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TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The report *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society* provides a thorough international investigation of tertiary education policy across its many facets – governance, funding, quality assurance, equity, research and innovation, academic career, links to the labour market and internationalisation. The report draws on the results of the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education – conducted over the 2004-08 period in collaboration with 24 countries around the world (see www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review).

The growing focus on tertiary education

The widespread recognition that tertiary education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality tertiary education more important than ever before. The imperative for countries is to raise higher-level employment skills, to sustain a globally competitive research base and to improve knowledge dissemination to the benefit of society. To meet the current challenges, the Report suggests a number of policy options some of which are reviewed below.

• Develop a coherent strategic vision

A first priority for countries should be to develop a comprehensive and coherent vision for the future of tertiary education, to guide future policy development over the medium and long term in harmony with national social and economic objectives. Ideally, it should result from a systematic national strategic review of tertiary education and entail a clear statement of the strategic aims.

• Strengthen the ability of institutions to align with the national tertiary education strategy

One simple way to encourage institutions to engage in more deliberate and focused self-management would be for the tertiary education authorities to require all institutions in receipt of public funding to prepare, and regularly update, meaningful strategic plans. It would also be important to review options to widen the scope of institutional autonomy so as to allow for greater responsiveness (to students, stakeholders, regions) and efficiency in operations. At the same time, the national policy towards institutional governance needs to allow institutions to make the most of their autonomy and new responsibilities. It would be important to create a legal framework that provides them with the opportunity to establish a governing body which would operate at a strategic (as opposed to scientific) level.

• Make institutional funding clear to all

The criteria for the distribution of funds to institutions need to be clear to all. This is best achieved through a transparent formula which shields allocation decisions from political pressures and tailors incentives to shape institutional plans in harmony with national goals. The basis for allocating “core” funding to institutions should to some extent be output-oriented to support excellence in teaching and learning. Indicators used in performance-based funding systems should relate to internal

(e.g. costs, completion rates) and external (e.g. quality of graduates) efficiency. However, performance-based funding mechanisms should be carefully implemented to avoid undesired effects.

• Put more stress on internal quality assurance mechanisms

A strong quality culture in tertiary education institutions – shared by the academic leadership, staff and students – helps to reinforce the quality assurance system. Evidence suggests that a strong quality culture may develop through the (mandatory) creation of internal quality assurance systems by institutions or in response to appropriate incentives such as publishing student evaluations of their learning experience. It is also important to bring legitimacy to internal quality assurance mechanisms by having them formally validated periodically by an external assessment.

• Improve knowledge diffusion rather than strengthening commercialisation

There has been, in recent years, a stronger policy emphasis on the commercialisation of university R&D results. In essence, such measures assume that innovation is the outcome of a discovery process that is then commercialised, and that R&D is the initiating phase of innovation. However innovation often has wider origins in the development of new product concepts by firms, and R&D is a problem-solving activity along the ‘innovation journey’ rather than a point of departure for it. This suggests that the diffusion capabilities and interactive support activities of tertiary institutions may be at least as important, and methods and instruments for such support deserve closer policy consideration.

• Give institutions ample autonomy over the management of human resources

In today’s systems of tertiary education, individual institutions pursue a diversity of missions, exhibit a variety of strategies to accomplish their objectives, face different circumstances and have needs which are particular to them. More and more they are also being held accountable for the use of scarce public resources while being given more formal autonomy. Institutions are likely to be more effective in achieving their mission if they benefit from ample autonomy in the area of human resource management, e.g. with faculty and staff being formal employees of institutions, institutions having broad discretion over the setting of academic salaries, the freedom to create academic positions in line with their strategy, the ability to determine the career structures which reflect the distinct roles academics play within them (including the balance between teaching and research), and the design of promotion, assessment and professional development strategies.

Download the full report from:
<http://oecd-conference-teks.iscte.pt> and related documents
from www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review
Contact: paulo.santiago@oecd.org

THE ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES (AHELO)

AHELO feasibility study is now underway. In April 2008, the OECD Education Policy Committee placed its management under the immediate supervision of the IMHE Governing Board – which brings together HEIs and governments – in recognition that the support of both is necessary for the success of this initiative. A senior survey manager has also been appointed in May 2008. Her first tasks are to prepare a roadmap plan for the feasibility study as well as secure funding and institutional commitment for its different components.

The development of an AHELO will build upon related work seeking to assess learning outcomes internationally. The overarching goals of the feasibility study is to assess whether it is possible to measure what undergraduate degree students know and can do in different types of HEIs and countries, in order to provide better information to HEIs, governments and other stakeholders. The feasibility study has two aims. First, test the science of the assessment – whether it is possible to devise an assessment of the outcomes of higher education which enables to make reliable statements about the performance/effectiveness of learning in HEIs of very different types, and in countries with different cultures and languages – and second, test the practicality of implementation and of motivating HEIs and students to participate. The comparison of HEIs' performance is not a goal at this stage.

The feasibility study will involve different kinds of activities, hence several strands of work. The different strands will be carried out separately but coherently. Each will involve about 10 HEIs from 3-4 countries.

First, the feasibility study will consider different types of assessment instruments and explore their validity in an international context. These include a **generic skills strand**, consisting of an international pilot test of the United States' Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to assess the extent to which higher-order skills of the type measured by the CLA can be validly measured across different cultural, linguistic and institutional contexts. Meanwhile, a **discipline strand** will explore the feasibility of directly measuring learning outcomes in selected disciplines and across different cultural and linguistic contexts – with engineering and economics as likely candidates. But while prospective students or employers have an interest in the "bottom line" of the performance of HEIs, departments or faculties, the OECD recognises that raw scores students would attain on an assessment would not only measure the quality of educational services provided, but also other aspects such as the effects of selection and the socio-economic makeup of students. For the AHELO to inform HEIs about their own teaching performance, strengths and weaknesses – and thereby provide a diagnostic tool for improvement – it is critical to account for these aspects and capture the "value-added" by the HEIs. This is a complex task, therefore the feasibility study will comprise a **value-added measurement strand** to explore the issue of value-added measurement from a conceptual perspective through an

AHELO prompts a substantial challenge and serious responsibility for IMHE. The Governing Board's position in the discussion has been that defining and assessing learning outcomes is at the heart of designing and implementing the teaching and learning process. And consequently that it is inherently part of the institutional responsibility for the quality of its core processes, and a clear reason why higher education institutions should be centrally involved in a project with this focus.

The question whether defining and assessing learning outcomes can be done across borders is a relatively new one. In Europe the Tuning project presents compelling evidence that the former is possible. But with respect to the latter the question in fact is whether we would be able to take learning outcome assessment a step further into a truly international and thus diverse higher education context, enabling both assessment and recognition of learning outcomes across the borders of different educational systems, types of institutions, languages and cultures?

Another dimension is the extent to which the use of possible results can be controlled by the sector, i.e. to avoid rankings of the type that stereotype on reputational factors rather than truly inform students and other stakeholders.

We will do our utmost to ensure that the feasibility study is conducted making use of the best expertise available and that it takes account of the views of stakeholders on the potential benefits and pitfalls. Only in this way can the findings be solidly grounded and meaningful for everyone: institutions and faculty; students and policy makers.

For this reason IMHE will develop over the coming months its efforts to engage intensively with the higher education community on AHELO. Information, feedback and consultation with higher education associations and other actors across regions will support the IMHE Governing Board in its responsibility to oversee the management of this project in the best possible way.

Marijk van der Wende
IMHE President

examination and analysis of potential data sources and methodologies. Finally, a **contextual strand** of work will explore the development of contextual information indicators at institutional level of the kind developed by the *Gemeinnütziges Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung* (CHE) in Germany, in recognition of the need for a multidimensional approach to higher education quality.

In order to enhance transparency, a web-page has been created to inform various stakeholders with progress on the AHELO feasibility study. Please check www.oecd.org/edu/ahelo for updates.

IMHE NEWS

The IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > Agency for Science and Higher Education - Croatia
- > Strathmore University – Kenya
- > Puyong National University – Korea
- > Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez – Mexico
- > New Zealand Ministry of Education - New Zealand
- > University of Stavange – Norway
- > Ministry of Science and Higher Education – Poland
- > Universidad de la Laguna - Spain
- > University of Newcastle – U.K.

CITY-REGIONS IN FOCUS

The new round of reviews of higher education and regional development has raised interest among some of the leading cities in Europe. The first one to make a positive decision was Berlin who joined the activity in May. Target regions include also regions in G8 countries and in countries identified for accession to the OECD (Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia, Slovenia) or with whom OECD has enhanced engagement (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, South Africa).

Why a stronger focus on cities and city-regions?

In the UK some city-regions produce 50% and more of their entire region's economic output. The situation is not different elsewhere. Today, cities drive national and regional economy and are central to social cohesion and climate change. They are major centres of business and wealth creation that in turn power the economy of the surrounding region.

Cities and city-regions benefit from the presence of universities and other higher education institutions. HEIs can help the city to become a magnet for investment and talent not only nationally, but also globally. Flagship areas of research expertise help branding the cities as centres of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity.

Berlin the first to join

The first city-region to join the review programme was Berlin. Despite recent job cuts the city has great potential in its HEIs and research institutes. It is also home to one of the world's largest science and technology parks: **Adlershof**, The City of Science, Technology and Media.



David Ausserhofer

Jutta Allmendinger, the President of WZB

Berlin is a major centre of higher education with 25 HEIs including 8 universities and 10 Fachhochschulen (universities of applied sciences) with over 130 000 students. In addition, research institutes employ more than 50 000 people.

One of them, the **Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB)** will play an important coordinating role in the self-evaluation review. This is how Prof. Dr. **Jutta Allmendinger**, the President of WZB sees the role of reviews.

— *This will give Berlin and our research centre a great opportunity to analyse the economic and social potential of HEIs and to learn from other city-regions in*

Europe and elsewhere. I also believe that the review process will build local capacity to meet the great challenges of knowledge society. It will bring together HEIs and the City of Berlin in a new and more meaningful way.

Dr. **Hans-Gerhard Husung**, State Secretary of Science and Research at the Land of Berlin stresses the opportunities for international comparison:

— *Berlin's unique science and research landscape has a deep impact on the economic, social and cultural life of our city. With the master plan "Knowledge creates Berlin's future" we ensure that this potential is used for the benefit of the metropolis. To follow this strategy we need international exchange. The participation in the OECD review will provide us with international benchmark opportunities and new incentives."*

Berlin Board to support

Another key player in the review will be the Berlin Board that was set up by the Mayor of Berlin in August 2007. It aims to foster dialogue between high level representatives from politics, economy, science and research, urban development, culture and social affairs.

For more information, see www.oecd.org/edu/higher/regionaldevelopment or contact: jaana.puukka@oecd.org

City-Regions – What are they?

City-Regions are enlarged territories from which core urban areas draw people for work and services such as shopping, education, health, leisure and entertainment. The City-Region is a functional entity within which business and services operate. City-regional economies play a strong role in driving forward the economies of their regions. The city-regional scale reflects the 'geography of everyday life' rather than administrative boundaries

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

Our 2009-2010 programme of work, based on extensive consultation with IMHE members, will cover a wide range of areas.

Reviews of higher education institutions in regional development

This project will evaluate how higher education institutions in selected regions contribute to economic, social and cultural development and develop proposals for improvement.

Please contact jaana.puukka@oecd.org for more information

The assessment of higher education outcomes

The OECD is developing a feasibility study to assess higher education outcomes that will allow comparisons between higher education institutions across countries. IMHE will manage this work.

Please contact karine.tremblay@oecd.org for more information

Supporting quality teaching in higher education

This project aims to provide an overview of how and why HEIs identify, implement, sustain, reward and disseminate the quality

teaching. It will highlight the drivers of change as well as the difficulties to be overcome.

Please contact fabrice.henard@oecd.org for more information

The changing institutional architecture for higher education

Competition or collaboration? Research or teaching? Specialised or broad-based/ On-line or face-to-face? Local or global? Higher education institutions face difficult strategic choices and IMHE will continue to study how the institutional landscape is developing to assist you in making them.

Developing the knowledge-base

To bridge theory and practice, we will also organise seminars and conferences and publish reports. This will give you the opportunity to network, share best practice, and keep abreast of international developments.

To ensure your institution is part of the larger picture, join IMHE : imhe@oecd.org

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST



OECD Factbook 2008: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics

OECD Publishing, ISBN-10: 9264043780

Now in its fourth edition, the OECD Factbook is the most comprehensive and dynamic statistical annual from the OECD. More than 100 indicators cover a wide range of areas: economy, agriculture, education, energy, environment, foreign aid, health and quality of life, industry, information and communications, population/labour force, trade and investment, taxation, public expenditure and R&D.

Higher Education Management and Policy: Volume 20, No. 1

OECD Publishing, SUB-89011P1

The journal of the OECD Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education. This issue features articles on fair access to higher education, a comparative study of the assessment of HE personnel in France and Finland, the human resource dimension of a forced merger of two HEIs in Northern Ireland, the emergence of the private university system in Nigeria, developments in HE in Central and Eastern Europe, internationalisation of HE and language policy, and improving student satisfaction and success in Portugal. Appearing three

times per year, the journal covers practice and policy in the field of system and institutional management through articles and reports on research of wide international scope.

Teaching in English on the rise in European universities

The Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) has published a study on English-taught programmes in European higher education. *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education*, by Bernd Wächter and Friedhelm Maiworm, is based on surveys of 2,200 universities and colleges in 27 European countries where English is not the domestic language.

For more detail, consult the ACA website: <http://www.aca-secretariat.be>.

OECD Economics Department Working Paper No. 576: The Policy Determinants of Investment in Tertiary Education

This paper assesses how policies and institutions affect private returns to invest in tertiary human capital, the ability of individuals to finance this investment and the institutional characteristics of tertiary education systems.

Available from Source OECD: www.sourceoecd.org

IMHE CALENDAR

8-10 Sept. 2008 *Outcomes of higher education: quality, relevance and Impact*, IMHE General Conference, Paris, France
Registration now open.
 Contact: cassandra.davis@oecd.org
www.oecd.org/edu/imhegeneralconference2008

10-13 Sept. 2008 *20th Annual EAIE Conference: Re-designing the map of European higher education*
Antwerp, Belgium

OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

10-11 July 2008 *Conference on Typology: Transparency in Diversity - Towards a Classification of European Higher Education Institutions*, 2nd Conference of the EU-funded Project: "Classifying European Institutions of Higher Education, Phase II" (CEIHE II)
Berlin, Germany

13-17 October 2008 *EAIE Conference: Quality management in higher education*
Enschede, Netherlands
www.eaie.org/PD/modules/2008/

15-18 July 2008 *IAU 13th General Conference 'Higher Education and Research Addressing Local and Global Needs'*
Utrecht University, Netherlands
www.unesco.org/iau/conferences/Utrecht

17-21 August 2008 *International Meeting of University Administrators (IMUA) Conference on: Globalisation*
Vancouver, Canada

24-27 August 2008 *EAIR 30th Annual Forum Copenhagen 2008: Polishing the silver: Are we really improving higher education?*
Copenhagen, Denmark



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