OECD THEMATIC REVIEW OF TERTIARY EDUCATION

GUIDELINES FOR COUNTRY PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW

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CONTENTS

I BACKGROUND

1. The thematic review

1.1 The objectives of the OECD thematic review of tertiary education

1. The overall objectives of the thematic review are to examine how the organisation, management and delivery of tertiary education can help countries, both at present and in the future, to achieve their economic and social objectives, and in this context to examine the relationship between national policies for tertiary education and institutional behaviour. Equity, quality and sustainability will be key concerns. The focus of the review is primarily upon *national*[1] policies for tertiary education *systems*, rather than upon policies and practices at the institutional level. However the management of tertiary education institutions will be relevant to the extent that policies to improve institutional management can help to progress national policies. In broad terms it will focus upon four principal questions:

– What are and should be the economic and social objectives of the tertiary education system?

– How can countries make sure that their tertiary education system is economically sustainable, that it has an appropriate structure, that there are effective links between the component parts, and that adequate mechanisms exist to ensure its quality?

– How can adequate resources be mobilised for the tertiary education system?

– What mechanisms and policies at national level can ensure effective governance of the system as a whole?

1.2 Scope and definitions

2. Describing what is meant by tertiary education used to be fairly simple. Tertiary education, which was more commonly referred to as higher education, was what happened in universities. This largely encompassed teaching and learning requiring high level conceptual and intellectual skills in the humanities, sciences and social sciences, the preparation of students for entry to a limited number of professions such as medicine, engineering and law, and disinterested advanced research and scholarship. Over the last 30 years guiding definitions such as this have become less reliable. There are a number of reasons for this. As participation in tertiary education has expanded, universities have assumed responsibility for a far wider range of occupational preparation than in the past. As the result of a combination of the increased knowledge base of many occupations and credentials inflation, not only doctors, engineers and lawyers but also nurses, accountants, computer programmers, teachers, pharmacists, speech therapists, and business managers now receive their principal occupational qualifications from a university in many OECD countries. In some OECD countries universities are now involved in a wider range of teaching than their traditional degree-level courses. While the extent of such teaching is not large, many examples can be found of universities that offer adult education and leisure courses, upper secondary

1. However in many countries with federal systems of government policies at the state, provincial or regional level may be as important as, or more important than, national policies. This should be reflected in background reports.

courses to prepare students for university-level study, and short specific occupational preparation at sub-degree level. In addition, within many OECD countries it has become more common for universities not only to engage in teaching and research, but also to provide consultancy services to industry and government and to contribute to national and regional economic and social development. Some of these changes have been associated with differentiation within universities. Some are associated with greater differences emerging between universities in their typical course profiles and student bodies, and in the extent of their engagement in research. Another significant change in some OECD countries has been the emergence of corporate universities, initially offering tertiary-level teaching and awarding tertiary-level qualifications to the employees of a single enterprise, but increasingly offering an alternative for anyone who wants to pay. And, compared to 30 or 40 years ago, universities operate in a developing international market.

3. In addition to these changes within universities that make the traditional picture of tertiary education fuzzier around the edges, universities now, compared to 30 or 40 years ago, face wider competition from new types of tertiary institutions. These have been created for a number of reasons: to develop a closer relationship between tertiary education and the external world; to embody a more applied approach to research; to provide high-level occupational preparation in a more applied and less theoretical way; and to make it easier for articulated qualification routes to be built from lower-level courses to tertiary-level study. Some of these institutions, for example the Universities of Applied Science in Switzerland, the FHS in Austria and Germany, the IUTs in France, and Finland's polytechnics, mostly offer courses at tertiary level. Others, such as TAFE colleges in Australia, Community Colleges in Canada, four-year trade and technical schools in Germany, and New Zealand's polytechnics, offer a wide mix of both tertiary-level courses and a range of courses that are not at tertiary level.

4. In some OECD countries – of which Sweden is a good example – new types of shorter and more applied tertiary programmes have been introduced, but countries have deliberately decided not to create a new institutional sector to offer them. Thus Sweden's advanced vocational training (*kvalificerad yrkesutbildning* or KY) courses can be offered in supplementary adult education provided through the municipalities, in state-funded vocational colleges, in private education and training colleges, and through labour market programmes for the unemployed, as well as in universities.

5. The scope of the OECD thematic review of tertiary education needs to be defined in a way that takes adequate account of developments such as those described in the previous three paragraphs. It needs to be able to reflect not only the breadth of tertiary education programmes, but also the breadth of the institutions that are involved in providing tertiary education.

6. The traditional way in which tertiary education has been identified in international statistical collections has been through the course or programme, not the institution. ISCED-97, the accepted international framework for the collection of education statistics, distinguishes between three types of tertiary programmes:

– ISCED 5A refers to programmes that are largely theoretically based and intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into advanced research programmes and professions with high skills requirements. They are normally expected to be at least three years in duration, although examples exist of 5A programmes that are of shorter duration such as the university transfer programmes offered by Canadian and American Community Colleges;

– ISCED 5B refers to programmes that, like ISCED 5A programmes generally require successful completion of an upper secondary qualification or its equivalent for entry, but which are generally shorter, more practical, technical or occupationally specific than ISCED 5A programmes;

– ISCED 6 refers to advanced research programmes, generally requiring submission of a thesis.

7. In practice, no single criterion can be used to define the boundary between ISCED 5A and 5B programmes. In addition, ISCED-97 provides for the identification of post-secondary non-tertiary programmes, classified as ISCED 4, to straddle the boundary between upper secondary and post-secondary education. Until 1997 these programmes were located either in upper secondary education (now ISCED 3) or in tertiary education (now ISCED 5). Some OECD countries still find it very difficult to distinguish clearly between ISCED 4 and ISCED 5 programmes when reporting tertiary participation data, and the boundary between them in practice is often not clear[2].

8. In addition to the above complexities in the definition of what constitutes a tertiary programme, defining the scope of the review only upon the basis of programmes would make it harder to adopt an analytical framework that can encompass the wide range of institutions that offer tertiary education. The above discussion makes it clear that in considering the scope of the OECD thematic review of tertiary education, account needs to be taken both of *courses or programme*s and of *institutions*.

9. It is proposed that, for purposes of preparing their background reports, countries take a broad view, and include within their analysis and discussion the full range of institutions offering programmes at ISCED 4, and above, but with the major focus being upon those institutions that offer programmes at ISCED 5 or above *as well as* at ISCED 4. (In other words the focus should *not* be on institutions that offer programmes only at ISCED 4 or below.) **The major focus should be on programmes that are currently classified at the level of ISCED 5 and above**. Programmes at ISCED 4 should not be ignored where the distinction between them and ISCED 5 is difficult to make, or where clearly articulated pathways exist, and are widely used, between ISCED 4 qualifications and qualifications at ISCED 5.

A note on terminology

10. The term *tertiary education* is a relatively recent one. Previously the more common term was *higher education*, but tertiary education was adopted in order to reflect the growing diversity of institutions, programmes and purposes referred to above. *Post-secondary education* is another term used for some purposes, to describe the full range of programmes and institutions available after the completion of upper-secondary education. However it is too broad for present purposes, encompassing a far wider range of occupational preparation programmes than is intended to be the focus of the review, as well as a range of adult education programmes that are also not the primary focus of this review. It is important for a more focused scope than the whole of post-secondary education to be adopted for the review.

11. The difficulties that exist in the English language in accurately defining the scope of the thematic review have parallels when translated into other languages. For example the literal translation of tertiary education into French (*enseignement tertiaire*) is often felt in France (although not necessarily in other Francophone communities) to be less appropriate a translation than the term *enseignement supérieur*, which is seen as encompassing the full range of programmes and institutions included within the English term tertiary education, even though, when literally translated into English, *enseignement supérieur* becomes "higher education".

2 . A more detailed discussion of the definitions of tertiary programmes may be found in OECD (1999) *Classifying Educational Programmes. Manual for ISCED-97 Implementation in OECD Countries. 1999 Edition*, Paris.

2. Background reports

2.1 Some general comments

12. All countries participating in the activity will be required to prepare a background report. This is intended to:

– Provide a description of the national and international context of tertiary education;

– Describe the national tertiary education system; and

– Provide an analysis of the key factors that are influencing tertiary education policy and an analysis of key policy concerns in a number of specific areas.

13. All background reports are to be prepared within a common framework. This is in order to facilitate comparative analysis and to maximise the opportunities for countries to learn from each other. Nevertheless the Secretariat may well ask for supplementary material that is specific to the particular country. In a number of places the guidelines that follow ask countries to provide statistical data. However full use will be made of existing OECD statistical collections during the review, and countries will not be asked to duplicate statistics that are already available. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the review will also draw upon other work on tertiary education being carried out within the OECD (for example CERI's work on international trade in education services and the future of the university, the work of IMHE on institutional management, recent reviews of national tertiary education, and the work of the Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry).

14. Background reports are intended for five main audiences:

– The OECD Secretariat, which will use them in preparing the final comparative report from the review;

– The reviewers who will visit the country (for those countries hosting a national visit as part of their participation in the review). The background report will help the review team to identify questions to ask, policies to examine, people to meet and institutions to visit;

– Those interested in tertiary education policy issues within the country that is writing the report. The background report can be an important way to focus national attention on key issues, and of drawing attention to policy initiatives;

– Other countries participating in the review. Background reports can be an aid to sharing experiences; and

– Those interested in tertiary education policy issues at an international level and in countries not participating in the review. After clearance by countries, all background reports will be placed on the OECD website and their availability will be widely disseminated.

15. The questions to be addressed in background reports are grouped around a number of common problems and issues in tertiary education policy that all countries must address. This provides a common structure for each background report. The questions are not prescriptive, and they should not take precedence over common sense. If some topics or issues are not relevant, say so. And if something that is important for tertiary education policy in your country is not mentioned in the guidelines it should nevertheless be addressed in the background report. Although we strongly prefer you to use the structure of questions that is set out in Section II of this paper, you may wish to combine, rephrase or expand certain

questions in the light of national circumstances. The key requirement is that the issues underlying the questions are addressed in each background report.

16. The more complete the information that you provide, the better the final comparative report of the thematic review will be. If you have no information on a question that is specifically mentioned in the guidelines, it is more helpful to the Secretariat if you indicate that there is no information available than to simply ignore the issue. As supporting material, please provide copies of relevant up-to-date research papers and data.

17. To maximise opportunities for countries to learn from each other, and in order to be useful to country authorities and to the review team, the background report will need to be written in clear, simple language. It should be a coherent, self-contained analytical document rather than a descriptive list of responses to the individual topics or issues in the guidelines.

18. The guidelines in Section II suggest the number of pages that each Chapter of the report should contain. These are only indicative, and you should feel free to vary them if particular issues are of greater or lesser importance for your country.

19. Some technical guidelines on matters such as formatting are provided in Section III.

2.2 Processes to follow when preparing background reports

20. National authorities are responsible for the preparation of the background report. Each country taking part in the review must appoint a national co-ordinator. The responsibilities of the national co-ordinator include managing the preparation of the background report.

21. The national authority responsible for a country's participation in the review may decide to write the background report itself, or it may decide to commission a research organization, a consultant or a group of consultants to write it on its behalf. Whichever decision is taken, the national co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the background report is completed on time and that it follows these guidelines.

22. No single organisation, Ministry or group will have all of the information required to complete the background report. National co-ordinators therefore need to ensure co-operation between all relevant Ministries and agencies, as well as the involvement of key stakeholder groups[3]. The Country may choose to assemble a National Advisory Committee comprised of key stakeholder groups. This committee can play an important role in ensuring that a variety of perspectives are reflected in the report. Where a country decides not to establish an Advisory Committee there will need to be other processes for ensuring that the report adequately reflects the views and perspectives of the different stakeholder groups concerned with tertiary education. A key task of national co-ordinators will be to consolidate these different perspectives in order to provide the OECD Secretariat with a single, integrated response. The methodology used to ensure the involvement of different bodies in the preparation of the report should be noted in the report itself.

23. Experience gained in other OECD thematic reviews suggests that each background report is likely to take around 6-9 months to complete. For those countries participating in the thematic country review strand, the report should be finalised one month before the visit of the review team.

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3. These will vary from country to country, but would normally include, in addition to the Ministry of education, Ministries such as finance, labour, industry, research, science and technology; employers and trade unions; representatives of academic staff; student organisations; agencies responsible for funding and quality assurance; and organisations representing tertiary institutions.

A note on the time periods to be covered in providing data

24. At a number of points the guidelines ask countries to provide comparisons or information on trends over a period of time. Generally a period of ten years is referred to. However countries should be flexible in interpreting this. In some cases a more useful picture will be provided using a longer time period in order to capture significant reforms or changes in tertiary education systems such as the introduction of new types of institutions, the onset of significant growth, or changes in funding arrangements.

An important general point about data

25. Countries are **<u>not</u>** expected to collect new data, to conduct new research or to carry out new surveys in order to obtain the data needed to complete national background reports. Reports should be written using the best **available** data and evidence. Where evidence is missing on particular points this can be an important indicator of areas for future policy analysis.

II. SPECIFIC ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN BACKGROUND REPORTS

Chapter 1: The national context of tertiary education (about 3 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly and clearly outline the broad political, demographic, economic, social, and cultural developments that shape the issues that tertiary education policies must address. Please address the following:

- The economic, social and cultural background of your country that has implications for tertiary education;

- Broad population trends in terms of numbers, age structure and cultural diversity that have implications for tertiary education; and

- The main economic and labour market trends that have implications for tertiary education.

Chapter 2: Overall description of the tertiary education system (about 10 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the main features of the tertiary education system, its goals, trends and key policy issues. This chapter will provide much of the detail that is to be cross-referenced in the following chapters. Please address the following issues;

- What are the purposes, goals and objectives of the tertiary education system? How are these goals and objectives set, and which actors are involved in setting them? Do they vary between different parts of the system? How are objectives such as research and innovation, teaching, community development, cultural development, social equity and contributions to national and regional economic development balanced? Do tensions exist within tertiary education, and between it and external actors, over the relative weight that should be given to different objectives? How have the purposes and goals of the tertiary education system changed over the last ten years?

- What is the overall size of the tertiary education system (number of students, participation rates)? How has the overall size of the system changed over the last ten years, and in which parts of the system has any growth been concentrated? (Include detailed tables in an Annex.)

- What national goals and targets exist for growth in tertiary education (overall size of the system; participation rates; outputs in terms of qualifications and graduations; sectoral distribution)? How have such targets been set in relation to need and demand? In setting targets for tertiary education, what account is taken of targets for other parts of the education system? How is demand balanced against available resources when setting targets?

- Describe the major national agencies responsible for developing tertiary education policy, for financing the system, and for assuring its quality, and their mandates. Describe how national tertiary education policies are developed.

- Outline the basic governance of and regulatory framework for the tertiary education system, including the major legislation that applies to it.

- Outline the number and types of institutions that provide tertiary education in your country. Examples of types of institutions to be described include: public and private; for-profit and not-for-profit; research and non-research institutions; vocationally oriented; universities; non-university tertiary institutions such as polytechnics; and distance education institutions. If relevant, also describe how these relate to post-secondary non-tertiary institutions (for example describe the extent to which organisations that are primarily not tertiary institutions also offer as one of their functions. Indicate the distribution of institutions by size. Describe the typical attendance modes (full-time; part-time; sandwich programmes; block-release; distance education) typically associated with each type of institution.

- Outline the different types of qualifications that are issued by the tertiary education system, and describe the key differences between them. (In a separate Annex indicate the numbers of students enrolled in and graduating from each type of qualification, and the distribution of enrolments in different types of qualifications across different types of institutions.) What pressures exist for these qualifications to change (for example the Bologna process in European countries)?

- What have been the major changes in the tertiary education system over the last ten years? What have been the major influences upon these changes? How has tertiary education changed for students over this period, and what has policy done to encourage these changes?

Chapter 3: The tertiary education system and the labour market (about 5 pages)

This chapter aims to identify the links between tertiary education and the labour market and policies to improve these links. It asks for evidence on this relationship, how it has changed, and the mechanisms used to sustain it.

- What evidence can be provided on the relationship between labour market demand and the supply of tertiary education graduates? Is such evidence gathered routinely and systematically at national level? How is it used in planning and managing the system? Is there evidence either of shortages of graduates in particular areas or of over-supply? How has the tertiary education system responded to any such evidence, and how have responses within tertiary education been complemented by adjustment mechanisms within the labour market itself? How do employment outcomes and earnings differ by type of institution, field of study, and completion versus non-completion?

- What is the relationship between the supply of tertiary graduates (and their earnings) and the supply of graduates (and their earnings) from other sectors or levels of education? How has this relationship changed over the last ten years? (Please include any detailed tables in an Annex.)

- How does national policy try to ensure that tertiary institutions respond appropriately to labour market demands and that their students are appropriately prepared for employment and have the types of employment-related skills that employers are seeking (for example: mechanisms for updating the curriculum; links to professional associations; job placement services; employer liaison services; graduate surveys; career services)? How do policies try to balance short term labour market requirements and longer-term employability skills?

- Please comment upon the ways in which an international market for labour is having an impact upon the national tertiary education system, and upon policy responses to any such impact.

Chapter 4: The regional role of tertiary education (about 5 pages)

– To what extent does national higher education policy have a regional dimension? In answering this, the following questions could be taken into consideration:

  – Have regional development (economic, social, cultural) considerations played a prominent role in decisions on where to locate and build up new institutions?

  – Have funding arrangements been altered to reward institutions for regional engagement or to make this engagement possible?

  – Is regional engagement imposed on institutions by government as a formal requirement?

  – What policy initiatives have been taken to stimulate and promote regional collaboration between tertiary institutions, industry, government and civil society? Who have been the driving forces behind these initiatives?

– To what extent do these considerations have a differential impact upon different types of tertiary institutions?

– Does an emphasis upon a regional role for tertiary institutions involve any policy tensions? For example, is there a conflict between regional commitment and the strive for quality and international competitiveness in higher education? Is the existing structure of higher education generally regarded as too centralized or too geographically dispersed and fragmented?

– What policies exist to help tertiary institutions to respond to, and to help to shape, the economic and labour market requirements of the regions in which they are located (including a role in regional industry development and in regional innovation, knowledge transfer and research)?

Chapter 5: The role of tertiary education in research and innovation (about 10 pages)

This chapter is intended to provide information on the role of tertiary education in research and innovation, and on the mechanisms and policies that governments use to support and strengthen this role.

– What is the balance of effort between teaching and research (in staff time, in expenditure) within the tertiary education sector as a whole, and between different parts of the system? Does the balance differ between different types of institutions and/or between different individual institutions? If so, why?

– What are the major sources of funds for research conducted within tertiary education? What is the balance between government funds and private funds?

– What methods and policies are used to allocate research funds to tertiary education as a sector, to individual institutions, and to individual researchers within tertiary education? What role, if any, does government policy play in setting research priorities? Do government policies attempt to encourage any particular types of research or approaches to research (for example research directed at regional development, pure research, research in partnership with industry)?

– What methods are used to assess the quality and effectiveness of the research conducted within tertiary education? Is there a link between any such methods and the allocation of research funds?

- What policies regulate or influence competition between tertiary education and other institutions (private and public corporations, government research organisations located outside of tertiary education) for government research funds? How is the allocation of research funds between these different types of organisation determined?

- What changes have occurred over the last ten years in the level of research funding, the sources of research funds, the effort allocated to research, the methods used to allocate research funds, or the methods used to judge the quality of research effort within tertiary education? (Provide detailed data in an Annex if necessary.)

- Do policies or funding programmes exist to encourage co-operative research between tertiary education and industry or the exchange of research staff between the two?

- Describe the ways in which tertiary institutions help to stimulate innovation and knowledge transfer between researchers and industry (both larger enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises). Do national policies exist to encourage tertiary institutions to play such a role? Are there any specific mechanisms that have been created within or between tertiary institutions to encourage such a role?

- Does the national legal framework for intellectual property rights support the role of tertiary institutions in research and innovation (including research and innovation partnerships with industry)? If not, what specific problems and issues does it create?

Chapter 6: Achieving equity in and through tertiary education (about 10 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the policies through which the tertiary education system helps to advance national equity objectives, and to provide evidence on the link between the system and equity goals.

- Describe the composition of the student body as a function of factors such as age, sex, socio-economic background and ethnicity. How do participation and graduation rates differ as a function of such factors? What changes have occurred in the composition of the student body over the last ten years? What has been the relationship between expansion of the system and the composition of the student body? (Include detailed tables in an Annex. If possible, provide data on the socio-economic composition of enrolments and graduates by ISCED level and type of institution.)

- What central policies or programmes exist to encourage the tertiary education system to advance equity goals, and how do these relate to national labour market and social welfare policies? How and at what level are such policies implemented? Describe any policies, targets or goals that apply to specific groups such as those from low income families, poor regions, adults, women, ethnic minorities, or the disabled. What initiatives have been introduced over the last ten years to improve the tertiary education system's contribution to equity goals?

- Outline any national schemes or guidelines affecting how students are selected to enter tertiary education. Is there an automatic right of entry to tertiary education for all upper-secondary graduates, or do competitive selection processes exist? Do selection procedures differ in different parts of the system? Do special selection procedures and selection criteria exist for particular groups such as those from low income families, those from particular categories of schools, members of ethnic minorities or adults?

- Discuss the implications of current methods of financing tertiary education (and in particular the ways in which tuition costs and incidental and living costs are financed) for equity. Are special programmes in place to help meet such costs for particular groups or types of students?

- What national evidence exists on the contribution that tertiary education makes to social mobility – for example the mobility of ethnic groups and their children or economic mobility between generations?

Chapter 7: Resourcing the tertiary education system (about 10 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to identify major issues in the staffing and financing of tertiary education and to describe the policies and programmes that have been adopted to address these issues. NOTE: In discussing staffing and financing, you should provide a separate discussion of how these are treated for purposes of teaching and research.

7.1 Staff

- Is the tertiary education system currently experiencing problems in ensuring an adequate supply of academic staff? If so, what steps have been taken to address them? Are such problems expected in the future? If so, what steps are proposed to address them? In addressing this issue, you might also like to describe the ways in which academic salaries are set, and the role, if any, that national policies play in this process. Typically, what criteria are used to select academic staff? Please describe any differences between selection criteria in different parts of the tertiary education system.

- Describe the criteria used to promote academic staff within the sector as a whole and within its component parts. What relative emphasis is given to teaching, to research, to relationships with industry and to community contributions in promotion decisions?

- What policies and programmes exist to improve the quality of tertiary education staff: in teaching; in research; and in administration and leadership?

7.2 Financing

- Describe the mechanisms (such as direct grants, student fees and charges, income from part-time employment, loans, income-contingent loans, taxation rebates or deductions, income from patents, the export of educational services, income from endowments) which, at the moment, are used to finance tertiary education. In this description, provide details of the separate contributions of i) governments ii) students and their families iii) employers iv) private capital markets and v) other sources of funds to i) tuition costs ii) student living costs and incidental expenses such as text books and materials and iv) capital works. What changes have occurred in the balance between these over the last ten years?

- Describe the mechanisms that are used to allocate government funds to institutions, and the conditions that are attached to these funds. Indicate the links, if any, that exist between funding methods and quality assurance outcomes. Describe differences in the cost of tertiary education between different parts of the system, and explain why any such differences exist. How have unit costs changed over the last ten years in different parts of the system, and what accounts for any such changes?

- Provide details of changes to the methods used to fund tertiary education that have been introduced in the last ten years, as well as changes in the relative contributions of different sources of funds to overall tertiary funding. Discuss the impact that expansion in the system as a whole has had upon financing methods.

– Discuss any problems and pressures that are currently being experienced in funding tertiary education, and outline the policy options being considered to solve these problems.

– Outline the ways in which expenditure on tertiary education by individuals and private enterprises is treated for taxation purposes.

– What implications do the age-earnings profiles of tertiary graduates, relative to the age-earnings profiles of graduates from other levels of the education system, have for the ways in which tertiary education is financed in your country?

Chapter 8: Planning, governing and regulating the system (about 10 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the size, shape and structure of the tertiary education system as a whole is determined, how the system is governed and regulated, and to describe the policy measures that are taken to ensure that the links between its separate parts are effective. In your discussion, you should clearly highlight differences between the ways in which teaching and research are planned, governed and regulated.

– How are responsibilities for decision making distributed between central ministries, independent agencies and tertiary institutions themselves in matters such as: the aims and objectives of institutions; the content of the curriculum; the profile of courses to be offered; research priorities; staff recruitment and working conditions; resource allocation; degree granting; and major capital programmes (both expansion or renovation of existing institutions and the establishment of new institutions)? Has the distribution of responsibility over matters such as these changed in the last ten years? How is the relationship between the autonomy of institutions on the one hand and transparency and accountability on the other balanced? To what extent does national policy seek to encourage institutional autonomy and to limit the role of government in such matters?

– Outline the methods that have been used to decide upon priorities in any expansion that has occurred in the tertiary education system as a whole over the last ten years. Has expansion been planned against specific targets for overall growth, and for growth in particular parts of the system (types of institutions, levels of qualifications, areas of study, geographical regions)? Or has growth been largely driven by community demand and student choices, relatively unfettered by government?

– Does national legislation or national regulations specify the nature, composition and methods of operation of institutional governing bodies? What role, for example, do groups such as students, graduates, employers and community members play in the governance and management of institutions?

– What central policy levers are used to improve institutional management: for example setting performance targets and resource allocation based on performance?

– How have linkages among tertiary institutions been fostered and to what extent have they relied on mechanisms such as: different patterns of transition or transfer among tertiary institutions; the extent to which students are able to change programmes and institutions; the availability of information to students within the system; and the relative use of specialised versus comprehensive institutions? Summarise available evidence on the extent of transfers and linkages, such as the extent of student movement among programmes and institutions (in an Annex if necessary).

- What sorts of issues arise in attempting to maintain diversity within the tertiary education system as a whole? For example are pressures evident for non-university institutions to emulate universities in matters such as their research profiles, the levels of the qualifications that they issue, and staff qualifications? How are such pressures dealt with?

System linkages

- Describe the nature of the linkages that exist between tertiary institutions on the one hand and other forms of education such as adult and continuing education, short-term job training, remedial training (e.g., for welfare recipients), and employer-based training on the other. To what extent to tertiary institutions directly provide these other forms of education and training, and do national policies encourage them to do so?

- In what ways has the relationship between tertiary education and upper secondary education changed in recent years? To what extent have any such changes been policy driven? (Examples include changes to the school curriculum such as the introduction of programmes to better prepare upper secondary students for tertiary study, the introduction by tertiary institutions of remedial programmes for upper secondary graduates, or the teaching in secondary schools of advanced level courses providing credit towards tertiary study).

- Provide details of any national policies or legislation that exist to encourage i) credit transfer between programmes within the one institution or between different tertiary institutions, either at the same level or from one level to another; and ii) recognition of prior learning as a basis for admission to a programme or as a basis for granting credit towards qualifications;

- What data is available about the extent to which tertiary institutions actually use credit transfer and recognition of prior learning for purposes of admission of students and the granting of credit towards qualifications, and about the proportion of students benefiting from such arrangements? (Detailed data can be provided in an Annex).

- How do students access information on opportunities available in tertiary education, including information on the opportunities for transfer between programmes and institutions? What role is played by government, as opposed to institutions, in collecting and systematising such information?

Chapter 9: Assuring and improving the quality of tertiary education (about 5 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the mechanisms and policies that are used to assure the quality of the tertiary education system.

- What mechanisms and criteria are used to assess and assure the quality of the tertiary education system? Describe the key agencies or organisations (national and international) that are involved in this process: their ownership, scope, funding and regulation. Separately describe the methods used to assess research quality and teaching quality. Describe the ways in which students' and graduates' perspectives are incorporated into quality assessments. Do mechanisms exist to ensure international comparability of the quality of tertiary education? What relationship exists between the methods used to finance tertiary education and quality measures?

- Describe any national policies, programmes or agencies that have been created to improve the quality of teaching and learning within tertiary institutions. Is the quality of teaching and learning monitored on a regular basis, and if so, how?

- In practice, who are the key audiences for evidence on the quality of the system (for example students, prospective students, the managers of tertiary institutions, academic staff, policy makers, the providers of funds, the employers of graduates, the users of research) and how is this evidence provided to them?

- What specific issues does the existence of private tertiary institutions pose for quality assurance mechanisms: for example do the mechanisms and processes used to assure differ between public and private institutions?

- What evidence exists on the relationship between inputs (for example enrolments) and outputs (for example graduation rates)? What trends exist in this relationship over the last ten years? Do graduation rates differ by type of institution, for different types of courses or for different types of students? (Provide detailed evidence in an Annex if necessary.) Has expansion of the tertiary education system had any implications for quality, and if so, how has national policy responded?

Chapter 10: Internationalisation and globalisation of tertiary education (about 5 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the impact that internationalisation is having upon policies for the tertiary education system and the steps that are being taken to encourage and/or respond to it.

- Describe how internationalisation and globalisation are having an impact upon the tertiary education system and upon national policies: for example policies for student and staff exchanges, the awarding of joint degrees, the export of education, the content of the curriculum or the encouragement of joint programmes with institutions in other countries. What are seen to be the main goals, benefits and costs associated with such internationalisation? What reasons have driven the internationalisation of tertiary education?

- Do national policies exist to encourage your country's tertiary education institutions to engage in international exchange of students and/or in the international marketing of educational services? What, if any, mechanisms have been put in place to encourage them to do so?

- What are the principal policy issues (for example financing, quality assurance, loss of staff, impact upon the rest of the system, competition for students from foreign institutions) that have arisen as a result of the impact of globalisation and internationalisation on the tertiary education system?

Chapter 11: Conclusion (about 3 pages)

The purpose of this chapter is to enable the authors of the report to give an overall assessment of tertiary education policy, to comment on trends and changes in policy development, and to include a discussion of their vision for the future of policy in the field. Please address following issues;

- What are the major weaknesses and strengths in current tertiary education policy?

- What are the trends and changes that might be anticipated in future policy development, in both the short and the long term, and what are the highest priorities for future policy development in the field of tertiary education?

– What use, if any, has been made of systematic tools such as scenarios to create alternative visions for the future, and to translate these into options for the direction of tertiary education policy?

III. SOME PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING BACKGROUND REPORTS

Language

1. The background report should be provided to the OECD Secretariat in either English or French.

Length

2. The text of Chapters 1-10 of the background report should be about 80 single-spaced pages in length. Additional material can be attached as Annexes or included as tables, charts, diagrams and extracts from other documents.

Contents

3. In addition to Chapters 1-10, we suggest that your background report should include: a table of contents; a list of tables and figures; a list of acronyms; a glossary of terms; an executive summary; a list of references; and a set of Annexes.

Format

4. To ensure that background reports have a consistent appearance and are easy to use we would appreciate it if you could follow these format guidelines:

- Font Times 11;
- Single spacing;
- Page size A4;
- Pages numbered (bottom centre of each page);
- Part /Section/chapter heading level 1: in **CAPITAL LETTERS IN BOLD** (centred);
- Sub-chapters heading level 2: **Normal letters in bold** (left justified);
- Heading level 3: ***Normal letters in bold and italics*** (left justified);
- Heading level 4: *Normal letters in italics* (left justified);
- Heading level 5: Normal letters (left justified);
- Normal text, single spacing within paragraphs, with a space between paragraphs;
- Paragraphs should be numbered sequentially throughout the document (1, 2, 3, etc.); indent after the paragraph number;

- Lists should be indented; points in a list should be indicated with bullets or numbers;

- Tables and figures should be prepared in Excel or Word, if possible. Each table and figure should have a title and a source, as well as notes as appropriate. Please insert the tables and figures as "pictures" in the document, not floating over the text. The numbering of the tables and figures should be in accordance with the number of the chapter. For example, the first figure in Chapter 3 will be Figure 3.1, the second Figure 3.2 etc;

- Photos, which are inserted in the text as gifs or bitmaps, should have a resolution 300 dpi in the size of print to ensure quality of images;

- References should appear as needed throughout the text in round brackets, specifying the author and the date, like (Smith, 2004);

- Please use the symbol "%" instead of "per cent" or "percent".

5. The background report should be provided in electronic format, preferably as a Word document, suitable for placement on the OECD website.

6. In completing the background report please try wherever possible to refer to the source(s) of any data -- legislation, formal agreements, research articles, literature reviews, surveys, evaluations, publications, administrative data and so on. Where possible, please provide copies of key documents, particularly those available in English and French. Countries should also take the opportunity to include extracts from key documents within the background reports, or as appendices.

General notes on sources

7. Where data are not available, this should be noted, as we would like to identify priorities for future data collection and research.

8. In addition to statistical data, databases and official documents, it would be helpful if the background report also drew on information from research studies in the country, whether of qualitative or quantitative nature. Countries should build some participation by using the input of their own researchers in the writing process.

IV. THE PROCESSES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

International co-operation

1. A co-operative approach between countries, and between countries and the Secretariat, provides countries with an opportunity to learn more about themselves by examining their experiences against those of other countries. It also accumulates international evidence on the impact of policy reforms, and on the circumstances under which they work.

2. Nevertheless comparative work is not simple. The national contexts of tertiary institutions and tertiary education policy making vary markedly across countries. They depend upon countries' historical traditions, social structures and economic conditions. Policy initiatives that work well in one country cannot necessarily be transferred across national borders. The review will need to be sensitive to the role played national context in influencing the implementation and impact of policies.

Two complementary strands

3. The review will comprise two complementary strands: an analytical strand, which be largely desk-bound; and a strand in which countries will be visited by expert groups. The analytical strand will use a variety of inputs to analyse the context of tertiary policy in OECD countries, the factors that shape tertiary policies, and the range of policy responses to these factors. These inputs will include country background reports, papers commissioned by the review, OECD statistics, and the wider research literature on tertiary education. All countries taking part in the review will be involved in the analytical strand.

4. Countries may choose to complement the analytical strand by hosting a national visit. National visits will provide an in-depth analysis of context, key factors and policy responses in participating countries, and they result in countries receiving, in the form of a Country Note written after the national visit, an analysis of key issues in tertiary education that need to be addressed, and a set of policy recommendations on how to address these issues.

5. Experience gained in other recent OECD thematic reviews has shown that where countries participate only in the analytical strand it is often difficult for the Secretariat to gain a full appreciation of the national context, of key policy concerns, and of recent policy initiatives. This can result in countries not being reflected as fully as they might be in the final comparative report of the thematic review. To help minimise these problems in the tertiary education review, it is proposed to take a number of cost-effective steps to set the material provided in background reports more fully into national context, and to widen the Secretariat's understanding of significant national policy issues. These will include telephone and video conferences with key individuals and groups, and a short (2-3 day) visit by one or two Secretariat members to meet with key individuals and stakeholder groups. (The cost of such visits will be included within the already announced costs to countries of participating in the review.)

Country visits

6. A team of up to five reviewers (including at least one Secretariat member) will analyse the country background report and associated materials and subsequently undertake an intensive case study visit of

around 10 days in length. The reviewers will be selected in consultation with the country authorities to ensure that they have experience relevant to the main policy issues in the country concerned. The visit by the full review team will be preceded by a short two-to-three day pre-review visit to the country by a member of the Secretariat. It is suggested that this take place when the background report is at a draft stage. The aim of the pre-visit is for the Secretariat member responsible for liaison with that country to meet the national steering committee, to discuss the programme for the national review visit, and to discuss progress in completing the background report.

7. The study visit, to be organised by the country authorities in conjunction with the Secretariat, should aim to provide the review team with a variety of perspectives on tertiary education policy. Where possible the visit should include meetings with senior policy makers in all key ministries, tertiary education institutions, funding and quality assurance agencies, organisations representing tertiary institutions, groups representing academic staff, employer and trade union organisations, and researchers with a particular expertise in tertiary education. The aim cannot be to have a comprehensive view of all issues relating to tertiary education, but to accumulate sufficient information and understanding on which to base the analysis and policy recommendations.

8. After the visit the review team will prepare a short Country Note (about 30-40 pages) that provides, from an international perspective, reflections on specific issues and policies concerning tertiary education in the country concerned.

9. The organisation of the national visit and the preparation of the Country Note after the visit would normally take a period of 3-6 months.

National co-ordinator

10. Each participating country will appoint a national co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is responsible for:

– Communications with the OECD Secretariat about the review;

– Communications within the country about the review;

– Ensuring that the background report is completed on schedule;

– Liaising with the OECD Secretariat about the organisation of the review team visit (for those countries hosting a visit);

– Attending international meetings and workshops associated with the review;

– Co-ordinating country feedback on draft materials produced through the review; and

– Assisting with dissemination activities associated with the review.

11. The national co-ordinator would normally be appointed from within the national Ministry of Education, and would preferably be an official with close involvement in the tertiary education policy. It is estimated that the National Co-ordinator’s role would involve a minimum of 20 working days per year, with perhaps an additional 5-10 days involved with organising the external review team’s visit in those countries hosting a national visit.

National advisory committee

12. Countries should consider establishing a national advisory committee to support the work of the national co-ordinator, oversee the preparation of the Country Background Report, and to assist in the review more generally. The Committee could include key stakeholder groups concerned with tertiary education, as well as officials experienced in collaborating with the OECD. Some suggestions on relevant stakeholders that should be included are contained in footnote 3 on page 5 of this document.

13. Where a country decides not to establish a national advisory committee it will be important that processes be in place to ensure that the background report is comprehensive in covering the issues and that it adequately reflects the views and perspectives of the different stakeholder groups.

Workshops and Dissemination

14. Meetings of national co-ordinators will be held at roughly six-monthly intervals during the review. Participating countries will be invited to host these meetings, and they will be an opportunity both to share progress in the review and for tertiary education policies in host countries to be shared with all participating countries.

15. In order to share lessons and experiences among participating countries, it is proposed that during the process of completing this review 2-3 country-hosted workshops could be organised. These could be held in association with (before or after) meetings of national co-ordinators. At each workshop, a set of issues from the Country Background Reports (for example financing tertiary education, quality assurance, equity, the future of tertiary education) could be selected for thorough cross-country examination. Participants would be invited to present an analysis of the issues in their own country and the impact on policy initiatives. It would be desirable to have a small delegation of stakeholders represent each country. These workshops would also give an opportunity for participating countries to share perspectives and insights gained during the completion of the corresponding sections of the background reports. In addition to the country presentations, international experts and key stakeholders would be invited to contribute to the debate.

16. In addition, countries participating in the review will be encouraged to host national workshops, conferences and seminars to discuss and disseminate their background reports and their Country Notes. Normally the OECD secretariat would participate in such events.

17. During the review a plan for dissemination events and activities for the final comparative report of the review will be developed by the Secretariat in association with participating countries.

Commissioned Papers

18. The review will be enriched through specially commissioned papers that will provide new perspectives and new analyses on selected issues. Around four commissioned papers should be feasible. Some papers may be commissioned jointly with other work on teachers within OECD or by other international organisations. Possible topics for commissioned papers include the following:

i. Financing tertiary education: emerging models and challenges;

ii. Quality assurance in tertiary education;

iii. Models of system governance in OECD countries;

iv. Supply and demand for graduates: trends in income relativities by qualification in OECD countries;

v. Linking tertiary education to innovation and productivity growth

vi. Equity targets and policies: the impact upon quality.

Outputs

19. The review will generate a number of outputs. These will include: national background reports; Country Notes (for those countries receiving a national visit); regular newsletters; commissioned papers; and a final comparative report. All key documents will be available on the reviews web site.

Timeline

20. The following timeline is proposed to guide the Activity. At this stage it is indicative, as it cannot be finalised until the number of countries participating in each strand of the review has been confirmed. In addition, detailed discussions will need to be held with individual countries about their particular needs.

May – July 2004

Countries confirm their interest in participating in the analytical strand and in the thematic country review strand, appoint a national co-ordinator and commence work on the background reports.

September – December 2004

Expert consultants' reports commissioned.

Schedule for country visits, meetings of national co-ordinators and workshops negotiated between Secretariat and participating countries.

January/February 2005

Meeting of national co-ordinators to assess progress in completing the background reports and discuss further steps; country hosted workshop 1.

February 2005 - April 2006

National visits

October 2005

Progress report presented to the Education Committee

November 2005

Meeting of national co-ordinators to assess progress in completing the background reports and discuss further steps; country hosted workshop 2.

January-June 2006

Country hosted workshop 3 to focus discussion on a set of key substantive issues, discuss selected papers commissioned on those issues, policy implications and lessons learned from country experiences. Country visits continued.

March 2006

Progress report and proposed outline for the final report presented to the Education Committee.

October 2006

Draft synthesising report presented to the Education Committee.

Dissemination activities planned.

March 2007

Final synthesising report presented to the Education Committee.

Dissemination activities launched.

Next steps

21. The following steps will be taken over the next few months to implement the Activity:

- Countries confirm their intention to participate in both the review and confirm which strand(s) they will participate in.
- Participating countries appoint a national co-ordinator
- Participating countries establish a national advisory committee (if desired)
- Participating countries commence preparation of the background reports
- The Secretariat confirm timelines and costs
- The Secretariat commissions relevant background papers
- The Secretariat identifies potential external reviewers in consultation with countries
- The first country-hosted workshop is convened.