

The OECD international forum designed for higher education institutions  
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## Inside

- The IMHE General Conference
- Present realities: charting the crisis
- The post-crisis context: investing in tertiary education for sustainable growth
- Impact of the 2010 IMHE General Conference: articulating a new commitment to tertiary education for the knowledge society
- New members
- Publications of interest
- IMHE calendar

## THE IMHE GENERAL CONFERENCE

The 2010 IMHE Conference takes place against the background of the most synchronised recession in OECD countries in over half a century. How can the higher education sector – governments, institutions, partner organisations and individuals – best adapt to new circumstances and contribute to sustainable recovery? Debate will seek to identify longer-term trends in the global context based on analyses of national policy, institutional case-studies and the latest research from the OECD and elsewhere. Given the post-recession employment challenges in OECD economies, productivity will receive special attention. Embracing both social and economic aspects, this event will showcase a dynamic tertiary education sector – and the modern academy – as part of the return-to-growth process. With the emergence of the knowledge society in the past two decades, higher education has come under ever closer scrutiny. This global analysis has highlighted vast differences in capacity – both intra-national and amongst regions. To secure a sustainable future for all nations, these discrepancies must be reduced. The “utterly changed world” evoked in the conference title implies a truly international debate.

Within this context, the conference will address the many aspects of the current global agenda for higher education: *globalisation, massification, governance, equity, access and diversification, internationalisation and academic mobility, teaching, learning and the curricula (including measuring learning outcomes), quality assurance, financing, public/private provision, the academic profession, research, the next wave of CIT technology and distance learning, as well as social engagement.*

- The IMHE General Conference will be held at the OECD headquarters in Paris, France between 13 – 15 September 2010. Around 400 participants from 66 countries have already registered to attend.
- The key speakers at this event are renowned policy makers, institutional leaders and academic experts. So far, they include:
  - Soumitra DUTTA, Professor of Information Systems and Dean of External Relations, INSEAD
  - Malcolm GRANT, President and Provost, University College London
  - Maria Helena GUIMARAES DE CASTRO, Former Minister for Higher Education, Brazil
  - Luc MONTAGNIER, Nobel Prize winner 2008
  - Charles REED, Chancellor, The California State University
  - Alan RUBY, Senior Fellow, Penn GSE



Follow the IMHE General Conference blog posts and discussions on educationtoday at: [OECD\\_EDU](http://OECD_EDU)

Tweet during the conference  
Use this hashtag in your posts: #OECDHE

Coinciding with the closing of the IMHE General Conference on 15 September, the OECD is launching a social media project called “Raise your hand”. As the OECD believes that education powers our future, the project intends to gather responses to the question, “In the context of the economic crisis, what do you think is the most important action we need to take today?” Those wishing to participate can vote on over 50 ideas and submit their own ideas for everyone across the globe to vote on. The best ideas will be shown to OECD education ministers, global business leaders technical experts and academics at the Education Policy Forum at the OECD in Paris on 4 November 2010/ Education Ministers will be invited to respond to the ideas at that time and a compilation video will be released shortly following the event. Follow the conversation as it unfolds on OECD educationtoday and submit and vote on the most important action in education today, and invite others to join in. Above all... Raise your hand!

[www.oecd.org/edu/educationtoday](http://www.oecd.org/edu/educationtoday)

Join us at the IMHE General Conference,  
*Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly.*  
*Doing more with less.*

Lead the way to sustainable recovery!

For a full list of confirmed speakers and to view the provisional programme, please refer to the General conference website [www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/generalconference](http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/generalconference).

## PRESENT REALITIES: CHARTING THE CRISIS

Recovery is appearing, but is fragile and uneven. The World Trade Organization (WTO) expects global trade to increase by 9.5% in 2010. In contrast, instability and austerity continue to haunt many developed economies. The spectre of unemployment looms large. For example, the United States recorded levels of around 10% over the 2009-10 winter period, though spring figures looked much brighter. By September 2010, the conference should table both cutting-edge tertiary education institutional responses to immediate pressures and propose longer term strategies to maintain the policy directions.

Recent OECD work has identified a new framework for future policy (*Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society, OECD, 2008*) based on 24 country reviews. But, could this be challenged by the complex volatility of the post-recession context? The 2010 IMHE debate will be rooted in evidence regarding: the scope and nature of the crisis, new government regulations, visible impacts (positive or negative) to date, successful institutional coping strategies, instances of "what not to do" and prognostics for action till 2015. Debate will include not only OECD members, but also the many middle and low-income countries, which have already begun to invest heavily to modernise this sector.

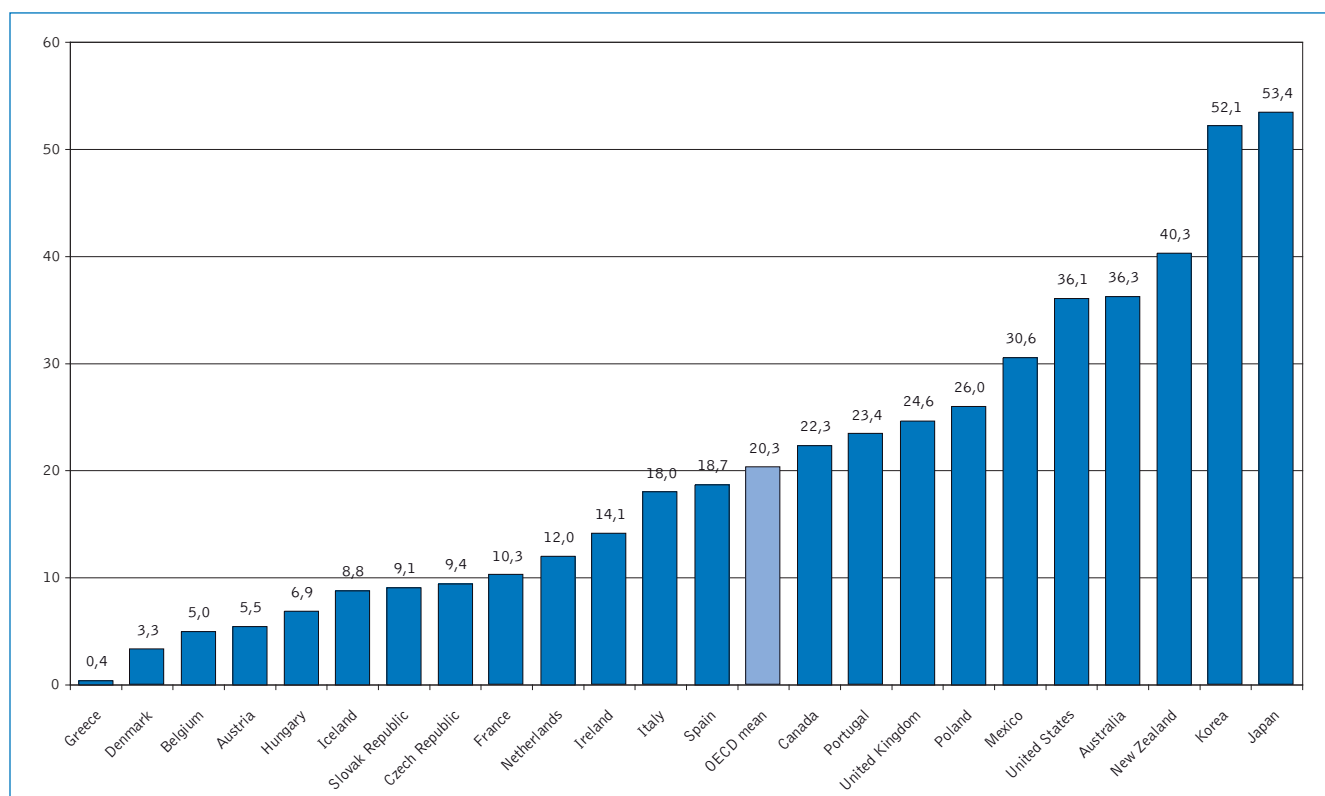
The knowledge society is distinguished by diversity, with multiple forms related to varied and localised approaches to common priorities. "Equality in diversity" respects institutional and learner profiles, provision and competences. This principle also recognises the variety of human capital: intellectual, emotional, cultural, technological, etc. Furthermore, some emerging economies are outstripping traditional OECD leaders in tertiary education enrolments and capacity. To better understand this society, measures for assessing the quality, impact and actual outcomes of learning need further analysis. Initiatives such as the OECD's pioneering work in quality assurance (QA) and its Assessment of Higher Education

Learning Outcomes (AHELO) project, along with the increasing research on doctoral education, should be monitored for replication. In this way, learners may be better equipped to handle the socio-cultural diversity of a globalised world. In addition, more equitable paths for promoting social mobility may be identified.

The modern academy is a key actor in building the knowledge society. Its agenda was forecast at the OECD's 2006 meeting of Education Ministers (Athens, Greece) and then developed in the tertiary review process. Priorities are: *governance, sectoral sustainability, funding, measuring quality and impact, research and innovation (R and I) and the global market, relevance and equity*. This anticipated the immense challenges emanating from diversified demand, scope, economic significance and social engagement. Post-recession, rallying to the "do more with less" call to help deal with economic recovery may well accelerate the response process. Certain past practices may be supplanted by fresh approaches better suited to the changing socio-economic context. Crossing this Rubicon could open positive perspectives for the academy if institutions choose to position themselves as key powerhouses of support for the recovery process and beyond.

While the immediate future may well demand enhanced productivity, the primary focus should be social. This approach also serves to reiterate the broad role of tertiary education in global, regional, national and local contexts. Swift action to prevent a lingering employment crisis is essential to secure the social and economic well-being of citizens. Debate on revenue and costs remains vital, but should recall the existing uneasiness with current management and business practices. The mission of tertiary education institutions – namely, educating and training citizens of all ages and contributing to the generation of new knowledge via research – concerns all social stakeholders involved in the recovery process. This reaffirms the status of tertiary education as a public good. Productivity thus becomes part of the social engagement and responsibility of the sector, emphasising its constructive solutions to immediate and emerging questions at multiple levels.

Share of direct expenditures to tertiary education institutions coming from households, 2005 (%)



Source: OECD

## THE POST-CRISIS CONTEXT: INVESTING IN TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Post-crisis reconstruction will require prudence and pragmatism. Governments seeking recovery solutions worry that economic growth is more evident in non-OECD contexts. The crisis has forced profound reflection on the moral foundations of the business model that has driven the market era to serious grave social consequences. In this climate, public policy will face tough challenges (old and new), such as paying the post-recession bill, regaining investor confidence, ageing OECD populations, immigration, volatile labour markets – including youth unemployment – and meeting new costs in education and health. As the modern academy participates in the response strategy, this is yet another opportunity to stress that productivity has both social and economic benefits.

The traditional value of social investment in education holds true – though, in tight budget negotiations, this needs to be defended strongly and the value of this investment demonstrated with visible effectiveness. This is regularly documented in the OECD's *Education at a Glance* (e.g. net public return, skilled human capital as the basis of the knowledge society/economy, better long-term social outcomes). However, in the immediate, tertiary education must operate in a difficult socio-economic context with specific challenges (e.g. increased learner demand due to the volatile labour market and fewer employment opportunities, the need to provide education/training incentives for "at risk" social groups and to satisfy higher demand for retraining throughout the workforce, assuring adequate provision in varied demographic situations). Concurrently, global demand is growing with ever more graduates seeking employment opportunities worldwide. As part of a more mobile global labour market, this question is important for sourcing skilled human capital.

Post-recession, OECD countries expect to encounter more government regulation. As part of public policy, tertiary education will need to demonstrate explicitly the value of investment in these domains from both the public and private spheres and its role in recovery. Despite solid OECD results to date, the pressure to do more with fewer resources may intensify. These challenges are likely to impact upon institutional missions and profiles and on outreach and alliance strategies for social engagement and economic growth.

## IMPACT OF THE 2010 IMHE GENERAL CONFERENCE: ARTICULATING A NEW COMMITMENT TO TERTIARY EDUCATION FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Will internal or external perspectives prevail beyond 2010? Could institutions – facing increased pressure to contribute to national recovery – prefer a debate on "doing more with less" with regard to their (and similar) economies so as to benchmark their efforts against their peers? Or, with international initiatives creating more links between OECD countries and other economies, will a global debate on tertiary education policy responses be required. Policy responses are not definitive, yet lessons are learned from sharing experiences. The tension between these two approaches should be further debated taking into account both short and longer term views.

Whether recovery is swift or protracted, the crisis has made governments aware that citizens have less confidence in political and economic management, and clearly disapprove of the excesses of the market model. Escalating unemployment has fuelled this fire. Yet, crises always offer dangers and opportunities: reconciling the recommended longer-term policy course with approaches that demonstrate perceived productivity, new attitudes and more powerful roles for the main actors, ensuring fair and rational decision making, a tough climate and the imperative to nurture human creativity despite bleak economic times.

Renewed attention should be paid to partnerships and stakeholder dialogue, which have long been viewed as an essential support for policy implementation. In the post-crisis era, this co-operation could become crucial. So, how best to stimulate innovative and more effective strategies for this mechanism? Locating learners at the heart of debate and action, exploring CIT solutions, strengthening employer/private sector interaction, as well as community outreach, are some critical areas to explore. Citizens have greater satisfaction when contributing to social development at all levels and in various ways as they feel "part of the solution". Hence, this already solid foundation should be further explored during the conference debates.

Most importantly, can institutions take charge of the crisis and gain ownership of the solutions for their benefit in the long term? The outcome might then be a more savvy and dynamic tertiary education sector in which the role and expertise of the modern academy is considered – by social consensus rather than by its own "converted brethren" – as a pivotal force in national and global development.



### The IMHE welcomes the following new members:

- > La Trobe University – Australia
- > Université Laval - Canada
- > Universidad del Bío-Bío – Chile
- > Ecoles des hautes études en santé publique - France
- > Technological and Educational Institute of Patra – Greece
- > Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) – Korea
- > University of Luxembroug - Luxembourg
- > CETYS University – Mexico
- > Norwegian Network for Private Higher Education Institutions (NPH) – Norway

- > EAIE - European Association for International Education – Netherlands
- > Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (A3ES) - Portugal
- > Moscow State University for Economics, Statistics, and Informatics (MESI) – Russia
- > National Training Foundation – Russia
- > Southern Federal University – Russia
- > University of Pretoria, South Africa
- > University of Texas at El Paso – United States

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

In 2010, IMHE members have access to all OECD publications online.

To access this service, please contact Emily Groves, [emily.groves@oecd.org](mailto:emily.groves@oecd.org) for a user name and password.

This user name and password, valid until the end of 2010, is meant for your personal use only.

### *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Higher Education in Egypt 2010*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264084346

This book presents an independent review of Egypt's higher education system and focuses on areas needing the attention of policy makers and stakeholders, including system steering and institutional governance; student access to higher education; educational quality and effectiveness; research, development and innovation; and finance. It contains an analysis of the system and valuable recommendations which, taken together, represent major structural and cultural reforms of Egyptian higher education over the decade to 2020.

### *Recognising non-formal and informal learning: outcomes, policies and practices*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264063846

This book provides policy recommendations on how best to structure and organise systems for recognition of non-formal and informal learning and is based on an OECD review of 22 countries.

### *The OECD Innovation Strategy: Getting a Head Start on Tomorrow*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264084704

Well-timed and targeted innovation boosts productivity, increases economic growth and helps solve societal problems. But how can governments encourage more people to innovate more of the time? And how can government itself be more innovative?

### *Measuring Innovation: A New Perspective*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264059467

This book presents new measures and new ways of looking at traditional indicators. It builds on 50 years of indicator development by OECD and goes beyond R&D to describe the broader context in which innovation occurs. It includes some experimental indicators that provide insight into new areas of policy interest. on SourceOECD - on the Online Bookshop

### *OECD Factbook 2010*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264084032

The sixth edition of a comprehensive and dynamic statistical annual from the OECD features a focus chapter on the crisis and beyond. More than 100 indicators cover a wide range of areas and data are provided for all OECD member countries with area totals, and in some cases, for selected non-member economies.

### *OECD Economic Outlook*

OECD Publishing, ISBN: 9789264085213

It analyses the current economic situation and examines the economic policies required to foster a sustained recovery in member countries. The present issue covers the outlook to end-2011 for both OECD countries and selected non-OECD economies. It is a unique tool to keep abreast of world economic developments.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

13-15 September 2010

IMHE General Conference, *Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly. Doing More with Less*, Paris, France.  
[www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/generalconference](http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/generalconference)

### OTHER MEETINGS OF INTEREST

- 1-4 Sept. 2010 *32nd EAIR Forum, Linking Society and Universities: New Missions for Universities*, Valencia, Spain  
[www.eair.nl/forum/Valencia](http://www.eair.nl/forum/Valencia)
- 15-18 Sept. 2010 *22nd Annual EAIE Conference*, Nantes, France  
[www.eaie.org/nantes/](http://www.eaie.org/nantes/)
- 12-15 Oct. 2010 *Education*, 12-15 October 2010, Laurea University of Applied Sciences, Vantaa, Finland  
<http://lbdconference.laurea.fi/conference.html>
- 15 October 2010 *ACA, World-class: the Brave New World of Global Higher Education and Research*, Brussels, Belgium
- 20-23 October 2010 *EUA Annual Conference, Diversities and Commonalities – the Changing Face of Europe's Universities*, University of Palermo, Italy [www.eua.be/eua-events/](http://www.eua.be/eua-events/)
- 18-20 Nov. 2010 *Fifth European Quality Assurance Forum*, University Claude Bernard Lyon I, France  
<http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/quality-assurance/qa-forum/>

Find all our meetings on  
[www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings](http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhemeetings)

23-26 Nov. 2010

*5th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education Higher Education's Commitment to Sustainability: from Understanding to Action*, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain



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