11
  University of Eastern Finland .......................................................................................... 11
  University of Tampere ...................................................................................................... 11

SLOVENIA ............................................................................................................................ 11
  Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia ....... 11

SPAIN .................................................................................................................................... 13
  Basque Government .......................................................................................................... 13
  Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona ............................................................................ 15

SWEDEN ............................................................................................................................... 17
  Karolinska Institutet .......................................................................................................... 17
  Linnaeus University ........................................................................................................... 19
  Örebro University ............................................................................................................... 19

UNITED KINGDOM ............................................................................................................... 20
  Higher Education Funding Council for England .............................................................. 20
INTRODUCTION

In November 2013, the OECD consulted the IMHE Governing Board on the strengths and weaknesses of the Membership package products and services in order to improve their value and usefulness to members. With respect to the Quarterly Briefs (the What it Means for Higher Education series), participants suggested that this series would benefit from complementing the policy-oriented content of these Briefs with practical case studies highlighting how member institutions tackle specific issues in practice. Accordingly, this new approach has been tried out in the March 2014 issue of the Quarterly Brief. This Brief takes a closer look at equity and gender balance issues based on the PISA 2012 results, and examines the implications for higher education.

Therefore, IMHE Members were asked to flag any initiative they may have adopted in their institutions to: provide academic support to under-prepared students, attract and retain disadvantaged students and help them reach graduation, promote female enrolments in scientific programmes, use role models (whether female scientists or resilient disadvantaged students) to foster students’ self-confidence, or foster attitudes that are associated with successful higher education (autonomy, perseverance in problem-solving, self-efficacy, etc.).

The two compendia (Fostering Inclusion of Disadvantaged Students and Promoting Female Participation in STEM) show all the practical cases that the Secretariat received and they have been sorted according to their thematic focus. The contributions are included in the state they in which they were submitted by the Members, with some minor proof editing by the Secretariat.
Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program and Disability Support Program

The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) provides funding to higher education providers to conduct activities that improve access to domestic undergraduate courses for people from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds and improve the retention and completion rates of those students. Activities funded through the HEPPP include scholarships, academic support and alternative entry schemes, as well as partnership activities with schools, vocational education providers and others to raise aspirations and build the capacity of low SES people to participate in higher education. $951 million is budgeted for the HEPPP from 2014 to 2018.

Although the precise impact of the HEPPP is yet to be determined, in 2012, for the first time in a decade, the rate of domestic undergraduate students from low SES backgrounds commencing university exceeded 17 per cent of the domestic undergraduate population. This is up from 16% in 2007.

The Disability Support Program (DSP) funds higher education providers to assist in removing barriers to education for domestic students with a disability through partial reimbursement of equipment and educational support costs for those students with high cost needs. Some of the services supported by the DSP include: production of Braille formats of course materials and lecture notes, examination and assessment assistance, and purchase of adaptive software and/or adaptive computer equipment such as adaptive keyboards, mouse, screens, etc.

In 2014 under the DSP, $6.9 million is available to universities for this purpose. In 2012, nearly 6000 students with disabilities accessed equipment and educational support made available by the universities using DSP funds.

Submitted by: Robina Mitchell, Strategic Engagement and Communication Unit, Quality and Deregulation Branch, Higher Education Support Group, Australian Government Department of Education, robina.mitchell@education.gov.au

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education

The University is ranked in Australia’s top 10 for research, with strengths in health and medicine, energy and the environment, and science and engineering. Twelve disciplines of research at Newcastle are ranked in the top 200 across the globe, in the 2014 QS Subject Rankings. The University has at its core a deep commitment to access and equity. In the Hunter region – the University’s primary catchment area for student enrolments - total weekly family income is below the Australian average. Running in parallel with the region’s lower socio-economic status, our participation rates in education are also lower – 38 per cent of young people complete their Higher School Certificate compared to the national average of 52 per cent, and 15 per cent hold a Bachelor degree or higher compared to 21 per cent nationally. Over the past 40 years more than 37-thousand students have enrolled in our enabling programs – courses of study that provide the skills and qualifications needed to enter an undergraduate degree at university.

The NeW Directions Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015 includes an objective to build access, participation and success for our students. A key pillar to delivery is the creation of a Centre of Excellence in Equity for Higher Education - a resource for the whole of Australia, a hub for a network of ideas and debate and home to an evidence base that will shape policy and practice. The Centre’s objectives are: to be at the centre of public policy dialogue about equity in higher education; and to ‘close the loop’ between equity policy, research and practice by: supporting and informing evaluation of current equity practice with a particular focus on identifying good practice; identifying innovative approaches to equity through existing research and the development of a
forward research program to fill gaps in knowledge; and translating these learnings into practical advice for
decision makers and practitioners alike.

Learn more about the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education:
equity-in-higher-education#CEEHE

AIM High Program

The AIM High Program at the University of Newcastle, Australia, seeks to challenge social exclusion by
supporting positive change through education. Working in partnership with low socio-economic status (SES)
communities, AIM High seeks to: increase awareness and understanding of higher education, build aspiration
and expectation to participate in higher education, improve educational attainment and achievement which
will facilitate ongoing participation, provide knowledge, information and choice about pathways into higher
education and increase the capacity of families, in partnership with schools, to assist their children in reaching
their educational/career aspirations.

In 2014, 15 high schools and 85 primary schools are involved in the program. AIM High offers a suite of six
tertiary education experiences throughout the key school learning stages. Each activity works to establish
opportunities for conversations about careers and further education between University students, school
students and family members, based on shared experiences within the school environment and on the
University campus. AIM High addresses the cycle of disadvantage that develops in low SES regions by giving
individuals and communities the skills to recognise and take advantage of the transformative effect of
education contributing to enhanced social and economic mobility.

Learn more about the AIM High Program: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/community-and-alumni/community-
engagement/community-and-school-programs/aim-high

Indigenous education

Since the 1970s the University of Newcastle, Australia, has made an unparalleled contribution to Indigenous
education in Australia. Indigenous student enrolments at the University of Newcastle are more than double
the sector average and approximately half of Australia’s Indigenous medical doctors are our graduates. We
have the highest number of Indigenous staff of any university in Australia - Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people currently make up 2.8 per cent of our staff. We are also the only university in New South
Wales to have a campus-wide approach to reconciliation with our Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-2015.

The Wollotuka Institute consolidates all Indigenous activities of the University under one strategic and
operational body. It plays an important role in representing and supporting Indigenous Australians studying at
university. Through its work, Wollotuka and the University of Newcastle more broadly are regarded as leaders
in Indigenous education in Australia.

Read about Indigenous collaboration: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/about-uon/our-university/indigenous-
collaboration.

Read about the Wollotuka Institute: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/about-uon/our-university/indigenous-
collaboration/the-wollotuka-institute

Submitted by: Katie Porritt, Alumni and External Relations, University of Newcastle, Australia,
katie.porritt@newcastle.edu.au
Policy Unit Diversity and Gender

Because Ghent University strongly believes that consciously dealing with diversity is enrichment to the university as a whole and to the staff and students individually, it has shown increasing attention to this topic in various ways. In 2008, Ghent University embedded diversity in its policymaking by establishing a policy unit Diversity and Gender. This unit stimulates through concrete actions the mutual involvement between students and staff and implements diversity in all layers of the academic policy. Its focal points are attracting disadvantaged students and developing actions to improve their academic chances.

Towards a decentralized diversity policy: establishing diversity teams in all faculties

On a central level the Ghent University Policy Unit on Diversity and Gender was established in 2008 to develop a university wide diversity policy and to create awareness towards diversity issues. Efforts were put into different actions to improve diversity matters in all faculties. To ensure a structural embedding in the general educational setting and to ensure that all efforts can be made profitable and sustainable, the university decided to establish a diversity team in every faculty in 2014. This diversity team is led by a diversity coordinator, and supported by one or more contact persons and if possible also students. To implement a valid and strong diversity policy on a faculty basis, with enough support within the faculty itself, a structural embedding is necessary with colleagues and students involved. The implementation of these diversity teams – 11 in total – and operational actions can be chosen freely by each faculty. The diversity itself of the faculties’ nature and needs is seen as very valuable to Ghent University and will be guaranteed.

Together with the diversity teams in the faculties, a network is organized by the Policy Unit on Diversity and Gender every four months. This network creates the opportunity for members of the diversity teams to meet, learn and share good practices. The diversity coordinators are also invited to take part in the policy making of the university, headed by the headmaster of the University of Ghent herself. These two tracks are needed to lend diversity its rightful attention in the entire organization: a faculty based diversity team with enthusiastic members that take diversity issues to their heart and a clear signal from the university management that diversity is important and that it gets the attention it needs.

Community service learning

Background & goals

Ghent University advances Community Service Learning (CSL) as one of the strategic goals of the Strategic Plan, which is: “Ghent University aims to educate students to become global citizens, who take joint responsibility for their education and play a significant role in an open, critical and independent way in an ever-changing society.” Being a teaching methodology CSL is seen as a vehicle to encourage social engagement of students in academic curricula. In this way, we aim (1) to contribute to the social accountability of Ghent University in general, (2) to encourage the social relevance of its education and (3) to improve social responsibility of students. And last but not least, (4) CSL aims to respond to real world problems and real needs of (local) communities and disadvantaged groups in society.

Definition

CSL “is a form of experiential education in which students engage in service activities [this is a practical experience in the shape of a social or civic engagement] that address community needs [real social or civic needs or problems; such as poverty & cultural exclusion], together with structured opportunities of reflection intentionally designed to promote student [academic and civic] learning and development (Jacoby, 1996).”

Project Plan

Ghent University wants to encourage new initiatives of CSL, by: listing and visualizing good practices of CSL at Ghent University, developing a practical CSL toolkit and developing a pilot project CSL at Ghent University.
There’s already developed a good practice of CSL at Ghent University: the university wide optional course ‘Coaching and diversity’.

In this course students will acquire knowledge on theoretical frameworks with regard to diversity and coaching. Also, they will be practicing their skills within a real context: they will be the mentor of a first year student during a full academic year by means of social engagement and they will deeply and critically reflect on their experiences and theoretical insights by writing a portfolio and by participating in peer discussion groups.

**Actions for students with dyslexia**

Although most adults take reading and writing for granted, it remains a source of anxiety and frustration for many people with dyslexia. Ghent University has developed a program that focuses both on offering solutions to dyslectic students and making staff and other students more aware of the problems dyslectics have to cope with.

A first step for students with dyslexia is applying for a ‘special statute’. This statute gives them the opportunity to ask for reasonable adjustments for studying and taking exams. The most popular facilities are extra time for a written exam and an oral explanation of a written exam.

Because students are expected to assimilate a lot of study material, they can make use of compensating software for free. This enables them to read and write more fluently. During the academic year various workshops are organized to help them getting to know the various types of compensating software. One of the conditions to use this type of software is of course the availability of digital study material. Therefore a project to digitize all the student’s study materials (for free) was developed and is widely used. In addition, dyslectic students can subscribe to study skill workshops in which they are given concrete tips to study a large amount of texts. Students who experience problems with giving presentations or writing papers can also receive personal academic language support.

Ghent University has also made a documentary about dyslexia. The documentary tells the story of young professionals with dyslexia who have studied successfully at Ghent University and who all have a flourishing career. They testify on the obstacles during their time as a student in secondary and higher education. A team of experts links these stories to current research on dyslexia. The documentary showed that dyslectic students have developed certain strengths. They have to possess a tremendous amount of motivation and dedication to attain their goals. They appear to be ‘out-of-the-box-thinkers’, a characteristic that is not only important during their studies but that turns out to be a real asset in their professional careers as well.

**Academic Dutch: “When Dutch becomes a threshold for academic success...”**

Statistically, students with a migration background have less chance to be academically successful than the average. One explanation, besides the specific social and economic background of students, is a lack of linguistic skills needed for academic success. Thus substandard academic language skills can bar students from academic success although they may have the required intellectual capacity. To tackle this issue, Ghent University launched in 2009 a project implementing several actions to support students in bridging the linguistic gap: academic language workshops for L2 students, individual academic language support for underrepresented groups of students, academic language support tailored to the faculty’s needs, online academic language test, and online Guides for Academic Linguistic Requirements.

Submitted by: Sigried Lievens, Beleidsadviseur Diversiteit en Gender, Ghent University, Sigried.Lievens@UGent.be
**BRAZIL**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAMPINAS**

ProFIS: A New Paradigm for Higher Education in Brazil

Public universities represent nowadays a relatively small part of the Brazilian higher education system, both in terms of number of institutions and in terms of enrolment. Approximately 3/4 of all undergraduate students in Brazil attend private institutions. Public institutions are, on average, much more selective than those in the private system. This profile has two basic causes: the higher prestige of public universities and the fact that they do not charge any tuition fees. However, many of the students who are accepted at public universities come from wealthy families, and relatively fewer are from poor families or from minority groups, such as afro-descendants. The higher selectivity has a clear effect of inhibiting them from applying to a public Higher Education Institution (HEI), as we will see in the case of the University of Campinas (Unicamp), one of the most selective universities in Brazil.

ProFIS (Interdisciplinary Higher Education Programme) is a two-year undergraduate programme that was established in 2011 at Unicamp. It was created with the purpose of increasing the access of low-income and minority students to the university in an innovative way, both in terms of the admission system and of the curriculum structure. It consists of a 2-year general education programme, after which students are automatically admitted to a four or five-year undergraduate programme at Unicamp, without having to pass an admission exam, selecting their next level of studies based on their performance.

Although complete academic results for the first admitted class are not yet available, it is already possible to say that equity objectives were achieved by the programme, with a significant increase in enrolment of minorities, low-income and first-generation college students when compared to the usual university admission process.


Submitted by: Renato Pedrosa, Associate Professor, University of Campinas, renato.pedrosa@ige.unicamp.br

**CROATIA**

**THE AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

Institute for the Development of Education

Linking quality and social inclusion in higher education in Croatia

The project directly contributes to the promotion of equal opportunities in access to higher education (HE) for disadvantaged groups through promoting quality provision of relevant, socially inclusive services. The project’s specific objective will contribute to all three specific objectives of the Call: (1) improving quality of education of persons at a disadvantage (by developing mechanisms for continuous enhancement of quality of education for disadvantaged students); (2) increasing social inclusion of persons at a disadvantage in HE institutions (through the development of quality culture which values social inclusion as one of its core elements); in the longer term, the action will support HE institutions in increasing the number of persons at a disadvantage enrolling to and completing HE (by developing a pilot “quality label” to be awarded to HE institutions as an incentive for creating a socially inclusive quality culture). Duration of the project: 22 August 2013 – 21 February 2015.


Submitted by: Đurđica Dragojević, Agency for Science and Higher Education, Department for International Cooperation, Croatia, durdica.dragojevic@azvo.hr
The breaking of social patterns in recruitment of new students

At Aalborg University, Denmark we work intensively on equity and gender issues. In this short article we will concentrate on one aspect, namely the breaking of the social patterns of recruitment of new students.

Aalborg University is a relatively new university (1974) situated in the northern part of Denmark. From the beginning is has been a part of the mission to attract students from families, that had no connection to universities. The pedagogical processes were developed to facilitate a broader recruitment of student, than had usually been the case at Danish universities.

Seen from this point of view the recruitment has been successful. If we count the number of student, where none of the parents has been attending a university, it is 80 % of the new students. These students are breaking the social pattern. The amount represents social mobility to an extreme degree. The percentage has been stable over the years and has newly been confirmed for the 2013-intake. If we compare the main areas of Humanities, Social Science, Science and Technical Science, the breaking of the social pattern are surprisingly equal between the areas.

One thing is recruitment, but do they become successful student? The answer is yes. They accomplish their studies to the same extent as other students. Besides that, they are slightly quicker to get there degree than the other group. A number of factors work together to obtain these results: the pedagogical processes imply working with a concrete project, working in a group and in many cases working with an outside company or institution, the working with a “real” project bridges the gap between (the parents and newcomers’) ordinary life and the university, the working in a group of students prevent loneliness and fosters a social control stronger than what the university itself could ever produce, and the working with companies or institutions outside the university help focusing on usefulness and also on possible working places after graduation. All this factors together make it possible to recruit from non-academic families, to prevent drop-outs, to accomplish the bachelors- plus masters curriculum within the prescribed 5 years and to get a work in the same amount as graduates from other Danish universities.

The future? The great political issue in Denmark in 2013-14 is to make students speed up, so they finish studies within the prescribed time, being 5 years. It is argued, that this push will be socially imbalanced. This is not the point of view of Aalborg University. We are already at 5 years with 80 % from non-academic families. The speed of student is more decided by the learning culture and organization of the studies.

Submitted by: Preben Sørensen, Director of Studies at Aalborg University, ps@adm.aau.dk
FINLAND

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

University of Eastern Finland (UEF) launched a large paper, “Equality and equal opportunities policy 2013–2015” in the UEF. The whole university is obliged to follow the guidelines written in the policy paper. Detailed information can be found here:

http://www.uef.fi/documents/1459298/1459305/UEF_tasa-arvo-ja_yhdenvertaisuusohjelma_netti ENG.pdf/59f682f7-efa5-40bd-9be0-60ce8e60d486

Submitted by: Tuomo Meriläinen, Director of Administration, University of Eastern Finland, tuomo.merilainen@uef.fi

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

Practices in promoting equity

Doors that open automatically and places for the wheelchairs in the lecture halls and auditoriums. Special parking places for those who have difficulties in walking without help. In Finland we have regulations for this (building regulations).

Extra help for the applicants, students and staff who have physical difficulties. The help can be a special room to make an exam or to work, a permit to use an aiding instrument, a permit to take the exam in parts.

The University has contact persons to whom the students or staff with difficulties and in need of help can get in touch with. The contact person informs about the arrangements that are available and evaluates the amount of the help the student or the member of the staff needs. A doctor's certificate is required.

Submitted by: Pirjo Rauhala, Planning manager, University of Tampere, pirjo.rauhala@uta.fi

SLOVENIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

University of Maribor

Introductory week for first year students – in some faculties it includes introductory seminars in certain domains: http://www.um.si/univerza/medijsko-sredisce/dogodki/Documents/Vabilo%20na%20uvajalni%20teden%20za%20bruce%20o%20aktivnostmi%20fakultet%202013.pdf

Tutorship: http://www.um.si/studij/Tutorstvo/Strani/default.aspx

Possibilities to gain the special status of candidate with special needs which allows enrolment with 90% of the required points: http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV9950

Possibilities to gain the special status which allows for adaptable student responsibilities during the studies: http://www.um.si/univerza/dokumentni-center/akti/Akti%20univerze%20v%20Mariboru/Pravilnik%20o%20%5Dstudentih%20s%20posebnim%20statusom. pdf

Special tutorship: http://www.um.si/studij/Tutorstvo/Strani/default.aspx

Possibilities to gain the special status of candidate with special needs which allows enrolment with 90% of the required points: http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=PRAV9950

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Special tutorship: http://www.um.si/studij/Tutorstvo/Strani/default.aspx

Cooperation with the association of infirm students, Maribor: http://www.dsis-drustvo si/
University of Primorska

The effectiveness of studies for all students is promoted through various measures, especially through a developed tutoring system and organised study aid for students. With the aim of adapting the study process to the needs of students (student centred study), the University of Primorska (UP) has implemented the system of tutors. Tutoring is a formalised system of providing mentors to students. Tutors help students in solving different problems which may occur during their study (e.g. help in finding appropriate literature) by directing the student towards appropriate solutions. They can also guide the student regarding the choice of study programmes, optional courses, further studies, etc. The main goal of the tutors systems is to provide quality study, ensure students' independence, initiative, and ability to plan their future, facilitate their capacity to look for sources, encourage their ability to connect with and join professional networks.

The University of Primorska pays special attention to students with special needs (i.e., handicapped students, blind and partially sighted, deaf and hard of hearing, etc.). However, member institutions find it rather difficult to adapt their infrastructure and buildings to suit the needs of these students (the seat of several member institutions is in older buildings with no elevators, with difficulties in providing ramps and suitable toilet areas, etc); moreover, member institutions have difficulties in adapting their study process, too (lack of funding to obtain appropriate study material and prepare individual study plans, etc.). Students with special needs are offered special help by tutors, which undergo a special training. Their mission is to encourage these students to develop all the necessary capacities to lead a full student life, as well as to help them with the study activities that these students cannot perform on their own.

The tutors of students with special needs and faculty teachers regularly take part in education courses and workshops organised by the UP, which focus on training for work with this target student group. Additionally, the UP regularly informs the tutors and employees of innovations from this field, available literature, seminars and possible new regulations governing this field. For several years, the UP actively cooperates with the Organisation of Disabled Students of Slovenia (several workshops aimed at training teachers for work with students with special needs have already been organised).

During their studies, students are given possibilities to acquire appropriate competencies and to be included in research and professional projects. One of the possibilities is the inclusion in research and professional projects within the framework of mandatory practical training. This is an integral part of study programmes and is also evaluated based on the ECTS. The ambition of the UP to include its graduates in the increasingly demanding labour market as soon as possible is also reflected in the preparation of study programmes. The study programmes insure that student obtains appropriate general competencies that actually fulfil the expectations of future employers.

The general competencies on which all involved partners in the survey agree that the graduate should acquire are the following: acquaintance with expert terminology from a certain field, ability to form independent texts, capability of constructive cooperation with other expert profiles, collegiality towards co-workers, as well as ability to operate within a group (including an international environment). The UP also takes care of the career development of students and graduates, as well as of their successful entry into the labour market immediately after completion of studies. The UP and its members offer students, in cooperation with other external partners, various workshops, seminars, courses and other forms of learning.

Within the framework of the project Career planning and counselling for an effective entry into the labour market the UP has established a network of career counsellors, who can help students with choosing their studies and career paths. The activities have been aimed at acquiring competencies for a successful career development and for raising employability.

Submitted by: Marija Škerlj, Undersecretary at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia, Marija.Skerlj1@gov.si
Fairness and Gender

Within the 2011-2014 University Plan and among the new action programmes that help classify the initiatives that are going to be developed, there are two that especially tackle the issues of fairness and gender. These are the Student Support and Accessibility to Learning Programme and the University and Society Programme.

In the case of the first-mentioned, the aim is to provide students and special groups with resources in order to facilitate their access to university education. The initiatives developed need to mobilise the financial and material resources required to enable students to gain access to university education under conditions of equality. In this respect, special attention shall be paid to students who, owing to the specific conditions they face, find it difficult to access and pursue university studies. The proposed action included in this programme has a variety of aims, ranging from payment of enrolment fees to the provision of stipends to help cover the cost of study, purchase of material, assistance with transport and/or accommodation, and aid for learning languages, etc. From a more specific standpoint, support action is also being promoted for those students who find it difficult to access and pursue university studies owing to the conditions they face.

**ACTION REGARDING THE SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of action</th>
<th>STATE-ASSISTED ACTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General grants to help defray the cost of daily transport and transport for disabled students.</td>
<td>Action geared towards accessibility and inclusion, interculturality, solidarity and cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants for collaboration purposes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants for language courses overseas during summer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants for Erasmus students and other university mobility programmes of an international nature.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants for academic excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exemption from public prices for students who find it difficult to access and pursue university studies owing to the conditions they face.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants, aid</td>
<td>Fairness and social projection contract-programme offered by the UPV/EHU, University of Deusto and Mondragón</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second programme, i.e. the University and Society Programme, forms part of the area of fairness and social projection, and is related to the following strategic objective set out by the plan: to reinforce the role of the university as a place for reflection that is able to foster a critical spirit, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and sustainability. Action related to the promotion of gender equality is of special relevance in this sphere of activity and shall be developed via the fairness and social projection contract-programme offered by universities within the Basque University System.

The contract-programme within the 2011-2014 University Plan includes qualitative indicators in which goals are defined by the state or extent of implementation of the different courses of action and the year in which they need to commence or be completed, in addition to related action and its funding.
### UPV/EHU

#### Equality plan
- **2011**: €69,000
- **2012**: €69,000
- **2013**: €69,000
- **2014**: €69,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of research projects on equality and/or gender perspective.</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>7</td>
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#### University of Deusto

- **Development of University Social Responsibility by intervening, among other ways, in the area of gender equality.**
  - **2011**: €25,000
  - **2012**: €50,000
  - **2013**: €75,000
  - **2014**: €100,000

<table>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</table>

- **Executive Plans, among which is included gender equality.**
  - **Drafted**
  - **Being developed**
  - **Being developed**
  - **Being developed and assessed**

### University of Mondragón

- **Action related to social responsibility that includes gender equality.**
  - **2011**: €19,820
  - **2012**: €27,550
  - **2013**: €35,264
  - **2014**: €44,961

<table>
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- **Carrying out and putting into practice of plans.**
  - **2011**: €19,820
  - **2012**: €27,550
  - **2013**: €35,264
  - **2014**: €44,961

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- **Drafting and defining of the University Social Responsibility Report.**
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As far as initiatives taken by the Basque Government to attract and retain disadvantaged students are concerned and help them to graduate, Ministerial Order dated 2nd July 2013, issued by the Minister for Education, Language Policy and Culture, sets out the costs to be met by public services in higher education at the University of the Basque Country/Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV/EHU) for the school year 2013-2014. It also defines the conditions governing exemptions from and reductions in the aforementioned costs in addition to setting public prices for higher education, in order to ensure that no-one is excluded from university study for financial reasons. To this end, the Government and the autonomous communities, in addition to universities themselves, implement a policy regarding grants, aid and credit for students and, in the case of state-run universities, shall also establish types of partial or total exemption from payment of public prices for the provision of academic services. The aforementioned is regulated by Section 45.4 of Constitutional Law 6/2001 dated 21st December governing Universities (modified by Constitutional Law 4/2007 dated 24th April). In all cases, special attention shall be paid to those persons with dependency or disability, thus ensuring their access to and pursuit of university studies.

Those students shall be able to obtain exemption from a reduction in public prices who: form part of a large family, are victims of terrorism or their family members, whose family includes some disabled person (either the university student has a level of disability equal to or over 33% or their direct members have a level of disability equal to or over 65%), are victims of gender violence (they and their children under 25 years of age), or form part of a single parent family (a single parent with two or more children under 25 years of age).

Likewise, Ministerial Order dated 10th July 2013 issued by the Minister for Education, Language Policy and Culture sets out the requirements for grants for the pursuit of university studies and other higher education studies for the school year 2013-2014, as well as aid destined for the defraying of transport expenses incurred by students with disability, whereby Section 9 governing Special assistance for students affected by a disability states the following: students affected by a recognised level of disability equal to or over 65% may reduce their academic workload by up to 50%, without any reduction in the amount of aid, and students who opt for full enrolment shall obtain a 50% increase in all components of the grant to which they are entitled, except for the exemption of public prices.
And in Article 17 governing Family income deductions, one of the cases listed is that of Deductions owing to disability, which states the following:

“A deduction shall be provided on family income for each computable member who is affected by a legally classified disability and who does not obtain any job income or similar. This deduction shall amount to 1,811 Euros if the level of disability is equal to or over 33% and less than 65%, irrespective of whether they are a computable family member. If the level of disability is equal to or over 65%, then the deduction shall amount to 4,000 Euros if the person with disability is the applicant and 2,881 Euros in the case of computable members. To apply for this deduction, proof must be provided of the fact that the disability persists as of the deadline for submission of applications.”

This Ministerial Order dated 10th July 2013 contains an annex that is set aside exclusively for Aid destined for transport expenses incurred by students with disability who pursued university or other higher education studies in the Basque Autonomous Community during the school year 2013-2014, setting out the purpose and nature of the grant, amount thereof and requirements. Up to 100 % of the approved budget may be funded, with a 12,000 Euro limit per application and until such time as the credit set aside for such purpose is used up.

Broadly speaking, the above would refer to initiatives that the Basque Government has been developing in recent years within its 2011-2014 University Plan with a view to fostering fairness in higher education, and facilitate access to it by those students who find it difficult to access and pursue university studies owing to the conditions they face.

Submitted by: Javier Alonso, Unibertsitate Zuzendaritza/Dirección de Universidades, huisuniv@ej-gv.es

UNIVERSITAT ROVIRA I VIRGILI, TARRAGONA

Second Assistance plan for URV students with disabilities

The second Assistance Plan for URV students with disabilities was approved by the University Council on 7 March 2013. In accordance with this Plan, the URV supports activities aimed at: guaranteeing the right to equal opportunity for all members of the university community (students, teaching staff, and administration and service personnel); guiding and advising students with disabilities on their arrival at the University; ensuring accessibility for all members of the community; raising awareness and solidarity at the University with regard to persons with disability; promoting training in matters of disability and universal accessibility for all members of the university community; conducting actions to enable persons with disability to enjoy the opportunities they need to fulfil their academic and career objectives and achieve social engagement; and promoting and disseminating research into matters pertaining to disabilities.

To complement this plan, the URV has also adopted a ruling to regulate adjustments for students with disabilities, produced a guidebook for teaching staff entitled Guia d’atenció als estudiants amb discapacitat i altres trastorns (Guide for assisting students with disabilities and other disorders), implemented accessibility improvements at the Sescelades Campus, and created a web page on the web sites of the URV Careers Office and URV Guide for Disabled Students to promote the integration into the labour market of students with disabilities.

To promote the access of disadvantaged students to the University, the URV offers a range of grants, special URV collaboration grants, two University Council programmes, University Council grants for URV students experiencing special difficulties, and grants sponsored by the Repsol Foundation and the URV University Council.

Special URV collaboration grants

In July 2012, the University Senate approved a student support program comprising measures for alleviating the effects of rising matriculation fees on equity of access. This program included an extraordinary call for collaboration grants for students experiencing difficult circumstances (academic year 2012/13), which was approved in May 2013 and which awarded 48 scholarships with a total value of 64,127.28€.
**URV University Council grants**

*University council grants for URV students experiencing special difficulties*

These grants are awarded to students who are enrolled at the URV and who, for social or family reasons (illness, family misfortune, difficult family circumstances, etc.), are experiencing special difficulties that may affect their ability to commence or continue their URV studies. In all, a maximum of 25,000 euros can be awarded to subsidise first-time enrolment for credits up to a maximum of 2,500 euros per student.

**Grants sponsored by the Repsol Foundation and the URV University Council**

The aim of these sponsored grants is to help children of families with special difficulties gain access to or continue their university studies at the URV. We believe such difficulties should be attested by two fundamental elements: first, the student’s family’s income and resources and the number of people in his or her family; and second, the student’s academic performance. Other circumstances that may be difficult to measure and quantify a priori, such as family break-ups, serious health problems, disabilities, communication problems, and belonging to ethnic minorities, etc., may also be taken into account. While this call for grants contemplates all three aspects, priority is given to the student’s personal circumstances.

Since academic year 2006/07, there have been 35 beneficiaries of these grants. The average PAU (university access test) score of these beneficiaries is 8.18 and the average CFGS (Higher National Diploma) score is 8.55. Thirty-one students had studied at public (state) schools and 4 had studied at private schools from all over the province of Tarragona—specifically from Tarragona, Reus, Valls, Amposta, Cambrils, Tortosa, Deltebre, Torredembarra, and Gandesa. The university courses taken by these students have been from every undergraduate discipline. Performance has generally been positive: of the 35 students who have benefitted from these grants, only two have abandoned their studies and two have had their grants revoked for poor performance. Despite the similar access scores, differences in performance have been observed between students who gained access to university via PAU and those who gained access via CFGS.

**Chair of Social inclusion**

With the creation of the Chair for Social Inclusion in 2011, the Rovira i Virgili University became a leader in social responsibility, acting with a commitment to society and an aim to promote the processes of social inclusion. The URV Chair for Social Inclusion was the first in the Catalan university system to have these characteristics. Its objectives, in matters related to processes of social exclusion and inclusion and set out at the time of its foundation, were aligned with the University’s three broad missions of research, teaching, and the transfer of knowledge. Initially, the Chair was sponsored by the ONCE Foundation, the Diputación (county council) of Tarragona, and the URV University Council. The Chair is currently seeking other sponsors that will enable it to continue to conduct its tasks at the service of society at large.

Since its inception, the Chair has focused much of its activity on research and the transfer of knowledge. In collaboration with the ONCE Foundation and CERMI (Spanish Committee of Representatives of Persons with Disabilities), the Chair has conducted a study entitled Discapacitat i pobresa (Disability and poverty), which measures the additional costs incurred by families with disabled members. The results of this study have been presented at national and international conferences.

The Chair has also participated in national competitive research programs such as Poverty and Gender in Spain and in research programmes financed by the EU, such as the recently completed Internet: Creatively Unveiling Discrimination (ICUD) and Social class, gender, participation and lifelong learning. In the transfer of knowledge, the Chair collaborates with URV Solidària on its range of training courses and with the various town halls of our region on training and awareness activities included in their social inclusion programmes.

Every year the Chair publishes the Quaderns per a la Inclusió. These are books comprising contributions from various academics on matters related to social inclusion.

*Submitted by: Laura Castillejo, Secretariat of the Rectorate, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, grector@urv.cat*
Support for students with disabilities

All universities and HEIs (higher education institutions) in Sweden have a contact person/coordinator employed who is responsible for working with issues relating to educational accessibility and equal opportunities for students with disabilities, and also acts as a source of knowledge and guidance for university staff. Universities and HEIs in Sweden are obliged to provide funds to cover costs for educational support and assistance to students with disabilities. A very important and essential public agency which supports the HEIs in this work is the Swedish Library of Audio Books and Braille, MTM. The MTM provides university students experiencing difficulties with reading (due to for example dyslexia, impaired sight or mobility), with course literature in different alternative formats. Services provided for students with disabilities are for instance audio books, sign language interpreting, note-taking help, mentors and courses in study skills and time management.

The University Library project “Function”

Karolinska Institutet has a high ambition to give disabled students the possibility to study on the same terms as other students. The University Library has decided to implement a project during a two-year period (autumn 2013–autumn 2015). To support this, the University Library will evaluate the service provided today and take actions to further develop and enhance the quality and quantity of the service.

The University Library is committed to providing access to all library facilities and collections for students with disabilities. Disabled students can access adaptions of course literature such as talking books, enlargements and e-text. There are two resource rooms equipped with assistive technology, which can be booked and used for individual exams and for studies. Disabled students can copy for free if they use note-taking help.

The following issues will be addressed through a cooperative effort involving both library and IT staff and the Coordinator for Disabled Students in the Education Support Office.

Accessibility

Accessibility of the Library facilities will be inspected and evaluated so that necessary remodeling of the library areas gives full access to disabled students with different needs. The resource rooms will be refurnished to better suit different kinds of disabilities. The library web site will undergo considerable development during this period with strong focus on accessibility.

Technology and software

The rapid development of technology and software in the recent years has led to a wide range of products available on the market, for single-use or campus licenses. The library should provide the latest and most cost-effective software and assistive technology possible.

Staff training

Course for all Library Staff to obtain basic knowledge of the different needs disabled students have and how the library can support them. Lecture for staff working in customer service roles to enable participants to become disability competent and confident when dealing with customers.

Communication and marketing

Information about the services the library can give disabled students should be easily obtainable and visible both through different channels on the web and on campus. The Library plans to have open seminars with lecturers or researches in disabilities during Dyslexia Awareness Week.

Student ambassadors

The use of Student ambassadors is one of the measures employed by Karolinska Institutet (KI) in order to broaden its student recruitment base. Student ambassadors participate in school visits, education fairs and
college fair days where they talk about education at KI and what it entails to be a student there. They also share their personal experiences of higher education and career choices. Student ambassadors also attend to individual prospective students who are interested in a specific study programme, an activity we have called “Tail a student”. It means that the prospective student spends half a day with the ambassador and attends lectures as well as visits study facilities and the campus. “To tail a student” is a golden opportunity to get answers to questions the prospective student may have about the educational programme at hand and about KI in general. Recruitment of new ambassadors takes place once a year and the goal is to select ambassadors from both sexes and from different study programmes and with diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Cooperation with upper secondary education institutions

In order to reach new student groups, KI collaborates with three schools in the county: Tensta Gymnasium, Huddinge gymnasiet and Solna Gymnasium. The collaboration aims at increasing the relatively low transition rate to higher education in these schools, as well as increasing the students’ interest and knowledge about health care professions. A range of activities and measures are implemented through these partnerships, such as inspirational lectures, laboratory work and field trips. Many students have also completed part of their “project work” at different KI departments. “Project work” is a required course in schools.

KI also brings university activities to the schools, by, for instance, offering lectures for students and seminars for faculty. The so-called KI- day, organized annually at Huddinge gymnasiet, is an example of such an activity where theme lectures and hands-on activities are organized by representatives and students from the undergraduate programmes. Information about the study opportunities at KI is also provided. Some themes for KI- day have been “Global health”, “Use and abuse” and “The fragile human”.

Mentor4Equality

An assessment of unequal structures and mechanisms in research careers has been conducted by the mentees of a one year mentor program at KI – Mentor4Equality – which was financed by the Delegation for Gender Equality in Higher Education. Sixteen PhD-students and postdocs from 13 departments at KI have assessed conditions for pursuing a research career from a gender and ethnicity perspective. Research and other studies on inequality regimes in the academy and other organizations have been used as a starting point for the project. Mentee observations and experiences from KI confirm the presence of inequality regimes based on gender and ethnicity as described in previous studies of KI as well as in research on inequality in organizations/in the academy elsewhere.

The project does not claim that the observations made are to be representative for KI as a whole. The observations should rather be seen as educational examples that may be used in order to visualize what forms unequal treatment and discrimination may take. The examples, together with research presented in the discussion material produced by the project, may contribute to increase the knowledge and awareness of inequality regimes at KI and thus, to improve the quality of existing preventive measures. In addition, the project has produced proposals for action.

Learn more about Mentor4Equality and read the discussion material Not the chosen one – gender ethnicity and power in research careers: http://www.uhr.se/sv/Framjande-och-analys/Delegationen-for-jamstalldhet/DJ---projekt/mentor-4-equality/

Support in academic writing

The Academic writing support, was introduced KI in 2003 in order to assist students to develop their academic writing skills, focusing structure, grammar, clarity, and style. Support is offered to students writing in Swedish and English. All undergraduate and master’s students at KI are welcome to make an appointment to discuss any written assignment, free of charge. Over the years there has been an increase in the number of students who take advantage of this opportunity. The target group for Academic Writing Support was originally students with first languages other than Swedish and students with non-academic backgrounds, but there seems to be a development where more students with Swedish as their first language and students with academic backgrounds seek and need assistance as well.

Teachers at KI may schedule Academic Writing Support lectures or workshops for their students. The lectures focus on the expectations on the students to be able to master a certain level of academic writing and how
they can achieve such level using different language tools. The complexity of the teaching increases as the students advance in their education and issues such as referencing, avoiding plagiarism and finding one’s own academic voice are added along the line.

Both tutoring and the lectures are offered on campus as well as online (as meetings and interactive webinars). Learn more about individual tutoring in the Academic Writing Support: http://kib.ki.se/en/node/17852

Submitted by: Professor Göran Dahllof, Council of Equal Treatment, Chairman, Karolinska Institutet, goran.dahllof@ki.se

LINNAEUS UNIVERSITY

Linnaeus University has an Academic Studies Workshop, which provides general advice and guidance in academic writing for students and postgraduate doctoral students. Students can book text tutoring individually or in peer groups. The Academic Studies Workshop provides general advice on academic writing, text structure, referencing, as well as comments on language correctness and formality, but they don’t provide proof-reading.

Linnaeus University attracts a relatively high number of students with disabilities (if this is applicable as disadvantaged) and the Office of student affairs offer support on an individual basis. To get access to this support, the student needs a medical certificate from a doctor, psychologist, or approved assessor for reading and writing difficulties. The purpose of the support is that it should compensate for the disability, so that the student can participate in his or her studies on the same level as the fellow students. This support is an important part in attracting and helping students with disabilities.

The Linnaeus University Student Welfare Office offers courses, lectures and individual counselling on health, lifestyle, stress, study technique, personal development, speech anxiety, presentation techniques and study and career guidance.

Submitted by: Sandra Bergsten, Investigator, Executive Office, Linnaeus University, on behalf of University Director Per Brolin, sandra.bergsten@lnu.se

ÖREBRO UNIVERSITY

Örebro University’s goal is to ensure that students with disabilities can pursue studies under equal conditions as other students. A kind reception, good accessibility and access to individualized educational support are conditions that enable studies under equal conditions. The university has several disability support coordinators available at the Funka-unit at Student Services.

Örebro University has a continuously updated three-year plan of action regarding equality: Action plan for Equality, which dictates the universities policies regarding its pro-equality and anti-discrimination work, all through the organization. This document is based on the Discrimination Act and other State policies regarding the Swedish system for higher education. In addition to this, several internal agents work with these issues on a daily basis: the organization developer, the Equality Board and the Network for Equality are examples of this.

Submitted by: Klara Folkesson, Ph.D., Organization Developer focusing on equality issues, Executive Office, Örebro University, Klara.Folkesson@oru.se
Student Opportunity funding

Through Student Opportunity funding, HEFCE provides funds that recognise the additional costs of recruiting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities and also recognises the additional costs of retaining students who may be less likely to continue their studies. This funding builds on over a decade of investment including the Integrated Aimhigher Programme (2004-05 to 2010-2011) and Lifelong Learning Networks (2004-05 to 2010-11).

HEFCE’s Catalyst Fund

Our Catalyst Fund is open to equality-related proposals. For example, recently £1.17m recurrent funding was provided to support Northumbria University’s Think Physics project.

Vitae

HEFCE has also funded the ‘Every Researcher Counts’ project, delivered by Vitae, to promote E&D in research careers by raising the profile of this issue in HEIs and developing targeted resources and networks. Vitae also manages resources created during the HEFCE-funded Premia project, which aimed to: improve provision for disabled postgraduate researchers; increase the number of disabled researchers at UK HEIs; and improve the quality of their experience.

HEFCE provides funding for Vitae. Vitae have worked, for example to develop and promote a suite of equality and diversity resources for use by UK HEIs as part of the Every Researcher Counts project. These resources are designed to increase the understanding of equality and diversity issues among those who manage research staff (i.e. Principal Investigators, staff developers and human resources specialists) and HEFCE continues to work with Vitae to monitor uptake and usage of these materials and consider ways in which awareness of equality and diversity issues can be raised within HEIs. Together with RCUK, HEFCE has committed to continuing to fund Vitae through its transition to become self-sustaining by 2015.

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

HEFCE is a signatory to the 2008 ‘Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers’. It is an agreement between the funders and employers of researchers in the UK to adhere to seven principles. The sixth principle is that E&D must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

Higher Education Academy (HEA)

HEFCE provides funding to the HEA to run a large number of events and programmes each year to support higher education institutions, departments, and individuals to better enhance the student learning experience. These events and programmes are underpinned by the research, case studies and other publications the Academy produces each year. Included below is a selection of some of HEA’s resources that provide practical ways of addressing the needs identified by OECD.

Other relevant activities of HEFCE

HEFCE funded the Higher Education Academy to curate and archive the research and practice resources from a number of widening participation programmes. The Widening Access Student Retention and Success National Programmes archive hosts research and a large number of case studies, tools and videos that can help support under-prepared and disadvantaged students.

HEFCE also hosts the HEFCE’s Higher education outreach to widen participation: toolkits for practitioners.

The National Teaching Fellowship Scheme promotes excellent learning and teaching. See for example the Dynamic Lab Techniques Manual for Physical and Biological sciences which looks at improving and developing relevant lab skills in undergraduates.
What works? Student Retention and Success. Paul Hamlyn Foundation has funded the Academy to work with 13 institutions to improve the strategic approach to improving the engagement, belonging, retention and success of students. See the What works student retention and success change programme page. This ‘Change’ Programme is informed by the findings of our What Works? Programme Stage 1 which sought to identify and evaluate effective approaches to improving student retention and success. Practical tools and resources are available from the Programme page as well as the Final Report from Stage 1 and a Compendium of Effective Practice – Volume 1 and 2.

The Academy’s BME Strategic Development Grants page provides useful detail on interventions underway by 8 institutions aimed at directly improving BME student retention and attainment. Also relevant is our NTFS funded Tackling the Sophomore Slump, which looks at improving the student experience and achievement in the 2nd year of university.

Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum initiative (2010-2013 phase; 2013-2015 phase) has developed a range of resources to provide support to under-prepared students, to retain disadvantaged students and to foster attitudes associated with HE (note however that the 2013-2015 phase is fully funded by the Scottish Funding Council). Connected with this is the OER produced by Wolverhampton, HEA and Jisc.

Submitted by: Dr Siobhan O’Malley, HE Policy Adviser, Equality & Diversity, Higher Education Funding Council for England, s.omalley@hefce.ac.uk