European Commission



Dropout and Completion in Higher Education in Europe

Annex 2: Short Country Reports

Education and Culture

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number (*)**:**

00 8006 7 89 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (http://europa.eu).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015

ISBN: 978-92-79-52354-0
doi: 10.2766/263798

© European Union, 2015
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Contract nº EAC-2014-0182

Dropout and Completion in Higher Education in Europe

Annex 2
Short Country Reports





Authors:

Andrea Kottmann
Alicia Betts
Alexandra Bitusikova
Emanuel Boudard
Pepka Boyadjieva
Maria Brown
Carina Carlhed
Leon Cremonini
Alessandra Decataldo
Karin Doolan
María Kristín Gylfadótti
Andreas Hadjar
Elisabeth Hovdhaugen
Djordje Jovanovic
Rita Kaša
Hanna Kanep
Renze Kolster
Irena Kuzmanoska
Marek Kwiek
Benedetto Lepori
Predrag Lažetić
Fatma Misikaci
Luminiţa Nicolescu
Tiina Niemi
Vibeke Opheim
Petros Pashiardis
Justin Powell
Palle Damkjær Rasmussen
Emanuela Reale
Ingvild Reymert
Maria J. Rosa
Eleni Sianou-Kyrgiou
Emer Smyth
Jozsef Temesi
Liz Thomas
Martin Unger
Josep M. Vilalta
Maarit Virolainen
Aleš Vlk
Don Westerheijden
Kurt de Wit
Sabine Wollscheid
Rimantas Zelvys
Pavel Zgaga

Disclaimer
The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents 5
I List of National Experts 6
II. Introduction 8
Austria *(Martin Unger)* 9
Bulgaria *(Pepka Boyadjieva)* 16
Croatia *(Karin Doolan)* 21
Cyprus *(Petros Pashiardis)* 26
Czech Republic *(Aleš Vlk)* 31
Denmark *(Palle Damkjær Rasmussen)* 36
England *(Liz Thomas)* 40
Estonia *(Hanna Kanep)* 47
Finland *(Tiina Niemi & Maarit Virolainen)* 50
Belgium (Flanders) *(Kurt de Wit)* 54
France *(Emmanuel Boudard)* 58
Germany *(Andrea Kottmann)* 64
Greece *(Eleni Sianou-Kyrgiou)* 73
Hungary *(Jozsef Temesi)* 76
Ireland *(Emer Smyth)* 80
Iceland *(María Kristín Gylfadótti)* 85
Italy *(Emmanuela Reale & Alessandra Decataldo)* 87
Latvia *(Rita Kaša)* 91
Lithuania *(Rimantas Zelvys)* 93
Luxembourg *(Andreas Hadjar & Justin Powell)* 97
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia *(Irena Kuzmanoska)* 98
Malta *(Maria Brown)* 102
Montenegro (*Djordje Jovanovic)* 107
The Netherlands *(Leon Cremonini, Renze Kolster & Don Westerheijden)* 111
Norway *(Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, Sabine Wollscheid, Ingvild Reymert & Vibeke Opheim)* 116
Poland *(Marek Kwiek)* 119
Portugal *(Claudia Sarrico & Maria J. Rosa)* 122
Romania *(Luminița Nicolescu)* 124
Serbia *(Predrag Lažetić)* 126
Slovakia *(Aleksandra Bitusikova)* 129
Slovenia *(Pavel Zgaga)* 131
Spain - Catalonia *(Alicia Betts & Josep M. Vilalta)* 133
Sweden *(Carina Carlhed)* 137
Switzerland *(Benedetto Lepori)* 139
Turkey *(Fatma Misikaci)* 142

I List of National Experts

Country	Name	Institution	Email
Austria	Martin Unger	HIS Vienna	unger@ihs.ac.at
Belgium	Kurt de Wit	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	Kurt.DeWit@dowb.kuleuven.be
Bulgaria	Pepka Boyadjieva	Institute of Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	pepka7@gmail.com
Croatia	Karin Doolan	University of Zadar	kdoolan@unizd.hr
Cyprus	Petros Pashiardis	Open University of Cyprus	p.pashiardis@ouc.ac.cy
Czech Republic	Ales Vlk	Independent consultant	ales.vlk@seznam.cz
Denmark	Palle Damkjær Rasmussen	University of Aalborg	palleras@learning.aau.dk
Estonia	Hanna Kanep	Estonian Rectors' Conference	Hanna.kanep@ern.ee
Finland	Maarit Virolainen	University of Jyväskylä	maarit.ha.virolainen@jyu.fi
	Tiina Niemi	Studyportals	tiina.j.niemi@gmail.com
France	Emmanuel Boudard	La Rochelle Consult	emmanuel.boudard@gmail.com
Germany	Andrea Kottmann	CHEPS	a.kottmann@utwente.nl
Greece	Eleni Sianou-Kyrgiou	University of Ioannina	esianou@uoi.gr
Hungary	Jozsef Temesi	Corvinus University of Budapest	jozsef.temesi@uni-corvinus.hu
Iceland	Maria Kristin Gylfadóttir	The Icelandic Erasmus+ National Agency	Maria.Kristin.Gylfadottir@Rannis.is
Ireland	Emer Smyth	The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin	Emer.Smyth@esri.ie
Italy	Emanuela Reale	Cnr CERIS	e.reale@ceris.cnr.it
	Alessandra Decataldo	University of Milan Bicocca	alessandra.decataldo@unimib.it
Latvia	Rita Kaša	Stockholm School of Economics in Riga	rita.kasa@sseriga.edu
Liechtenstein	Benedetto Lepori	University of Lugano	benedetto.lepori@unisi.ch
Lithuania	Rimantas Zelvys	Vilnius Pedagogical University	Rimantas.Zelvys@vpu.lt
Luxemburg	Andreas Hadjar	University of Luxemburg	Andreas.Hadjar@uni.lu
	Justin Powell		
Macedonia	Irena Kuzmanoska	CHEPS	i.kuzmanoska@utwente.nl
Malta	Maria Brown	University of Malta	maria.brown@um.edu.mt
Montenegro	Djordje Jovanovic	University of Montenegro	djordjej@ac.me
Netherlands	Leon Cremonini	CHEPS	l.cremonini@utwente.nl
Norway	Elisabeth Hovdhaugen	NIFU	elisabeth.hovdhaugen@nifu.no
Poland	Marek Kwiek	Poznan University	kwiekm@amu.edu.pl
Portugal	Cláudia Sarrico	University of Lisbon	cssarrico@iseg.utl.pt
	Maria João Rosa	University of Aveiro	m.joao@ua.pt
Romania	Luminita Nicolescu	Academy of Economic Studies	luminicolescu@yahoo.com
Serbia	Predrag Lazetic	Centre for Education Policy,	plazetic@cep.edu.rs

		Belgrade	
Slovakia	Alexandra Bitusikova	EUA, Brussels	alexandra.bitusikova@eua.be
Slovenia	Pavel Zgaga	University of Ljubljana	Pavel.Zgaga@guest.arnes.si
Spain	Josep Vilalta	ACAP, Barcelona	jmvilalta@acup.cat
	Alicia Betts	ACAP, Barcelona	alicia@acup.cat
Sweden	Carina Carlhed	Uppsala University	carina.carlhed@edu.uu.se
Switzerland	Benedetto Lepori	University of Lugano	benedetto.lepori@unisi.ch
Turkey	Fatma Mizikaci	Ankara University	fatmamizikaci@gmail.com
United Kingdom	Liz Thomas	Edge Hill University	ellerwoodassociates@gmail.com

II. Introduction

The short country reports in the HEDOCE study list the main national policies and measures implemented to increase completion and/or reduce dropout and time to degree in the last 5-10 years. Hence, the short country reports do not cover national policies and measures not specifically designed to address study success outcomes.

The short country reports describe the content and expected effects of national policies. Furthermore, the reports also include information on whether the national policies are monitored or evaluated.

Finally, the short country reports mention the importance of study success on the higher education agenda of the countries under review, as well as the dominant study success orientation set by national authorities and stakeholders in higher education (i.e. the definitions and objectives with regard to study success such as completion, retention and time to degree).

Austria

Country correspondent: Martin Unger (IHS)
Summarized by: Martin Unger (IHS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is not a main priority in Austrian national higher education policy. Although there is much talk about dropouts and completion rates, policies directly addressing these issues are scant. For example, while it is often mentioned that performance agreements between the Ministry and the universities include measures for reducing dropout rates, in fact only few specify concrete actions. These actions are usually minor and mainly indirect, such as setting-up a student monitor or providing assistance for academic writing. None the less, the current performance agreements (2013-2015) do state that addressing drop-outs will be an important topic during the 2016-18 round and that universities should prepare themselves for that. Furthermore, within the Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) sector study success is not a matter of national policy concern because dropout rates are low and graduate employability high.

Occasionally, the Rectors' Conference of universities, the national student union and the chamber of workers address dropout and/or study success. However, their core concerns are institutional and student funding, study conditions, or combining study and work. Hence, dropout is considered a possible cause of these problems rather than a problem *per se*, and reducing dropouts is seen as a side-effect of the proposed solution.

In general, Austrian policy and stakeholders define study success as "completion". Dropout is understood as non-graduation but is defined in many different ways.

2. National Policies implemented

Funding:

The funding systems of universities and UAS differ strongly. The autonomous universities receive a lump sum from the state, which is mainly distributed through performance agreements. However, around 5% of the funding is based on indicators,[1] including *inter alia* the number of graduates (during the period 2013-15). Around 0.5% of universities' public funding is based on the number of graduates weighted by field of study.[2] This funding system is an interim solution as a new system based on study places is being planned following the repeal of the earlier formula-based system.[3]

The new system would have placed a strong emphasis on study success but has been postponed indefinitely and the respective paragraphs in the University Act never entered into force. As the current (interim) funding system does not focus strongly on graduates, it is not expected to produce any significant effect on study success.

[1] Not including funding for university clinics
[2] Indicators and their weight are not yet known for 2016-18.
[3] The old system distributed around 12% of the public university budget according to indicators related to study success and completion. However, it was too complicated to be effective (see evaluation by Unger et al. 2011).

UASs are primarily funded according to their study placements and dropout rates above a 10% threshold lead to funding cuts. Although no systematic evaluation has taken place, it is apparent that, to avoid reductions in their funding, UASs implement several measures supporting study success and completion. Dropout rates are very low among full-time students but are higher among students in special programmes for working students.

The national student support system consists predominantly of needs-based grants. A 2013 evaluation estimated that every year approximately 7% of all graduates (1,500 persons) would be unable to finish their studies without this financial support (Unger *et al*). However, despite the Austrian comparatively long study duration, beneficiaries do not graduate earlier. In fact, as they reach their funding end date, many recipients become ineligible for grants before graduation. This may leave them in financial hardship during the last period of their studies.

Students nearing the end of their studies who for some time sustained themselves through work, are eligible for the "Studienabschluss-Stipendium", a grant covered in large part by the ESF budget and based on the student's most recent income. Evaluations conducted every five years have shown that this measure is highly effective. However, having been in existence for many decades, it is not a recent policy.

Information and support for students:

Since many years, information and counselling of prospective students has been deemed inadequate. During the last decade, the federal government implemented the "Studienchecker" project (today known as "18plus"). This project is organised by several Ministries and support units and provides counselling, including psychological support, to upper secondary school pupils. To date, around two thirds of upper secondary schools are participating. The project is meant to contribute to more informed study choices and, consequently, to less transfers, less dropouts, and better completion rates.

Second, the Ministry of Science operates a counselling service for prospective and current students. This service has branches in six large cities. It offers support for study choice or study changes, as well as for dealing with a range of (psychological) problems which might arise during one's studies (e.g. being afraid to speak freely, writer's block).

In addition to the national services mentioned above, higher education institutions are engaged in student counselling and have extended these services largely during the last decade.

Organisation of Higher Education:

One of the reasons why study success is currently not the key issue of national higher education policy is the Austrian university admission system. Until recently, nearly all study programmes at public universities had to follow an open access policy and admit every student fulfilling the general requirement (having a "Matura" or equivalent secondary exit qualification). Since 2005, study places in medicine and veterinary are limited; communication sciences and psychology followed suit. Since 2013, universities may hold an admission test in five study fields (architecture, informatics, biology, business administration/economics and pharmacy) if the number of applicants exceeds a certain threshold (based on the number of applicants in previous years). Since 2014, students have to pass a qualifying examination to enrol in teacher training programmes. Experiences with the first cohorts under stricter admission rules indicate that the number of active students is sometimes higher and dropouts are decreasing. Therefore the number of graduates might be constant or even higher than in cohorts with open access.

Since 2009, study programmes that do not fall under any of the new admission rules, are required to implement an entrance phase within the first semester (the requirement has been made stricter in 2011). This phase should enable students to reflect on their study choice and confront them with the requirements of the study programme. Only students who have completed this initial phase are allowed to progress. This measure is expected to reduce dropouts after the first semester.

Both the new admission rules and the entrance phase are currently being evaluated.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Hochschulraum-strukturmittel (HRSM)	Only public universities: Small share (ca. 0.5%) of the publically funded budget is based on the number of graduates weighted by field of study. This in an interim solution. Before there was a more complex system of indicator based funding with a higher share of budget distributed along indicators targeting study success which however was evaluated of being too complex to have any effects. Next should be a funding system based on study places, but that has been postponed indefinitely.	None, because share related to study success is too small	Number of graduates is monitored by the Ministry, but no specific evaluation of the HRSM so far
	FH-Finanzierung	UAS only: Funding of UAS is mainly based on the number of study places (set by the Ministry). A dropout of 10% is tolerated before funding is shortened accordingly	Dropout is by far lower at UAS than at universities. However, there are plenty reasons for that and a clear causality between the funding system and the lower dropout rate is difficult to construct. However, it is widely believed that the funding system has an impact, because UAS are also engaged more than universities in retention measures.	No
	Studienbeihilfe	Students from disadvantaged backgrounds can receive a need based grant to enable them to study but also to complete their studies. The grant system exists since a long time.	More students and graduates from disadvantaged groups.	The grant system has been evaluated by Unger et al 2013. It was estimated that around 1500 persons

				every year would not have graduated without the grant the received. However, recipients of a grant do not finish their studies quicker than other students.
	Studienabschluss-Stipendium	Students who have sustain themselves for a longer period (from working income) and are close to finishing their studies (max. 18 months to go), can receive a grant when they quit working to focus on their studies and complete within a time limit. The grant is based on their last income but has to be repaid, when students do not graduate in time. This grant is largely funded by ESF-budgets. This grant exists since many decades.	Prevent working students and especially those with a long study duration from dropping-out, resp. encourage them to finally graduate.	This grant is evaluated every five years (last: Unger et al. 2013) and has been proven to be highly effective.
Information and support for students	Studienchecker/18plus	This project is organised by several Ministries and support units and provides counselling to upper secondary school pupils including psychological support. Currently, around two thirds of all upper secondary schools are involved in that programme.	The hope is that the project contributes to a more informed choice of studies and thus contributing to the reduction of study changes and dropouts and to increase graduation rates.	Yes, implementation of the programme was evaluated: http://www.studienchecker.at/fileadmin/redaktion/Evaluation/Evaluation_Studienchecker_2011.pdf
Organisation of higher education	New admission rules	Before 2005 universities had to follow an open access policy. Since then, more and more programmes are allowed to set their own admission rules, sometimes limiting the number of beginners, sometimes not.	These procedures have been implemented to harmonize student numbers and capacities. However, it is also hoped that dropouts are reduced and number of graduates will be	All these new rules are currently evaluated

			stable or even increase when study conditions are improved due to less overcrowding.	
	StEOP – Studieneingangsphase	Most university programmes had to introduce a "study entrance phase" in 2009 (stricter rules implemented in 2011). Students are only allowed to continue studying after having finished this entrance phase	The measure should enable students to reflect their choice of study and by this reducing dropouts after the first semester.	The measure is currently being evaluated

References:

- Kolland, F. (Hrsg.) (2002), Studienabbruch: Zwischen Kontinuität und Krise. Eine empirische Untersuchung an Österreichs Universitäten., Braumüller Verlag, Wien.
- Latcheva, R. (2002), Multikausale Modelle zur Erklärung der Ursachen des Studienabbruchs, in: Kolland, Franz (Hrsg.), Studienabbruch: Zwischen Kontinuität und Krise. Eine empirische Untersuchung an Österreichs Universitäten., Braumüller Verlag, Wien.
- Thaler B, Unger M. (2014), Dropouts ≠ Dropouts. Wege nach dem Abgang von der Universität. http://www.equi.at/dateien/IHS_Dropoutstudie2014.pdf
- Thaler B, Unger M. (since 2008), tracking of students, drop-outs and graduates with data from the social security system, commissioned by various HEIs, unpublished IHS-reports
- Unger M. et al (2012), Studierenden-Sozialerhebung, Band 2, chapter 2 (p. 29ff): "study behaviour" (retention, dropout and graduation, transition into MA and PhD, returning to university by different social characteristics), http://ww2.sozialerhebung.at/Ergebnisse/PDF/Studierenden_Sozialerhebung_2011_BAND_2_Studierende.pdf
- Unger, M., Wroblewski, A. et al. (2009): Frühe Studienabbrüche an Universitäten in Österreich. Studie im Auftrag des BMWF. IHS-Projektbericht. Wien. http://www.equi.at/dateien/Frueher_Studienabbruch_an_Un.pdf
- Wroblewski A., Unger M. (1999), Merkmale der Studienabbruchsintension, IHS Projektbericht.

Bulgaria

Country correspondent: Renze Kolster (CHEPS) & Pepka Boyadjieva (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Compared to other higher education policy issues, promoting study success has not got a high priority in Bulgaria, possibly because at 3-4% drop-out rates are low. The "Strategy for the Development of Higher Education for the Period 2014-2020" does not mention dropouts and completion as either problems or areas where specific action is needed.[4]

Nevertheless, a number of national policies do relate to study success. They are primarily funding policies to increase completion rates and reduce dropouts in higher education. Several factors might give study success a higher priority in the future, including, *inter alia*:

1. The demographic crisis in Bulgaria which has led to a fall in participation in secondary education
2. The low completion rates of ethnic minorities students

In general, study success is understood mainly as completion of a study programme and, at doctoral level, as completion within a specific time period. Numerous stakeholders[5] support this definition and consider study success and drop-out as pressing issues. However, they are involved in different policy measures and appear to be engaged in the study success and drop-out discourse to a limited extent.

[4] The Strategy was approved by the Council of Ministers in June 2014 and on 26th of February, 2015 it was adopted by the Bulgarian Parliament.
[5] Stakeholders include: Council of Rectors, National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Bulgarian Industrial Association, National Representation of Student Councils in Bulgaria, Economic and Social Council

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Student loans defined in a special law from 2008	The loans are guaranteed by the state and have an interest rate that cannot exceed 7%. The proportion of students who take out loans to finance their studies remains very low.	Increase access, enrolment and completion of studies. To promote attendance and performance, participating students need to proof their retention each semester.	The implementation of the law has been evaluated, but the effects of the loans on student success have not yet been evaluated.
Funding	Performance based and SES-based scholarships	As part of the Higher Education Strategy 2014-2020 widening access to higher education and the national target of 36% of 30-34 years old completing higher education are to be achieved partly through taking away financial obstacles. Scholarships are provided by the state, EU, HEIs and non-governmental organisations. Through the implementation of the project entitled "*Undergraduate Scholarships*", undergraduate scholarships and rewards are awarded using funds from the European Social Fund under HRD OP	Improve student performance and completion rate or increase accessibility and enrolment.	The implementation of different scholarship programmes have been evaluated, but the effects of the scholarships on study success have so far not been thoroughly analysed.

Information and support for students	Student placements project	Allows students to gain practical training in real working environment. Funding is provided to students, academic mentors and mentors from the employer (Eurydice, 2014).	Raises the students' interest in study and thus stimulates completion and retention. Supports the transition from studies to employment.	Participation is monitored, effects will be evaluated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The project will continue to be implemented during the next academic years.
Information and support for students	Bulgarian university ranking	Bulgaria has introduced the Bulgarian University Ranking helping school leavers to choose a higher education institutions and a speciality. The ranking uses 60+ indicators, each selectable so that a user specific ranking can be made.	-Stimulate more deliberate study choices	
Organisation of higher education	Flexible educational pathway policies and monitoring of educational pathways	On national level, flexible educational pathways are created through allowing institutional mobility, recognition of periods of study in other (national or foreign) HEIs, and distance learning.	Flexible pathways can contribute to increasing completion rates if they allow students to be retained in higher education.	The Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science has a public register through which they monitor and track the education pathways of all students.

Organisation of higher education	Distance learning	Policy funds HEIs' initiatives to develop distance learning programmes and projects, e.g. 'Raising qualification of academic teachers' (Eurydice, 2014).	Improve access to higher education of non-traditional students, broadened opportunities for completion of degrees.	Policy led to diversification of the student body (more working people who are older than 25 years became students).

References:

- Center for Monitoring and Evaluation of Quality of School Education (2009). Socio-economic Conditions of Student Life in Bulgaria. Results from participation of Bulgaria in EUROSTUDENT III. Sofia (In Bulgarian), available at: http://www.ckoko.bg/page.php?c=3&page=1
- Economic and Social Council (2014). Opinion on "Draft Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Bulgaria for the Period 2014-2020", Sofia, http://www.esc.bg.
- Eurydice (2012). The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.
- Eurydice (2014). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability.
- Eurydice (2014). National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2014/15
- Ministry of Education (2014). Action plan for the measures regarding the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2014-2020. http://www.minedu.government.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143 (In Bulgarian)
- Ministry of Education (2014). Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Republic of Bulgaria for the Period 2014-2020. http://www.minedu.government.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143 (In Bulgarian)
- National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (n.d.). Criteria for programme accreditation of doctoral programme. http://www.neaa.government.bg/index.php/en/evaluation-and-accreditation/programme-accreditation/doctoral-programmes
- National Report (2014) – Republic of Bulgaria's contribution to the Joint 2015 Report of the Council and the European Commission in regards to implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation Education and Training 2020.

Croatia

Country correspondent: Dr Karin Doolan, University Zadar, Croatia
Summarized by: Professor Liz Thomas, Edge Hill University, UK

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

With an average 40% dropout rate (Farnell et al. 2014) and average length of undergraduate study of 6.6 years for university students graduating in 2007 and 5 years for professional studies students graduating in the same year (Matković 2009), addressing study progress and completion should be a priority for the Croatian higher education system. It is however only mentioned in the Strategy on Education, Science and Technology, and there is not a clear and explicit definition of study success. There are however a number of national policies that contain specific focus on improving student success, and here the emphasis is on completing the degree within the prescribed time frame.

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Funding agreements	Pilot funding agreements (introduced for 2012/2013) include performance indicators relevant to study success: (i) gaining a qualification within the prescribed time frame; (ii) increasing the number of people who have completed programmes in STEM, ICT and related interdisciplinary areas; and (iii) enhancing progress of students from low SES family backgrounds and students with disabilities. Institutions are able to choose from two groups of performance indicators, so not all institutions will select ones relating to study success. There is an A list of goals (5 of them)and a B list of goals (9 of them). Institutions have to select a minimum of 4, out of which minimally 3 should be from the A list. "Receiving a qualification in the time prescribed by the study programme" is an A list goal.	HEIs made more accountable for their activities. Increased completion rates with a particular focus on students in STEM areas, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities. NB institutional choice of PI means not all institutions are focusing on improving completion.	The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) receives an annual progress report from the higher education institutions with which funding agreements have been signed. An annual meeting with representatives of each institution is held at the MSES about the report.
Funding	Scholarships	National scholarships are available to students from low SES backgrounds. MSES annually awards scholarships to full-time low socio-economic status students (part-time students are not eligible). To be considered for a scholarship a student has to have accumulated a minimum of 45 ECTS points in the previous academic year. In the application process the student has to submit family financial records (obtained from the tax authorities). Extra points are given for factors such as having a child, being from a single parent family or not having a parent, having unemployed parents, having a sibling with special needs, having parents with	Increased completion rates, improved study success of disadvantaged students (with a focus on students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities).	Not available

		special needs. The scholarship amounted to 1.200 HRK in 2015 (approx. 157 EUR). Students tend to complain this amount is insufficient to cover living costs and that by the time they start receiving it they are already half way through the academic year (e.g. Doolan, Košutić, Barada, 2015). In 2015, 9.705 students applied for this scholarship, out of which 7.782 met the call requirements. 5000 scholarships were awarded in 2015.		
Funding	Abolition of tuition fees	From academic year 2010/2011 students do not pay tuition fees upon enrolment at undergraduate or Masters level studies. Their studies remain tuition free provided they acquire the necessary 55 ECTS points per academic year. Fees are payable for additional credit not achieved.	Removed financial barrier to improve study success, and provide incentive to make good progress (55 ECT points per year). The effect is expected across the board rather than for particular groups. What is problematic is that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are in a less favourable position to acquire the required 55 ECTS points, so the policy could be favouring the more socially advantaged students.	Not available
Information and support for students	N/A	Information provision and student support services are not national policy priorities. Information for students takes place at the school rather than HE level.	N/A	N/A
Organisation	Quality	For reaccreditation, HEIs have to complete a self-	Increased completion	Not available –2015

of higher education	Assurance: Self-evaluation report for the purposes of HEI reaccreditation	evaluation report including information on their completion rates and teacher-student ratio.	rates across the board.	marks the end of the first round of HEI reaccreditation in Croatia

References

- Doolan, K., Košutić, I. i Barada, V. (2015). Institutional bridges and barriers to study success: students' perspective (Report on research results). Zagreb: Institute for the Development of Education.
- Farnell, T., Matković, T., Doolan, K., Cvitan, M. (2014). The social inclusivity of higher education in Croatia. Zagreb: Institute for the Development of Education.
- Information about scholarships available (in Croatian) from: http://public.mzos.hr/Default.aspx?art=13620&sec=2263
- Matković, T. (2009). Youth between education and employment: is it worth getting an education? Zagreb: UNDP.

Cyprus

Country correspondent: Petros Pashiardis (Open University of Cyprus)
Summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In general, in study success is not very high on the agenda in Cyprus. Currently, national authorities are more focused on widening access and the growth of the higher education system. Moreover, completion rates in higher education are high. Although at national level completion and the drop-out rates are not monitored[6], some higher education institutions do so. According to reports of the University of Cyprus, Open University of Cyprus, and the Cyprus Technological University, between 90 and 95% of undergraduate students graduate within four years.

Cypriot higher education authorities and stakeholders predominantly define study success as the timely completion of a study programme. This definition is based on the assumption that students should graduate within the programme's standard duration which, at full time, is four years for the Bachelor degree and no more than two years for a Master's degree. The definition is supported by the Cypriot Rectors' Conference as well as the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KYSATS). Employers' organisations also emphasize the qualifications of students and their employability as a relevant aspects of study success.

2. National Policies implemented

To date, very few national policies and measures specifically related to drop-out and completion in higher education have been implemented. According to the expert (2nd Questionnaire, Part D) "[…]there is no real national strategy for drop-out prevention, mainly, because the need is not seen, at least so far. The higher education system is so new that it has still not provided any real evidence that students are not being successful and thus, only the institutions themselves create internal processes and services for students in order to assist them, but even this is at a small scale, as the numbers of those students in danger to drop out are indeed very small.". The Cyprus lifelong learning strategy for 2014-20 (CyLLS) is the only national strategy in existence, and even this is not directly related to drop-outs but rather it is considered as a strategy for employment and re-employment following the economic crisis in Cyprus. It was approved by the Council of Ministers in June 2014. It contains the main policy priorities for lifelong learning and sets out the key actions that the Cypriot government will promote under four priority pillars:

1. Improving access to lifelong learning for all and recognising learning outcomes;
2. Improving quality and efficiency of education and training;
3. Promoting research and development to support lifelong learning;
4. Improving employability (promoting entry and re-entry to the labour market).

Moreover, the variables 'drop-out' and 'completion' play no role in the funding of higher education institutions. Currently, the higher education institutions are funded according to a per student formula. However, after 12 semesters (6 years), which is the maximum

[6] National statistics report on the number of enrolments/students and the number of graduates.

period for the Bachelor completion, universities do not receive any funding for students who are still enrolled.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Tuition fees at private universities	The Minister of Education can stop the increase of tuition fees at the undergraduate level in private universities. during the economic crisis, and since 2010, all ministers of education have kept the tuition levels of private universities at the same level , this policy was implemented because of the economic crisis. The government did not want students to stop their university education because of higher tuition, and therefore decided to keep them at a reasonable level	Tuition costs for private universities to remain at reasonable levels	no evaluation
Information and support for students	Higher Education Fair	More fairs are being organized either by the Ministry of Education or by the British	More students attending universities successfully this policy was	no evaluation

		Council and /or Embassies in order to showcase their universities and how to be more successful in studying there, in order to attract more students and in order to inform students of possibilities to study outside Cyprus.	implemented in order to help students become better informed about the opportunities "out there" for university education, and therefore making wiser choices and thus, reducing the possibility to fail because of the wrong choice of university and/or country	
Organisation of higher education				

References:

The author has utilized mainly the webpages of the various universities in Cyprus as a source of information and at the same time utilised his own expertise and knowledge of the Cyprus higher education system (including the laws which govern higher education in Cyprus, as well as the new law being proposed in order to create the new Quality Assurance Body for Higher Education in Cyprus. The following are the main sources utilized:

- http://skills.oecd.org/skillsoutlook.html
- http://web.cut.ac.cy/postharvest/cyprus-university-of-technology/ Cyprus University of Technology
- http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/cyprus-lifelong-learning-strategy-2014-20
- http://www.ouc.ac.cy/web/guest/home Open University of Cyprus
- http://www.ucy.ac.cy/en/ University of Cyprus
- Περί Φορέα (Ίδρυση και Λειτουργία) Διασφάλισης και Πιστοποίησης Ποιότητας της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης Νόμος του 2014. (Proposed law for the creation of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in Cyprus).
- Pashiardis P. (1997). Higher Education in Cyprus: Facts, issues, dilemmas and solutions. Higher Education in Europe, 22 (2), 183-192.
- Pashiardis, P. (1995). Higher Education in Cyprus. Modern Greek Studies Yearbook, 10, University of Minnesota (10/11), 117-138.
- Γενική Διεύθυνση Ευρωπαϊκών Προγραμμάτων, Συντονισμού και Ανάπτυξης. (2014). ΕΘΝΙΚΗ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΗ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ ΜΑΘΗΣΗΣ, 2014-2020. Government printing office, Nicosia, Cyprus

Czech Republic

Country correspondent: Aleš Vlk (Tertiary Education & Research Institute, Brno, Czech Republic)
Summarized by: Martin Unger (IHS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is generally understood in the Czech Republic as completion of a study programme.

According to the national HEDOCE expert, compared to other issues in higher education policy the stimulation of study success is ranked average on the agenda of the responsible national authorities. Although in the annual report on Czech Education, dropout from higher education has not been mentioned since 2011, the topic is included in the more recent updates of the long-term plan for higher education. However, to date there is no national policy addressing directly study success or dropout prevention. The long-term plans contain recommendations for universities to monitor study progress and to implement dropout prevention measures. The New Strategic Framework for Higher Education (2016-2020) also includes a specific target regarding dropout – at least 60% of Bachelors started in 2015 should be completed within an "appropriate timeframe". However, no specific measures are mentioned.

In general, dropout from higher education is not perceived as a problem. Higher education representatives consider high dropout rates a quality assurance measure to "keep the bar high". Low skills and motivation of students who cannot meet the high demands of tertiary education are believed to be at the heart of dropouts. As yet, the ministry has not published comprehensive data on dropout and success. Hence, most stakeholders do not have a reliable picture of the dropout rates and their trends.

Starting from 2011, a demographic gap has led to a significant decline in the number of traditional higher education applicants, which is also reflected by the ministerial *numerus clausus* policy (some institutions have already reduced the number of first year students by over 30%). The combination of these factors might lead to less students overall, in which case dropout might become a very important topic for institutions, employers, the government and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, it is difficult to predict what sort of policy might be adopted.

2. National Policies implemented

Funding:

About 2% of all students receive a "social scholarship" designed to support socio-economically disadvantaged students. Although the programme has never been evaluated, its beneficiaries show significantly lower dropout rates than other students.

Since 2012, 5-6% of the higher education budget has been distributed to programmes promoting institutional innovation and modernisation based on national and institutional strategic plans. Projects aimed at success / dropout on institutional or lower level might be funded from this source. Similarly, projects might be funded from the EU Structural Funds. The expected effects are HEI-specific and the measures have not yet been evaluated in any detail.

Information and support for students:

Currently, a web portal to improve access to reliable information about HEIs and their study programmes is under preparation (running from 2015). One of its goals is to enable more informed study choice as a tool to prevent future programme switching.

Organisation of Higher Education:

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Social Scholarship	2% of all students receive a "social scholarship" which is designed to enable socio-economically disadvantaged students to study.		The scholarship programme has never truly been evaluated, but social scholarship students show significantly lower dropout rates than others.
	Funds for Modernisation of HEIs	Starting from 2012, 5-6% of the HE budget has been distributed to programs focused on innovation and modernisation of HEIs based on national and institutional strategic plans. Projects aimed at success / dropout on institutional or lower level might be funded from this source. Similarly, projects might be funded from the EU Structural Funds.	The expected effects are HEI-specific	The measures have so far not been evaluated.
Information and support for students	Web portal about study programmes	Currently, a web portal is under preparation (running from 2015), that should improve access to reliable information about HEIs and their study programmes.	More informed study choice as a tool to prevent future programme switching is one of the goals.	

Organisation of higher education				

References:

- Beneš, J. & Závada, J. (2009). New Degree Structure in Higher Education from the Viewpoint of Quantitative Data. *Andragogická revue*, 1 (1), 80-98.
- Fučík, P. & Slepičková, L. (2014). Studenti, kteří odcházejí: Kvantitativní analýza nedokončených vysokoškolských studií. *Aula*, 22 (1), 24-54.
- Kleňhová, M. & Vojtěch, J. (2011). *Úspěšnost absolventů středních škol ve vysokoškolském studiu, předčasné odchody ze vzdělávání.* Praha: Národní ústav pro vzdělávání. Available online: http://www.nuov.cz/uploads/Vzdelavani_a_TP/VS_predcasne_odchody_2011_pro_www.pdf
- Matějů, P. et al. *Studium na vysoké škole*. 2004. SOÚ.
- Menclová, L., Baštová, J., Kronrádová, K. *Firt-year drop-out rates among students in technical fields at public HE institutions in the Czech Republic*. 2004. MŠMT, CSVŠ, VUT. In Czech as well as in English
- Mouralová, M., Tomášková, A. Studijní neúspěšnost na českých vysokých školách. 2007. In *AULA*, 15, 01/2007.
- *Rámec rozvoje vzdělávací činnosti vysokých škol v České republice do roku 2020*. 2015. MŠMT. Available at http://www.msmt.cz/vzdelavani/vysoke-skolstvi/dlouhodoby-zamer-vzdelavaci-a-vedecke-vyzkumne-vyvojove-a-1
- Švec, V., Tichá, I., Problematika retence studentů českých vysokých škol. 2007. In *Essentia*.

Denmark

Country correspondent: Palle Damkjær Rasmussen, University of Aalborg
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid, Elisabeth Hovdhaugen & Ingvild Reymert, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is high on the national Higher Education policy agenda in Denmark and it is interpreted as completion in time. Denmark is monitoring students' completion and dropout rates through register data. Therefore completion rates are measured at the end of the first and second cycle, while dropout rates are measured at the end of each year (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:37-39). The Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2013a) also conducts its own analyses of data on dropout and completion. This analysis shows that about 30% of students taking a bachelor at university discontinue their studies, but that many of the dropouts actually are just reorienting themselves towards another higher education degree.

Denmark has extensive student support through the Danish Students' Grants and Loans Scheme (SU, see http://www.su.dk). As in the case of the other Nordic countries, Danish HEIs are funded through a funding formula coupled with a performance-based mechanism (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014: 35).

In 2013 a political agreement, known as the "Progress-Reform", introduced changes in the Grants and Loan Scheme, and in institutional follow-up of students. These initiatives were meant to promote study completion and, above all, completion in time. The reform was implemented since summer 2014 (Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2013b). It enhanced demands on students and institutions to document study progress.

2. National Policies implemented

Denmark has several different policies directly related to promoting study success. However, some of these policies are still in the process of being implemented. Even though the Progress-Reform can be seen as a comprehensive set of instruments, the measures relevant for HE will be described individually in the table.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	More study grants available for quick starters in HE (measure 1)	Students that start HE within 2 years after completing upper secondary can get grants and loans for 12 months exceeding the nominal time to degree. Students that wait more than two years after completing upper secondary only get grants and loans for prescribed time to degree.	To lower the average age of completion, and to motivate students to start immediately in HE	Implemented for students starting after July 1, 2014. No evidence yet.
Funding	Students have to show progress in order to keep getting grants and loans (measure 2)	Students have to document activity or progress in studies, and payments stop if students are more than 6 months delayed (used to be 12 month)	To promote progression towards graduation	Will be implemented in 2016, only applicable for new starters.
Funding	Graduation bonus (measure 8)	Students that complete before estimated time to degree will receive a stipend equivalent to half a month's grant, for every month early they are.	To promote progression towards graduation	Will be implemented from January 1, 2016
Funding	Completion bonus (measure 13)	Universities receive a bonus if the manage to reduce the average study-time. Today average time is 6.1 years, but this varies between institutions. HEIs will get individually set targets.	Shortening of completion times	Started July 1, 2014. Study-time have been somewhat reduced, but there may be other reasons
Information and support for students	Study choice	7 regional centres offering information and guidance about choice of HE	To foster more informed choice of HE	Impact hard to assess
Information and support for students	Education guide	National web-based system of information about all types of education available after primary education	To foster more informed choice of HE	Impact hard to assess
Organisation of higher education	Only full-time students (measure 11)	University students will automatically be signed up for classes of minimum 60 ECTS-credits. Opportunity to withdraw from exam is taken away.	To promote progression towards graduation	No evidence yet, started July 1, 2014.
Organisation of higher education	A institutional framework that promotes	Easier transfer of credits, as institutions are obliged to evaluate courses the student might have from other programmes/ institutions. Specific requirement	To promote progression between levels of education and	No evidence yet, started July 1, 2014.

	completion (measure 12a-d)	to master. Opportunity to start in spring semester.	to avoid "double" education	
Organisation of higher education	Test at study start (measure 14)	Not all students accepted in a programme really do start. In educations where this might be a problem institutions are allowed to have a start-up test students have to pass. Students that fail to pass will lose their study place.	To promote progression	Not yet implemented

References

- Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2013a): *Frafald på videregående uddannelser* [Drop-out in higher education]. Short report, February 2013. Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science
- Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science (2013b): *Reform af SU-systemet og rammerne for studiegennemførelse, Avtaletekst* [Agreement on reform of Students' Grants and Loans Scheme and Framework to promote study completion]. April 18, 2013. Copenhagen: Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

England

Country correspondent and Summary: Professor Liz Thomas, Edge Hill University, UK

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

The UK HE system is very efficient: students are only able to take up to one year out of higher education without having been deemed to have withdrawn, and there is little opportunity to transfer between HEIs, and the large majority of students complete their studies within this timeframe.

There is a strong national commitment to equity in each of the four countries of the UK, which includes working to eradicate differential rates of retention and completion that might apply to specific groups of students.

There are two measures of student retention are commonly used in respect of full-time undergraduates:

The first is the 'completion rate' – the proportion of starters in a year who continue their studies until they obtain their qualification, with no more than one consecutive year out of higher education. As higher education courses take years to complete, an expected completion rate is calculated by the Higher Education Statistics Agency… A more immediate measure of retention is the proportion of an institution's intake which is enrolled in higher education in the year following their first entry to higher education. This is the 'continuation rate'. (National Audit Office Report on Retention, 2007, p. 5).

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE 2013) recently identified four types of outcomes of HE: achieving a degree (retention and completion); achieving a first or upper second class degree (attainment); achieving a degree and continuing to employment or further study; and achieving a degree and continuing to graduate employment (as opposed to any employment) or postgraduate study. Attention is increasing turning to these additional measures, and the need to address differential outcomes by student/graduate characteristics.

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Institutional funding – public funding and student tuition fees.	Institutional funding is linked to student numbers and this impacts positively on the development of institutional measures to improve student retnetion and completion. In response to National Audit Office report the Government tightened up on audit process and reclaiming overpayments to institutions to improve retention (Longden 2012). Although the majority of funding is now paid by students rather than the state, it is still directly linked to enrolled and continuing student numbers. This has had the effect of focusing institutional attention even more on retention, completion and progression outcomes (see performance indicators and league tables below).	Institutions take greater responsibility for student retention and success.	Yes. The performance of each HEI is recorded annually and compared to expected performance. The National Audit Office has twice reviewed institutional retention and urged institutions to improve (NAO 2002 and 2007).
Funding	Student Opportunity Funding	A small study in the 00's demonstrated that retaining some students is more expensive that retaining other students. The retention strand of the Widening Participation Premium was introduced to address this in 2003/4 (recently renamed Student Opportunity Funding). The money is paid to HEIs and is formula-driven based on risk, thus payments are dependent on the age of students and their entry qualifications.	To enable institutions to better support students at risk of early withdrawal.	Bowes et al 2012 found that institutions reported that this funding made an important contribution to their efforts to improve retention and

				success, but more detailed relationships between the investment and student outcomes are not currently available. (HEFCE has recently commissioned work to enable better measurement of outcomes in relation to investment and activities.)
Funding	Access Agreement	All institutions charging tuition fees over £6000 are required to submit an Access Agreement to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). This documents specifies how a proportion of additional fee income it to be spent to ensure the access and success of disadvantaged student groups (particularly low SES). This must include outreach work, financial aid and spending to improve retention and success (including progression beyond HE). Access Agreements must be approved by the Director of the Office for Fair Access, however in reality approval is not withheld, but changes to the Access Agreement are made through informal discussions.	To improve the access, retention, completion, attainment and progression of students from lower SES groups (and other institutional target groups).	Yes. OFFA undertakes annual monitoring, and additional analysis - see http://www.offa.org.uk/publications/. Access agreements were evaluated Bowes et al 2013.
Funding	Student financial support	All fees are deferred. Students pay nothing up front. Public maintenance grants are provided for low income students; additional living costs are covered by loans.	To enable all students to study in HE and	Not as such.

		Maintenance loans comprise a non-financially assessed portion, which all students who are eligible for the loan can receive (i.e. dependent on study status); and financially assessed portion. All students are eligible for an annual loan of £3750, without means testing. Additional support is available for students from families with an income below £60,000 per year. Graduates only begin paying fee and maintenance loans when they are earning above £21,000 per year, at a rate of 9% of any income above this level. If earnings drop, then payments drop. If graduates stop work for whatever reason, then payments stop as well. The payment threshold is reviewed regularly to bring it into line with growth in earnings. The interest rate on the loans is the low rate that Government itself pays on borrowing money. There is a rebate for low earners: any balance remaining after 30 years is written off.	complete studies	
Funding	National Scholarship Programme (NSP)	Following the increase of tuition fees the government provided institutions with funding for the National Scholarship programme, which needed to be match funded, to provide additional financial support to students with a family income below £25,000. The schemes were developed and implemented at the institutional level, and money was allocated using additional criteria as many institutions did not have sufficient money to support all low income students. Initially only £1000 could be in a cash bursary, thus fee waivers were common and other approaches included vouchers etc. for institutional services such as accommodation and catering.	To improve the access and retention of eligible low income students.	Evaluation of the NSP found little evidence of impact on student retention and outcomes, but this work is still on-going (Bowes et al 2013b *http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2013/nspevaly2/*).
Information and support for students	Retention performance indicators, benchmarks and	The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects data about non-continuation and completion from HEIs which is published and publically available annually. HESA calculates a 'benchmark' for every institution (which takes into account	To provide better quality information to inform	Longden (2012) cites the value of the performance

	league tables	subject portfolio, entry qualifications and student diversity). This is published alongside actual performance with regards to the total institutional student population and sub-sections of the student population. This enables institutions to compare themselves year on year, with other HEIs and with where they should 'expect' to be. National newspapers use this data to produce league tables about retention, and the information is fed into wider league tables about the 'quality' of individual HE providers in England and the UK.	institutions and the public (e.g. potential students) about retention performance.	indicators in 'bearing down' on retention. The case study for HEDOCE finds this to be the case too.
Information and support for students	Key Information Sets (KIS)	KIS have been introduced for students, they provide comparable sets of information about all full and part-time undergraduate courses. They contain the items of information that prospective students have identified as most important to inform their decisions. The information is published on Unistats website. All institutions also make this information available via a small snippet of content or 'widget' through the course pages on their web-sites. The KIS includes information about: • student satisfaction from the National Student Survey • student destinations on finishing their course from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey • how the course is taught and study patterns • how the course is assessed • course accreditation • course costs (such as tuition fees and accommodation).	To enable students to have better information and to make more informed decisions about courses prior to entry.	No.
Organisation of higher education	Higher Education Academy (HEA)	English research has identified learning and teaching as being important to student retention and success. The Higher Education Academy was set up by Universities UK (which represents all universities) and the four funding bodies in the UK to improve the quality of learning and teaching in higher education. While improving student retention and success was not an explicit part of the HEA's remit, the National Strategy for Access and Student Success (BIS 2014) identifies learning and teaching as a primary approach to improving retention and	To improve the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.	The value of the HEA's retention work on influencing national policy and institutional practice is reported in

		success, and references various HEA publications.		Brooks et al 2014.

References

- BIS (2014) *National Strategy for Access and Student Success in Higher Education. Report by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA)*. London: BIS, HEFCE and OFFA https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-strategy-for-access-and-student-success
- Bowes, L., Jones, S., Thomas, L., Moreton, R., Birkin, G. and Nathwani, T. (2012) *The Uses and Impact of HEFCE Funding for Widening Participation*. Bristol: HEFCE.
- Bowes, L., Thomas, L., Peck, L., Moreton, R. And Birkin, G. (2013) *The uses and impact of access agreements and associated spend*. Bristol: OFFA
- Brooks, L., Baird, H. and Shenstone, A. (2014) Independent Review of the Higher Education Academy. A report to HEFCE by Capita Consulting. Bristol: HEFCE http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2014/heareview/Title,92165,en.html
- Longden, B. (2012): "Bearing Down" on Student Non-Completion: Implications and Consequences for English Higher Education. In *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice* 14 (1): 117–147.
- National Audit Office (2007) *Staying the course: The retention of students in higher education.* Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HC 616 Session 2006-2007. London: The Stationery Office.
- National Audit Office (NAO) (2002) *Improving student achievement in English higher education.* Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General. London: The Stationery Office.

Estonia

Country expert/correspondent: Hanna Kanep; Estonian Rectors' Conference
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert, the stimulation of study success is high on the agenda of national authorities. In Estonia study success has been high on the national agenda for years but mostly as an issue in secondary education. However, In recent years study success in higher education has attracted more attention at the national level. A funding reform which started in 2011 brought study success high on the national agenda with two efficiency related goals, namely (a) reducing drop-out rates in higher education and (b) increasing the proportion of students completing their studies within the programme's nominal duration (referred as study success in most cases). Moreover, the reform introduced by the Higher Education Act (and in force since September 2013) aimed at increasing students' access to need-based study allowances and scholarships (Education and Training Monitor 2014, Estonia) emphasizes the importance of study success on the national agenda. According to European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014:39) the Estonian education systems is among eight education systems in Europe claiming to measure drop-out rates at the end of each year.

2. National Policies implemented

Estonia has several policies directly related to enhancing study success: different types of funding policies, but also policies on information and support for students as well as organisation of HE (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Performance agreements	The goal is to monitor the fulfilment of goals negotiated between the Ministry of Education and Research and HEIs among them increased study success. Indicators of study success will be part of the formula funding introduced from 2016 onwards	To increase the motivation of the HEIs to address the increase in study success	HEIs have started several activities, including analyses and support measures, etc. However, more time is needed before the reform can be evaluated.
	Tuition policy	In 2013, shift from dual track tuition policy to cost-sharing tuition policy for students that are not able to keep the track of full-time studies. Further, universities got the possibility to charge tuition for international and part-time studies.	A reduction of study time by enabling the HEIs to charge students partly for their studies if they do not keep track.	Too early to estimate.
	Needs-based study allowance for students	Since, 2013/2014 students from less privileged families can apply for study allowance when studying full-time and in Estonian.	The expected results include widening access and an increased study success of students from that group.	Not yet available.
	Smart specialisation scholarships	Instrument to motivate students to study full-time in some specific fields of study that are prioritized, e.g., computer engineering, mathematics, physics.	To increase study success in specific fields, defined as priority fields.	Not yet available.

Information and support for students	Centres of counselling	Established in 2014 in every county: offer free of charge career guidance, counselling, and collect and share information about study choices, etc. The target group are up to 26 years-olds.	To help students to make more informed study and career decisions.	Not yet available
Organisation of higher education	E-Learning possibilities	The Ministry of Education and Research supported the development of e-learning through the programme called 'BeSt' 2008-2013. This programme covered 20 HEIs and targeted the instruments, quality standards, support services, etc. for creating e-learning courses in HE.	To increase flexibility in studying and thus contribute to study success, particularly for (part-time) working students.	

References

- Education and Training Monitor (2014). Estonia. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/docs/2014/monitor2014-ee_en.pdf
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Finland

Country expert/correspondent: Maarit Virolainen (University of Jyväskylä) & Tiina Niemi (Studyportals)
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid, Ingvild Reymert & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is high on the agenda of national authorities in higher education in Finland. Completion of studies within a specific time period and the reduction of dropouts are the key issues. Dropouts are considered a problem as students often dropout because of a lack of support (perceived as "pointless dropouts"). However, students who leave their institution/programme because of a switch in studies or discipline are not counted as dropouts. In fact, in some cases this type of reorientation is encouraged.

In 2006, the Ministry of Education set up a working group to address dropouts. In 2007, a report was published providing suggestions to reduce dropout rates on all educational levels and to ease access to student support services (Ministry of Education 2007). Many HEIs have made considerable investments to provide student support services as recommended although there are no specific regulations.

2. National Policies implemented

Finland has several measures related to funding and to student information and support. However, there are no measures that are directly related to the organisation of higher education. According to the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014), in Finland there are financial incentives to encourage students to complete their studies in time, completion rates are systematically measured, and are a criterion in the quality assurance processes.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Change in the study benefit/study loan system	The study subsidy has been reformed to encourage quicker completion of studies. In the new model the number of months that students can receive study subsidy is reduced. The progress of studies needs to be quicker, and the student loan model is renewed to encourage students to take student loan instead of part-time work. Some parts of student loan are paid back by KELA if studies are completed in time.	Students complete the higher education faster	Not yet seen.
Funding	Funding of higher education institutions steered towards quicker completion and reduced drop-out rates	New funding models of HEIs emphasis the progress of studies (bachelor and master students) as well as completed degrees.	The higher education institutions provide better services, support and structure of studies to students making it easier to progress in their studies and to find help and support if needed.	Started in 2013 for universities and 2014 for UAS. Results are not yet seen.
Funding	Performance agreement	Each university and the Ministry of Education conduct negotiations at the beginning of every three-year agreement term, in which they set operational and qualitative targets for the university and determine the resources required.	The funding programme for higher education will be reformed to better support the objectives of education, including higher completion of studies rates, quicker transfer to work, enhanced administration, improvement in the quality of education and research, internationalisation	Implemented recently. No evidence/data on results yet.

			and helping HEIS profile themselves in their areas of strength.	
Information and support for students	Ministry of education discussion paper 2007	Discussion paper aiming at reducing dropout rates at all education levels. Discusses reasons for dropping out as well as offers suggestions to reduce dropout. Suggests having better counselling at all education levels to prevent wrong educational choices. Better information on studies and future career possibilities prevent wrong expectations, which often result as dropouts, longer study periods and motivational problems. Suggests that institutions have study counselling and psychological services, personal study plan tools, continuous tracking of progress of studies and development of study registers to support the tracking.	Reduced drop-out rates and quicker completion of studies and quicker movement to work life.	Most of the suggestions have already been implemented, but have not been evaluated.
Information and support for students	Personal study plan	Personal Study Plan (PSP) is a tool used to manage the degree completion better. In the tool the student plans and schedules his courses for the time of whole degree. This plan is reviewed and commented by the coordinator of study programme or by mentor of the student half way of the first year. After the first year the plan is reviewed and updated every year.	To manage studies and see studies as a process that needs managing.	All higher education institutions have an interactive tool for PSP.
Information and support for students	Register of passive students	Continuous tracking of students' study records to identify students at risk for drop out and take early actions to prevent drop out. Each university is obliged to sort out the students in risk to drop out by means of statistics and reporting.	Early intervention to prevent dropout and make the completion of studies quicker. Needed also for funding purposes.	n/a
Organisation of higher education				

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ministry of Education (2007): *Opintojen keskeyttämisen vähentämisen toimenpideohjelma* [Dropout reduction programme]. Discussion paper. Available online: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2007/liitteet/opm_monisteita_2.pdf?lang=fi

Belgium (Flanders)

Country Correspondent: Renze Kolster (CHEPS) & Kurt de Wit (KU Leuven)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert the stimulation of study success is high on the national agenda. Following a number of policy reforms over the last decade, study success has increasingly been the object of attention. Three factors have put study success more prominently on the policy agenda.

Firstly, the Flemish open access policy means that anyone with the necessary secondary education qualification may enter higher education at low cost (and consequently, the number of freshmen is high). However, open access is also said to be the main reason for the high rate of failures during the first year of study.

Secondly, under the so-called "year system" in place until 2004, students could progress from one year to the next only if they passed all the annual examinations. However, this system is said to have led to about 50% of first year students failing. In 2004 the "year system" was replaced by a more flexible credit-based system. Under this system, students need to register for courses and determine the amount of credits per year. Study success is expressed by the number of credits students earn during the academic year in relation to the total credits for which they registered. In recent years, students have been earning less credits, leading to fewer graduations and more students finishing their studies with a delay of up to two years.

Thirdly, in 2008 the funding mechanism was significantly changed. In the current mechanism study success is one of the funding parameters (Eurydice, 2014).

While there is no consensus among different stakeholders on how to define "study success", it is generally understood to be completion of a study programme within a specific time period (Eurydice, 2014).

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Weighting factor in funding mechanism	Output funding on awarded credits and degrees, and additional funding through a weighting factor for students of underrepresented groups	Incentive for HEIs to focus on retention, completion and on specific groups of students	The output indicators are monitored, e.g. completion rate data of first generation students (Eurydice, 2014). Funding system was supposed to be evaluated by end of 2014 (European Commission, 2014), but this

				evaluation has not been carried out yet
	Encouragement fund (abolished end 2014)	Earmarked funding for each institution to set up measures with regard to the participation and performance of underrepresented groups	Development of pilot projects by HEIs	Pilot projects, which are monitored
	Learning account system (voucher system)	Students receive a limited number of learning credits, which they can use to enrol in modules. Students earn the credits back when they pass exams, but loose them if they fail	Incentive for HEIs to focus on study guidance and counselling, and incentive for students to consider their study success	Indicators of the learning account systems are measured in the Higher Education Database
Information and support for students	Student portal	Web-based portal where students can find all information on their learning account	Informing students	The number of hits on the landing page and the number of logins is monitored by the government
	Monitoring reports Higher Education Database	Confidential reports from the Higher Education Database on study success, provided to the HEI	Informing HEIs	Each HEI can use these reports to assess its position vis-à-vis other HEIs
	Website 'onderwijskiezer'	Website providing information on study success in HE broken down by secondary education branch of studies	Informing students	The number of hits is monitored
	Eurostudent	Report on the socio-economic background of students	Informing students	No monitoring or follow-up
	Higher Education Register	Official register of accredited study	Informing students	

		programmes		
	Funding	Funding HEIs to develop support services	Supporting students	HEIs have to report annually to the government about their support services
Organisation of higher education	Flexibility in education pathways (Decree on Flexibility, 2004)	HE-system includes: Credit accumulation system, choice between three formal student 'contracts, bridging programmes, preparatory programmes, credit transfer across institutions and study programmes, part-time study modes, recognition of competences and qualifications gained outside the formal education system, electives, study abroad opportunities, transfers between university and university colleges.	Flexible pathways providing broad access and leading to study success. It enables students to change programme without dropping out from a higher education institution (Eurydice, 2014).	Monitored, but with focus on additional red-tape. Overall, policy broadened access, but lowered study success
	Learning outcomes	Description of programmes in terms of learning outcomes	Informing students	The process of describing each programme in terms of learning outcomes is supervised by the representative organisations of universities

				(VLIR) and colleges (VLHORA)
	Quality assurance	A QA system based on ESG standards	Focus of the QA-system is on the degree to which it is possible for a student to complete the course successfully if a reasonable effort is made (Eurydice, 2014).	Evaluated in external quality assurance.

References:

- Databank Hoger Onderwijs, http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/HOGERONDERWIJS/databank/
- European Commission (2014). Education and Training Monitor 2014; Belgium.
- Eurydice (2014). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability
- Ministerie van Onderwijs en Vorming, AHOVOS, Afdeling Hoger Onderwijs (2014). Hoger Onderwijs in cijfers academiejaar 2014-2015. Brussel.
- Studiedienst van de Vlaamse regering (2014). Vlaamse Regionale Indicatoren 2014. Brussel.
- VDAB (2014). Werkzoekende schoolverlaters in Vlaanderen 2014; Zet je talenten aan het werk. 27ste studie.

France

Country correspondent: Emanuel Boudard (La Rochelle Consult)
Summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the expert, national authorities and other stakeholders in higher education define study success as the ability to find meaningful employment upon graduation. While this definition is prominent in the debate about study success, measures and policies addressing study success use completion and timely completion as measures of study success. The funding formula for universities reflects this understanding, including for example retention rates in the 2nd study year (students re-enrolling in the 2nd study year) and the number of Bachelor graduates as performance indicators.

2. National Policies implemented

In the recent years, France has faced high drop-out rates in particular in university education. Almost every second student in the first year of a university Bachelor programme drops out (MESR, 2013b, p. 4). Nationally, a number of reasons have been identified for this high drop-out:

- A strong increase in students with a professional or a technical secondary school leaving certificate rather than a general upper secondary school leaving certificate (Hetzel, 2006). These students are more likely to fail in higher education
- Mismatch: due to a lack of orientation, students often enrol in study programmes for which they do not meet the requirements. Students with a professional or technical secondary school leaving certificate often enrol in study programmes where they have a high probability to fail (OECD, 2014, p. 67)
- Unlike most other higher education institutions, universities do not select their students

With regard to national policies addressing the prevention of drop-out and increasing completion in higher education in France, two initiatives have to be mentioned:

- The 2007 "plan pour la réussite en licence" and
- The regulations in the 2013 law for higher education and research

The "plan pour la réussite en licence"[7] (2008-2012) provided top-up funds to universities subject to performance in three main pillars/topics (MESR, 2007):

- The revision of the first year in bachelor programmes (implementation of multidisciplinary first study year refreshing fundamentals);
- Improvement of study choices (better orientation and preparation for university entrance);
- Changes in the selection procedures of short-term selective higher education institutions.

During the plan the ministry issued a number of calls for proposals addressing different topics related to the three pillars. Universities were able to apply for funds supporting them to develop actions that were related to the calls/to improve completion rates in

[7] http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid20651/plan-pour-la-reussite-en-licence-730-millions-d-euros-d-ici-2012.html

Bachelor programmes. In addition, also national measures/regulations have been implemented to address study success, including *inter alia* (see table below):

- Early orientation of students in secondary education
- Websites informing about study programmes
- Support and career advice during the first semester
- Requirement of minimum number of contact hours with students throughout the study period
- Mentoring and tutoring.

Further, the 2013 law on higher education and research (MESR, 2013a; Legifrance, 2013) states that in the future about 50% of a cohort should complete a Bachelor degree. To achieve this goal the law lists a number of measures (see table).

The committee in charge of following up the Bachelor reforms ("Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle") monitors most of the actions described in the table below in an annual report (2009a, 2009b, 2011, 2012 and 2013).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Performance based funding for universities	The retention rate (students re-enrolling in the second study year) and the number of bachelor graduates are included in the funding formulas for universities	Universities implement measures/instruments to address retention and completion among bachelor students	Two types: annual budget (with performance indicators) and five years contracts (with additional resources if justified). Both are monitored by the ministry of higher education and research
Funding	Additional resources for higher education institutions	Hire additional support staff and professors (conducted through a five years plan) A total of 6,000 additional support staff and professors are planned to be hired over the period 2013-2017 (1,000 in 2013, about 45% of these were support staff and 55% were teaching positions,	To improve study success in the first cycle (completion of degree and re-enrolments)	Monitored by the ministry of higher education and research

		MESR 2013c, p. 8).		
Funding	"Le plan Campus"	About 5 billion euros to renovate university buildings under the condition universities present a plan for educational and scientific objectives, and develop a modern campus (among others)	Twelve universities have been selected. These campuses of excellence would be a showcase for France and strengthen the attractiveness and influence of French universities. Construction and reorganisation are just starting (MESR, 2012)	Monitored by the ministry of higher education and research
Funding	IDEFI[8] and IDEX[9] are two funds of the large loan	The large loan of 35 billion euros is implemented since 2010 to fund investment in five sectors, including higher education	IDEFI (149 million euros) funds Initiatives of Excellence in Innovative Training while IDEX (7.7 billion euros in total) funds Initiatives of Excellence. Both aims to increase quality of education and study success	Monitored by the national agency for research[10] (ANR)
Funding	Additional resources for students	Increased budget for student scholarships and student rental deposit by € 458 million About 135,000 scholarships are added and generalization of the "student rental deposit,"	The additional funding will prevent that access to higher education is hindered by socio-economic criteria	Monitored by the ministry of higher education and research
Information and support for students	Bac-3/bac+3 (Orientation of students also "plan pour la réussite" and 2013 higher education law)	Information throughout choice processes: Students in upper secondary	More deliberate choices about study programme, better match between student and study programme, better distribution of	Monitored by the annual report of the committee.

[8] http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid59599/37-projets-de-formation-labellises-idefi.html
[9] http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid51351/initiatives-d-excellence.html
[10] http://www.agence-nationale-recherche.fr/

		education are consulted about study/career choices three years before completion of the upper secondary school certificate. Done collaboratively by universities/HEI and upper secondary schools.	students on institutions	
Information and support for students	Personalized support and career services for students (seed funds from the 2007 "plan pour la réussite")	Provision of the services at universities	Many universities have reorganized departments that were providing services for students - now single offices providing personalized support for students (including career advice, accommodation and other administrative tasks) have been established	Monitored by the annual report of the committee.
	2013 law on higher education and research – proposition 3 Orientation	Orienting holders of professional or technical secondary school leaving certificate to short-term selective higher education institutions	Better achievements of students prepared for short-term studies	Monitored by the annual report of the committee. The centralised website[11] allows regional authorities to fine-tune choices and admissions to reach quotas set annually by the ministry of professional and technical baccalaureates into short-term selective

[11] https://www.admission-postbac.fr/

				higher education institutions.
Organisation of higher education	Admission post-bac	Website to centrally manage applications to higher education institutions Provides also consultation for students	Better distribution of students across higher education institutions Informing study, support decision making	Evaluation was done - led to changes in the services. Monitored by the annual report of the committee.
	Quality assurance Evaluation agency called HCERES[12] established in 2007	The agency conducts three types of evaluation every 5 years: diplomas (about 5000 out of 10000), research units, and institutions (about 300). The agency is conducting its evaluations based on data provided by the institution	Improvement of study success by evaluating quality of training (data available such as completion rate or time to find a job) and making sure internal quality control systems are in place. The agency also spreads good practices by involving evaluators that are peers.	?
	Reduction of number of bachelor titles/study programmes (MESR, 2014) Measure 2 of the 2013 higher education law	Since 2014 bachelor degrees are on two levels: large areas and specialization: Students can in the first year choose a large area of study and subsequently decide for a specialisation in the second/third year (also planned for professional bachelors from 2015 onwards)	Allow students to specify their study choice while studying. Avoid dropouts caused by overspecialized study programmes, and allow easier recognition of diploma by future employers.	Monitored by the annual report of the committee.

References

[12] http://www.hceres.fr

References

- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2014). Avis et recommandations: La spécialisation progressive. Retrieved from http://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Formations_et_diplomes/21/1/Avis_CSL-LP_specialisation-progressive_2014_350211.pdf
- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2013). Synthèse des travaux, propositions et recommendations. Retrieved from http://www.letudiant.fr/static/uploads/mediatheque/EDU_EDU/8/9/118589-rapport-csl-2012-2013-original.pdf
- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2012). Rapport. Synthèse des travaux, recommendations. Retrieved from http://soie.univ-lyon1.fr/jsp/saisie/liste_fichiergw.jsp?OBJET=DOCUMENT&CODE=1362580607812&LANGUE=0
- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2011). Rapport. Synthèse des travaux, recommendations. Retrieved from http://www.univ-paris-diderot.fr/DocumentsFCK/cevu/File/rapport_CSL_2010_2011.pdf
- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2009a). Rapport. Synthèse des travaux, recommendations. Retrieved from http://media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/2009/28/9/arecommandations_2008-2009_Vweb_121289.pdf
- Comité de suivi de la licence et de la licence professionnelle (2009b). Rapport. Synthèse des recommendations. Retrieved from http://media.education.gouv.fr/file/2008/13/8/rapport260608_30138.pdf
- Hetzel (2006). Rapport du débat national Université emploi. Retrieved from http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/064000796/0000.pdf
- Legifrance (2007). Loi n° 2007-1199 du 10 août 2007 relative aux libertés et responsabilités des universités. Retrieved from http://legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000824315
- Legifrance (2013). LOI n° 2013-660 du 22 juillet 2013 relative à l'enseignement supérieur et à la recherche. Retrieved from http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000027735009&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id
- MESR (2007). Plan pluriannuel pour la réussite en licence - Document d'orientation. Retrieved from http://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Communiques/01/8/orientationlicence_21018.pdf
- MESR (2012). Rapport de la mission national d'évaluation de l'Opération Campus. Retrieved from http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid65985/remise-a-genevieve-fioraso-du-rapport-de-la-mission-peylet-sur-l-operation-campus.html
- MESR (2013a). Loi pour l'Enseignement Supérieur et la Recherche. Retrieved from http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid29078/projet-de-loi-d-orientation-pour-l-e.s.r.html
- MESR (2013b). Plan pluriannuel pour la réussite en licence: document d'orientation. Retrieved from http://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Communiques/01/8/orientationlicence_21018.pdf
- MESR (2014). 22 juillet 2013 - 22 juillet 2014 L'université et la Recherche en Mouvement - Ce que change la loi. Retrieved from http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid81469/22-juillet-2013-22-juillet-2014-ce-que-change-la-loi-relative-a-l-enseignement-superieur-et-a-la-recherche.html
- OECD (2014). Série "Politiques meilleures" - FRANCE Redresser la compétitivité. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/fr/france/2014-07-Rapport-OCDE-sur-la-competitivite-en-France.pdf

Germany

Country correspondent and summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

The importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy has been increasing in Germany in the recent years. Currently, it has a moderate relevance on the federal level. At State-level the importance assigned to study success varies. For example, in North Rhine-Westphalia study success has high importance for the State authorities. The new so-called *Hochschulzukunftsgesetz* intends, *inter alia*, to establish conditions for teaching and learning that better meet the requirements of an increasingly heterogeneous student population.[13] Also, the new North Rhine Westphalia funding model for higher education institutions currently under development is expected to include regulations that encourage institutions to develop measures towards improving study success. In Berlin, the main rationale is that the quality of teaching contributes to study success. Therefore, Berlin provides additional funding to higher education institutions to improve their teaching quality.

The majority of national authorities, i.e. the federal ministry for education and research as well as the ministries of the federal states define study success as the completion of a study programme. Other stakeholders such as the Council of Sciences and Humanities (*Wissenschaftsrat*) and the German Rectors' Conference adopt the same definition.

Data on drop-out and completion rates is provided in two ways. The DZHW provides a drop-out rate. Since there is no full student register and privacy policy regulations do not allow tracking students' educational trajectories, the DZHW has developed a method (*Kohortenvergleich*) to estimate drop-out rates. The *Kohortenvergleich* is based on surveys among graduates and students who discontinued higher education as well as official data on new enrolments and graduates. The German Statistics Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*) also uses a cohort-method to provide completion rates (eight to ten years after first enrolment). Although both indicators are used by national authorities they have been criticized for not providing a full and updated picture.

2. National Policies implemented

Note: In Germany besides authorities on the federal level, authorities on the federal state level also further actors in higher education are active in addressing study success. In the following cooperative policies (funded by the federal ministry and the federal states), and policies implemented by two federal states - Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia - are presented.

Funding policies

In Germany higher education policy is under the authority of the federal states. Hence, the states have steering competence in higher education, not the federal government. Moreover, until December 2014 only the states funded higher education because under the so-called "cooperation ban" (*Kooperationsverbot*) the federal government was not allowed to do so. The recent loosening of the ban means that today the federal government can provide funds for higher education to the federal states.

[13] These are addressed by allowing new modes of teaching like part-time studies or online courses.

Nonetheless, while the cooperation ban was in place since 2006, the states and the federal government agreed in 2007 to cooperate through so-called "higher education pacts". This was possible because the German constitution (Art. 91b, 1, 1 No. 2) allows government-state cooperation under certain conditions (i.e. the cooperation must contribute to the German higher education system's international competitiveness). Through administrative agreements the government and the states cooperate by providing funds for the improvement of higher education.

In this context, two administrative arrangements have been implemented in recent years that provide both means for improving the quality of teaching at higher education institutions:

- The Higher Education Pact 2020 supports higher education institutions in addressing the expected increase in enrolments till 2020.[14] The KMK estimates that enrolments in German higher education will increase sharply and continuously until 2020. Therefore, it was agreed to provide the federal states funds for each new and additional entrant in higher education. The agreement requires the federal states to provide the necessary additional training capacity at higher education institutions and to provide high quality. The Pact is divided into three phases and is currently in its second phase, which will end in December 2015. The parties have already signed a new administrative agreement for the third phase starting in January 2016. In the second phase funds for 275,000 additional entrants in higher education were provided (higher education institutions receive €26,000 per student for a four year period, 50% paid by the federal ministry and 50% paid by the federal states). In the next phase institutions have to invest 10% of the funding from the higher education pact improving study success.
- The Quality Pact for Teaching funding scheme (2011 – 2020) was established between the German Federal Ministry and the federal states based on an administrative agreement. It supports higher education institutions in implementing instruments to improve quality of teaching and learning. The funding was allocated through a competitive procedure whereby institutions were eligible only if they developed an approach for improving teaching and learning. A committee reviewed the proposals. A wide range of instruments have been developed within this framework, for example hiring additional teaching staff and creating new organisational units offering study-related counselling and mentoring for both students and teachers. The states fund the higher education institutions and the Ministry provides funds for students.

Information and support for students/institutions

Higher education institutions are the prime providers of information and support for students. Special regulations mandating institutions to inform adequately about their study programmes are not implemented. However, State authorities support the provision of information on study programmes. In North Rhine-Westphalia the Ministry initiated the website http://wwwstudifinder.de, which provides a combination of self-evaluation tests and information on study programmes. Additionally stakeholders are actively supporting institutions by disseminating good practices addressing study success. The Stifterverband, the German Rector's Conference as well as the VDMA are issuing publications here. The Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung and the weekly journal die Zeit publish a ranking of higher education institutions annually to support students in making their study choices (Policies not included in table).

[14] In its first phase the higher education pact also aimed at strengthening the research capacities of universities. For research grants an additional allowance of 20% was awarded to fund the full costs of a research project.

Organisation of higher education

In the last five years policies improving study success by reforming the organisation of higher education have been few. The new North Rhine-Westphalia higher education law that came into force in October 2014 allows higher education institutions to establish part-time study programmes. A number of reforms are expected in the future. In November 2013, the German Rectors' Conference published recommendations for the further implementation of European higher education reforms, including a recommendation on how to address drop-out in the organisation of higher education. The Council for Science and Humanities (*Wissenschaftsrat*) will publish a position paper on drop-out and completion in higher education at the end of April 2015. This paper will also include recommendations for the further reform of the organisation of higher education. Finally, the guidelines for accreditation are currently also under revision. The revision will be completed in 2016 and it is expected that drop-out and completion will be addressed to a greater extent.

Policy area	Kind of policy/ responsible	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Cooperative policy	Higher Education Pact 2020	- providing funds to higher education institutions based on the number of additional new entrants in higher education - cooperative funding by federal level and federal states - funds have to be invested in the establishment of additional training capacity at higher education institutions - from 2016 onwards: 10% of the funds	- improve study conditions in higher education	Yes, by Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz, Countries have to send a self-evaluation report on how the funds have been spent
Funding	Cooperative policy	Quality Pact for Teaching	- providing funds for the developments of measures and instruments to improve the quality of teaching in higher education - open call for tender: higher education institutions were free to propose any kind of measure to improve the quality of teaching and learning	- improve the quality of teaching in higher education - increase completion - stimulate higher education institutions to develop instruments and measures to improve the quality of teaching in higher education	- midterm evaluations of the projects funded by the Quality Pact is currently ongoing - overall evaluation of the scheme is ongoing - research on the wider impact of the quality pact recently started.

				- stimulate higher education institutions to take more responsibility for the quality of teaching	
Funding	Federal policy	BAFöG	A combination of fellowship/loan is provided to students meeting certain eligibility criteria. The amount of funding depends on parental income. It is paid for the nominal period of a study programme. Regulations foresee that students can change their study programme one time for important reasons. After the fifth semester the funding depends also on the educational achievements of the student. Timely completion of the study programme is rewarded – the loan of students who complete their degree faster than the nominal time to degree is reduced by 25%	- increase completion - stimulate study progress - stimulate faster completion	Bafög is monitored annually with regard to the height of the funding per student, the socio-demographic background of recipients, and the repayment of the loans. Latest report: http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/20._BAfoeG-Bericht.pdf To what extent the provision of BAFöG has improved study success has not been evaluated. Research done by the DZHW on the motives and reasons for drop out have shown that students more often drop out for other reasons than financial problems, and that students receiving BAFöG are more likely to drop out of higher education (Heublein et al 2010).
Funding	Federal policy	Deutschland Stipendium	The Germany Scholarship was implemented in 2011. It is a fellowship for talented and high-achieving students, but is also awarded to students who show a special social commitment or who had to overcome different obstacles	- stimulate cooperation between higher education and industry in funding of	A mid-term evaluation of the Deutschland-Stipendium started in 2014 and will complete in 2016. Results are not available yet.

			in their educational careers. Selected students receive about 300 Euros per month, from these about 150 Euros are funded by the Federal Government and 150 Euros are supplied by private sponsors. Students should receive the fellowship for the nominal period of the study program. It is planned that in the long run about eight percent of all students at German universities should receive this scholarship. Scholarships are awarded by the participating universities, students also have to apply here.	training of graduate - improve completion rates	
Funding	Berlin	"Qualitätsoffensive Lehre"	In this scheme public higher education institutions can propose measures to improve the quality of teaching, and become funded after a positive evaluation of their proposals. Within this scheme a number of different measures have become funded -	- stimulate higher education institutions to develop instruments and measures to improve the quality of teaching in higher education - stimulate higher education institutions to take more responsibility	data on the effectiveness of the institutional measures is not available

				for the quality of teaching	
Information and support for students	North Rhine-Westphalia	Studifinder	The website addresses two information needs of students: on the one hand it provides a number of online-test where students can learn about their competencies and interests. Based on their test results the website recommends disciplines and study programmes. Information on the study programmes is also provided - here the website transfers the student to the website of the programme at the higher education institution.	- stimulate deliberate study choices - better match students to programmes	measure has been evaluated for its functionality and for customer satisfaction not for impact on study success
Information and support for students	North Rhine-Westphalia	14 Schritte zum erfolgreichen Studieren in NRW	This policy comprises 14 projects measures to improve study success. These are funded by the Ministry and run by different partners/organisations. As a major challenge the policy mentions the increasingly heterogeneous student population and seeks to develop adequate measures. Projects address different phases in the student life cycle: 1. before enrolling in higher education: measures to improve study choices 2. during the entrance phase/first study year/during study: measures to improve the integration of young students in higher education measures to improve academic	- increase completion - improve study conditions - stimulate institutions - stimulate students	collection of very different measures – some are evaluated

			preparedness 3. Transition to the labour market: Career orientation and graduate surveys Additionally projects to establish opportunities for students who discontinued higher education		
Organisation of higher education	Berlin	Consultation and mentoring talks for students	Article 28 of the higher education law for Berlin (insert name) proposes consultation and mentoring talks for students. This used to be mandatory but does not have relevance anymore after being change to a discretionary clause recently. Most higher education institutions have abolished the formerly mandatory consultation and mentoring talks for their students.	- track students - improve completion	Measure hardly used by higher education institutions anymore - students claimed that tracking would not be in line with privacy policy
	North Rhine-Westphalia	Introduction of part-time study programmes	The new 2014 higher education law allows higher education institutions to introduce part-time programmes. This measure shall allow higher education institutions to adjust their study programmes better to the needs of students	- better respond to needs of non-traditional students in higher education - adjust study programmes to the actual needs of students	Only recently implemented

References

- Heublein, Ulrich et. al. (2010): Ursachen des Studienabbruchs in Bachelor- und in herkömmlichen Studiengängen. Ergebnisse einer bundesweiten Befragung von Exmatrikulierten des Studienjahres 2007/08. Online available at: http://www.dzhw.eu/pdf/pub_fh/fh-201002.pdf
- Heublein, Ulrich/Wolter, Andrä (2011): Studienabbruch in Deutschland. Defintion, Häufigkeit, Ursachen, Maßnahmen. In: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, Heft 2/2011, p. 214-236.
- Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (2013): Empfehlung der 15. Mitgliederversammlung der Hochschulrektorenkonferenz Karlsruhe, 19.11.2013, Europäische Studienreform. Online available at: http://www.hrk.de/uploads/tx_szconvention/Empfehlung_Europaeische_Studienreform_19112013.pdf
- Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft und Forschung des Landes NRW (2013), ~~Un~~möglich. Jedem Talent eine Chance geben. Erfolgreich studieren in NRW. DUZ-Spezial, 22.11.2013. Online available at: http://www.duz.de/cms/media/uploads/user/livebook/duzSpecial/NRW-Special_2013/index.html
- Statisches Bundesamt (2012): Erfolgsquoten 2012, Berechnung für die Studienanfängerjahrgänge 2000 bis 2004. Online available at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/Erfolgsquoten5213001127004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Websites visited:

- BAFöG: www.bafög.de
- Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft: http://www.berlin.de/sen/bjw/
- Council for Science and Humanities: www.wissenschaftsrat.de
- Deutsches Studentenwerk: http://www.studentenwerke.de/
- Deutschland-Stipendium: www.deutschlandstipendium.de
- German Rectors‘ Conference: www.hrk.de
- Hochschulpakt 2020: http://www.bmbf.de/de/6142.php
- Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft und Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen: www.wissenschaft.nrw.de
- Qualitätspakt Lehre: http://www.qualitaetspakt-lehre.de/
- Statistical Office: www.destatis.de
- www.studifinder.de

Experts consulted:

- Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft: Dr. Angela Walter
- Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung: Andrea Spelberg
- Council for Science and Humanities: Dr. Sabine Behrenbeck
- Deutscher Akkreditierungsrat: Dr. Olaf Bartz
- German Rectors‘ Conference: Christian Tauch
- Ministerium für Innovation, Wissenschaft und Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen: Helmut Fangmann

Greece

Country Correspondent: Eleni Sianou-Kyrgiou (University of Ioannina)
Summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert, currently the stimulation of study success is very high on the agenda of national authorities. This high importance is mainly due to the implementation of a higher education reform in 2011 that stated that students in full-time study programmes must complete their studies within the nominal duration of the study programme (ranging between 8 and 12 semesters) plus four semesters. Students who fail to complete their studies in this time frame must stop their studies (i.e. they cannot enrol in courses anymore). Part-time students must complete within the double amount of the nominal duration of the study programme. This regulation is also meant to counter the common problem in Greece of students who enrol in higher education but do not attend courses. About 50% of Greek students are estimated to be "non-active". Hence, in Greece the study success orientation is towards "completion of a study programme with specific time period".

2. National Policies implemented

The above-mentioned higher education reform became effective in August 2014.
According to Law 4009/2011[15] "Students who had completed at the end of the academic year 2011-2012 attendance period equal to or greater than twice the number of semesters of what is required to obtain a degree according to the curriculum, incremented by two semesters, at the end of the academic year 2013-2014 have to stop their studies, unless otherwise specified in the Statute of the institution. Dropping out issued relevant declaratory act by the faculty which are established and the courses in which the student has successfully tested".
Officially, as of August 2014 the government states that students who do not complete a study programme within this specific time period no longer enrol into courses. However, as yet this rule has not been implemented. There is still an open conflict among different stakeholders and it is not yet clear what form national policies will ultimately take. No other reform actions have been established. Students have no limitations with regards to completion time.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	FUNDING OF HEI: A new funding formula has been adopted since 2012 based on quality criteria rather than the number of enrolled students.	Even though recent reforms (2012) intend higher institutions not to be funded for the number enrolled students but for performance based funding (quality indicators), by then no implementation have been forced.	1.Reduce the budget 2.Increase completion rates, 3.Offer better academic skills	Evaluation by the Hellenic quality assurance and accreditation agency. Find attached: http://www.hqa.gr/gr/exteval.phpurydice Evaluation is completed by the time. Evaluation reports are

[15] (Government Gazette 195/issue A'/6-9-2011): Art. 80 par. 9

				available by Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency (ADIP)
Funding	(Financial) support for students	Tertiary education in Greece is public and University attendance free of charge. Even though students who come from low income families find difficulty in completing their studies because they need to keep their own home in another city. Different programmes support those students: the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (providing food, accommodation, library services) and by the European Union (programmes that give students the opportunity to improve their academic skills like Erasmus) or by grants, provided to students from low-income families to qualify for academic life and meet academic requirements.	Widening Access - no direct relevance for drop-out and completion	
Information and support for students	Information provision from the Ministry of Higher Education	Information for students in **choice process** is not referred to higher education. High school offers services to help high school students making the best choice of a faculty in accordance to their skills (School Vocational Guidance).	1.Better study choices 2. Reduce of students who drop out 3. Support to vulnerable groups	Evaluation by the Hellenic quality assurance and accreditation agency
	Career Service Offices	Information and psychological support: Career service offices are funded by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the European Union. They have been established in most of	Improve study experience, improve social integration of the student - improve study success	No information

		the universities in Greece. They aim to promote employment and career opportunities. They offer psychological support, career counselling , job strategies, preparation for job interviews, mentoring etc.		
Organisation of higher education	Limitation of study period	The maximum time that can be used to complete a study programme has been limited. Students are not allowed to continue to reenrol when they have exceeded this maximum period. This regulation is effective since 2014. Full-time students who enrolled in 2006 and had not completed their studies by June 2014 had to be de-registered by the higher education institutions.	Complete study programme faster Move non-active students out of the higher education institutions	Evaluation will be done by the Hellenic quality assurance and accreditation agency So far, the implementation of this regulation is outstanding. There is still an open conflict and no one knows what national policies intend to do. No other reform actions have been established. Students have no limitation of completion time.
ATHENA Plan				Athena plan does not include measures related to drop out and completion. It refers to the reduction of departments and Technological Educational Institutes (TEI) in Greece from currently 534 to 405, in the near future.

References:

No References indicated by Expert

Hungary

Country correspondent: Jozsef Temesi (Corvinus University of Budapest)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert the stimulation of study success is high on the agenda of the responsible authorities. The government gives it high priority because it recognizes that low completion rates increase the direct costs and the opportunity costs of higher education. Moreover, the media emphasize that low success rates are indicate the low efficiency of higher education. To clarify the success rate, the government urges the development of new statistical measures and data collection to investigate the reasons behind the perceived low success rate.

The prevailing understanding of study success is the completion of a study programme with either a diploma or a so-called pre-degree certificate. Completion within a specified time specified period of time is also considered study success. Although not defined in the law (Eurydice, 2014), official statistics measure completion as attainment of a degree. A particular distinction in the Hungarian system is between a full degree and a "pre-degree" certificate. Students are awarded a full degree only if they pass a language exam, complete a thesis and finish their course work. If students complete the thesis and the course work but not the language exam they are granted a pre-degree certificate. Many students fail, or do not sit, the language exam. They subsequently enter the labour market with the pre-degree certificate and are not counted as having completed a full degree. In turn, this affects the overall completion rate.

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Changes in the tuition fee policy from 2011	The tuition fee policy defines the number of full- and partly funded study places. Distribution of the funded places amongst the undergraduate disciplines is an annual decision of the government.	Through tuition fee policies, the government is able to direct students to particular disciplines. Students can be required to pay full fees if they exceed the regular study period (Eurydice, 2014). This is an incentive for completion.	There are no official data available, yet. However, HEIs report a positive move to the direction of on-time completion of studies for fee-paying students.
	Student grant contracts from 2011	State funded students have to sign a contract about the repayment of their scholarship money in case of not meeting certain conditions	Completion of studies on time; graduated students will not leave the country.	Immediate effects are not visible, data about repayments are not known.
	Extension of the loan system from 2011	A new type of student loan (Student Loan 2.0) was introduced with subsidised interest rates.	Assistance for privately funded students.	There is not enough data yet.
Information and support for students	National graduate tracking system	It is compulsory for HEIs to provide student progress on labour market data. For students it is voluntarily.	The system allows the government to track graduate progress on the labour market and can help prospective students make more informed choices.	The first reports have been published with data and analysis.
	Ranking	The central	To help high	It is used by

	system	admission office system includes a database that can be used for ranking purposes.	school students in their choice.	the majority of applicants and is found very useful.
	Establishment of student support centres from 2005.	It is compulsory for the institutions to have these centres.	More study success through mentoring and counselling of students.	Evaluations suggest that it has a positive impact on study success.
Organisation of higher education	Recognition of prior learning (2012)	HEIs are allows to validate up to two thirds of the total credits based on prior learnings (Eurydice, 2014).	Increase access to HE.	It is a supporting tool for part-time students, however, only sporadic results are reported in a research on validation.
	Changes in the admission system	Distribution of the state funded places in favour of science and life-science studies. The system also set the admission standards (points) higher.	To increase the proportion of graduates in particular study fields and to raise HE entrance standards.	Controversial results. Due to the decline of total application numbers the number of applicants to these fields stagnates or decreases, but their proportion is higher than before (European Commission, 2014).
	External quality assurance systems	Completion and/or drop-out rates are considered as a required criterion in evaluations on institutional level (Eurydice, 2014).	Requires the HEIs to focus on completion and drop-out	Recently the Hungarian Accreditation Committee asks for completion and drop-out data to be included in HEIs' self-evaluation.

References

- European Commission (2014). Education and Training Monitor 2014; Hungary.
- Eurydice (2014). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability

Ireland

Country correspondent: Professor Emer Smyth, Economic and Social Research Institute, Ireland
Summarized by: Professor Liz Thomas, Edge Hill University, UK

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In Ireland, there has been a strong policy focus on broadening participation in higher education with less focus on the issue of course completion. However, the expansion of the HE sector and increasing diversity among the student population (as a result of the National Access Office policy focus on widening access) have necessitated a policy focus on improving retention

Until recently, there has been little systematic data on non-completion within higher education, a situation which has changed following the introduction of the Student Records System (see below). This data was used to inform the first national report on ***all*** publicly-funded HEIs (Mooney et al. 2010), with a further report on 2010/11 entrants published in 2014 (HEA, 2014). These data relate to transfer from first to second year of higher education and show non-progression rates of 16% compared with 15% for the 2007/8 entrant cohort. In terms of 'non-presence' rates, it was found that on average 16% of new entrants in 2010/11 across all sectors and NFQ levels were not present one year later. Non-presence rates are different across NFQ level: 31%/28% at levels 6/7 and 4%-17% at level 8. Non-presence rates are also different across sectors: 24% in IoTs, 9% in Universities, and 4% in other colleges (mainly teacher education institutions).

Thus, the policy focus in Ireland is on improving the continuation and completion rates.

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland Action Plan 2005-2007	Recurrent Grant Model to support equity and access as part of the core grant to universities (Source: Quinn 2013) The Recurrent Grant Allocation model is comprised of: a core grant (based on weighted student numbers by field of study, adjustment to reflect the costs of supporting under-represented groups, research, level 6 and 7 courses, an adjustment for financial stability); and a grant in lieu of tuition fees. In future	The aim of this policy is to improve the continuation and completion of students targeted as part of the equity of access plan.	The extent to which institutions meet the agreed objectives will be monitored and form the basis for the performance-related component of the grant.

		years up to 10% of the recurrent grant will be linked to performance in delivering on national objectives. Performance is assessed on the basis of targets set in an agreed compact covering the period 2014-16 between each HEI and the HEA. This compact includes a section on 'participation, equal access and lifelong learning'.		
Funding	Fees and student support	Students do not pay tuition fees (abolished in 1996), but do pay registration fees which are comparable in scale to tuition fees in some other countries. The amount per annum ranges from €305 to €5,915, depending on family income and size. Low-income students do not have to pay the registration fee and are entitled to a student maintenance grant.	The policy was initially intended to improve access for lower income groups but has been found to enhance progression rates, all else being equal (see Mooney et al., 2010).	There have been a number of research studies on equity of access to higher education and two studies to date on progression within higher education.
Information and support	A new Student Record System (SRS) (including both universities and IoTs)	New SRS has been developed, which compares favourably with the best systems internationally (Boland 2010). The SRS is an electronic Student Record System devised by the institutions and the HEA to allow detailed reporting of higher education students. It introduced the ISCED reporting scheme, and replaced the previous paper-based mode of data collection (HEA 2013).	The system was designed to provide harmonised information across institutions, and can be used to assess the profile of entrants and their progression to second year.	The record system itself is not being monitored but the data gathered can be used to assess student entry and progression patterns.
Information and support		From 2013 onwards, the Higher Education Authority has published	This is designed to support	It provides on-going monitoring of

		a detailed profile of each HE institution, which includes the rate of drop-out. This is part of the development of a broader evaluation framework to support strategic planning at institutional and system levels.	strategic planning at institutional and level.	the profile of students and their progression rates.
Information and support for students		In March 2013, the DES, in a paper on better supporting the transition from post-primary to HE, signalled agreement between key partners at post-primary and HE on a commitment to addressing any problematic predictability, and to reduce the number of grading bands, in the Leaving Certificate examination, and to review and significantly reduce the number of HE programmes at level 8, to encourage a broader, less specialised, undergraduate entry into the arts, business, science and engineering disciplines (but not highly contested disciplines, such as Medicine. The work of the Transition Reform Group is still on-going and further details are expected before summer 2015.	This is intended to lead to ways of improving the quality of the transition from secondary to higher education through: looking at ways of reducing the exam pressure and resultant rote learning among Leaving Certificate students; reducing the number of high points courses with a small no. of places; and improving the quality of decision-making around HE course choice.	No, at least not yet
Information and support for students	Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE)	ISSE is based on NSSE/AUSSE . The survey is intended to provide comprehensive information on student experiences in order to	It is intended to provide a resource for institutions to enhance	Yes, through on-going student surveys

		make higher education a more engaging process. HEIs have been asked to give feedback on how they propose to use these data (HEA, 2015).	the student experience.	
Information and support for students	Most institutions provide a range of student supports.	Once they enter university students can access a range of support: orientation programmes, extra tuition if needed, help with study skills and exam preparation, one-to-one meetings with student advisors, social gatherings, mentoring, advice about grants and scholarships and bursaries when available.	It is likely to facilitate student integration and progression but the lack of information on the exact nature of support makes it difficult to specify the likely outcomes.	No
Organisation of higher education	Mainstreaming access in Irish higher education (National Access Office, HEA 2006)	Examining, adapting, and transforming the curriculum, and learning and teaching. Institutional commitment to improving the mainstream learning and teaching environment for *all* students as a key aspect of good practice to improve retention.	To improve retention of all students by improving the quality of learning and teaching.	HEA Access Office conducts periodic reviews of developments
Organisation of higher education	National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education	Teaching and learning has underpinned the national approach to improving retention and completion rates. For example, through the establishment of *Learning and Teaching Centres in most HEIs, m*any offering PG teaching qualifications for academic staff. More recently the **National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education** has been established	To improve retention of all students by improving the quality of learning and teaching.	HEA Access Office conducts periodic reviews of developments. Funding has been made available through this initiative to conduct research on the outcomes of specific measures adopted.

		by the Minister for Education and Skills in order to enhance the quality of the learning experience for all students at third level, be they full-time, part-time or flexible learners.		
Organisation of higher education	External quality assurance	Completion and/or drop-out rates are used as a criterion for quality assurance at the institutional level as part of an overall performance evaluation framework. (See above on information)	See above	See above
	Access policy	Devolves responsibility to HEIs to improve the continuation and completion of student from widening access groups. (See above in relation to institutional compacts)	Improve continuation and completion of students from targeted widening access groups	HEA Access Office conducts periodic reviews of developments

References

- Boland. J. (2010) Foreword in Mooney, O., Patterson, V., O'Connor, M. and Chantler, A. (2010) *A study of progression in Irish higher education*, Dublin: HEA.
- Eurydice (2011) Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability
- Higher Education Authority (2013) Higher education key facts and figures 2011/12, Dublin: HEA.
- Higher Education Authority (2014) *A study of progression in Irish higher education institutions 2010/11 to 2011/12*, Dublin: HEA.
- Mooney, O., Patterson, V., O'Connor, M. and Chantler, A. (2010) *A study of progression in Irish higher education*, Dublin: HEA.
- Mooney, O., Patterson, V., O'Connor, M. and Chantler, A. (2010) *A study of progression in Irish higher education*, Dublin: HEA.
- Quinn, J. (2013) *Drop-out and Completion in Higher Education in Europe among students from under-represented groups*. Network of Experts on Social aspects of Education and Training (NESET) on behalf of the European Commission

Iceland

Country expert/correspondent: María Kristín Gylfadótti, RANNIS
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Compared to other policy issues on the higher education agenda study success is of relatively low importance in Iceland. Nevertheless, student dropout rates are systematically measured at the end of the first year (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014).

2. National Policies implemented

Since the issue of dropout and completion is not at the top of the agenda, few policies address the issue. Over the last few years, there has been a slight increase in focus on study success, which is reflected by a reform of the funding model introducing performance-based funding, and policy suggestions to restrict study support to students who did not progress through their studies.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(Expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Performance based funding	In 2012, a new funding model was introduced, and completion rates are part of the model. Institutions get a premium for students that graduate on time (about €1000/ISK150.000 for bachelor's degrees, and €667/ISK100.000).	Making institutions more inclined to support study success	No evidence yet.
	Restriction on study support, linking it to study progression	In 2013, the Ministry of Education proposed to change the law on student funding, only giving students that completed at least 25 ECTS per semester credits continued support.	Shortening time to completion	The proposal was opposed by the national student union, they filed a law suit and won, so the measure was never implemented.
Information and support for students	Support service, for students with disabilities	A revision in 2012 of the HE Act from 2006 strengthened the clause stipulating clearly that HEIs should ensure professional support and appropriate access for students with disabilities and seek to actively support all students with some type of	Helping students that are struggling to complete	No evidence yet

		learning disabilities or any other illnesses.		
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Italy

Country correspondents: Emanuela Reale (IRCRES CNR), Alessandra Decataldo (University of Milan Bicocca)
Summarised by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national experts, the stimulation of study success is high on the agenda of the responsible authorities. Study success is considered an important issue because of a number of problems in Italy's higher education system (European Commission, 2014). Firstly, Italy has one of the highest drop-out rates in Europe. Secondly, the attainment rates are among the lowest in Europe. Thirdly, graduates have difficulties transitioning from education to work, suggesting a mismatch between students' attainment as to the course certified skills. Fourth, and similarly to elsewhere in Europe, the overall quality of students' attainments is seen as an issue. Implemented policies focus, *inter alia*, on smoothening the transition to higher education, which is to prevent drop out and improve study success.

Study success is mainly understood as completion of a study programme and as completion within a specific time period. This definition is shared among the key stakeholders: the Rectors' conference (*Conferenza dei rettori delle università italiane*), the Accreditation Agency (*Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca*), the employers' organizations (*Confederazione degli industriali italiani*), the National Council of Universities (*Consiglio Universitario Nazionale*), and the Consortium AlmaLaurea (*Consorzio interuniversitario AlmaLaurea*).

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Diritto allo Studio	Bursary for the economic sustainment of low-income students based on funding to students supplied by the Regions and the Ministry of Education, University and Research-MIUR.	To provide resources to low-income students in order to reduce drop out due to economic motivations.	The instrument is efficient but less effective since the resources available are very low compared to the number of students affected by economic constraints.
Information and support for students	DM .240/2010	General reform of the university system.	Among many different aims, the reform will push for effectiveness, reducing drop-out rates and improving the job placement.	Evidence from NETSET report: Reform of the university system in 2011, expansion of higher education and shorter courses increased enrolment, but only partially reduced drop-out rates.
	Universait	A web portal	ANVUR pointed	The effectiveness of the

	aly	(Universitaly) that has information on all the courses available in the university system.	out the difficulty students have in moving from school to university life. There has been "ineffective orientation, a deficit in preparing students [and] a weakness in training staff [to help] those enrolled," (ANVUR 2014). This policy instrument is to help students make a more informed choice and thus contribute to reducing dropout.	instrument received several comments. European Commission: "Starting from 2013/14, career and counselling activities for prospective tertiary students became compulsory during the penultimate year of upper secondary education, with some additional resources allocated (EUR 7 million in 2013-14). This is a step in the right direction to help students make a more informed choice. It should help reduce tertiary drop-out rates and increase attainment rates." Eurydice (2014): "In Italy, the approach is to strengthen links between upper secondary schools and higher education institutions, allowing students to pre-register and thus to be better informed and prepared for higher education."
	Sistema nazionale di certificazione delle competenze (National system of certification of skills)	National System of certification of skills includes the identification and recognition of non-formal and informal apprenticeship.	To ease the transition to work and contribute to the students' understanding of the skills acquired at university and in the course of their working lives.	The new system has been implemented in 2012. There is no evidences of its effect at the moment.
	Progetto RI-CONVERT-2011 / intervention model for the accompaniment to work of young people	A model for the accompaniment to work of young people who have dropped out or are in the process of dropping out and need support to develop projects to get a working position, which	To improve job placement of university students; to reduce drop-out rates	No evidence

		capitalise the knowledge and skills acquired during the university training .		
	Azienda ESU di Padova	The mission of the ESU company is to offer students an integrated system of services to support their studies, in a perspective of quality and management efficiency. The activities carried out by the Company are set out by the LR n. 8 of 04.07.1998 Establishment of Companies for the Right to Education.	To reduce the drop-out rates. Also the objective of solidarity, i.e. protecting the needy and worthy students without financial means, went alongside with the willingness to provide services for all students, not just those entitled to it according to their economic situation	No evidence
Organisation of higher education	National System of Quality Assurance AVA (Autovalutazione, Valutazione e Accreditamento)	The AVA model, in line with the ESG ENQUA 2005/2009, foresees the universities to set specific goals and methods to achieve them; universities can autonomously decide how to get the results, but they must comply with several requirements. ANVUR has designed and implemented the experimental project TECO, which is conducted on a sample of graduates (on a small number of	Improving quality of teaching and learning. The model requires HEIs to have: information, monitoring, student services and support, particularly aiming to improve study success, transition to labour market and reduce drop-out (Eurydice, 2014).	Under development - no evidence for the time being

		universities involved on a voluntary basis).		

References:

- Agenzia nazionale di valutazione del sistema universitario e della ricerca (ANVUR) (2014) . Rapporto sullo stato del sistema universitario e della ricerca 2013. At: http://www.anvur.org/attachments/article/644/Rapporto%20ANVUR%202013_UNIVERSITA%20e%20RICERCA_integrale.pdf, Accessed 15 October 2014
- AlmaLaurea (2014), La condizione occupazionale dei laureati. XVI Indagine 2013, Bologna, www.almalaurea.it
- European Commission (2014). Education and Training Monitor 2014; Italy.
- Eurydice (2014). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability
- ISTAT (2013). Il reddito disponibile delle famiglie nelle regioni italiane. At: http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/81454, Accessed 15 October 2014
- NESET (2013). Drop-out and completion in higher education in Europe among students from under-represented groups. European Union.
- Reyneri E., Sociologia del mercato del lavoro. Vol. I. Il mercato del lavoro tra famiglia e welfare, il Mulino, Bologna, 2011.

Latvia

Country expert/correspondent: Rita Kaša, Stockholm School of Economics in Riga
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In Latvia, the stimulation of study success is not on the agenda of national authorities. According to European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014) Latvia does not have any incentives for students to complete studies within a limited period of time, completion rates are not measured systematically and they are not used as a criterion in external quality assurance.

In September 2014 the World Bank proposed a new funding model for Latvia that combines performance-oriented components with stable input-oriented funding (World Bank 2014a, 2014b).

2. National Policies implemented

The Ministry of Education and Science is working towards developing national policy measures to address dropout in higher education, especially in natural sciences and engineering. The Ministry has acknowledged that more professional are needed in these areas. Consequently, to attract more applicants to these types of programmes and reduce student dropout the government needs to provide sufficient funding for students. In this regards, the government acknowledges that funding should primarily support students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling them to study rather than work to cover living costs (Ministry of Education and Science, 2014: 24).

Currently, there are no direct policy measures to counter dropout in higher education. However, the Ministry of Education and Science asks HEIs to provide annual data on the number of students who have graduated. There are plans to start monitoring student dropout and link this information to accreditation of study programmes at HEIs.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	-	-	-	-
Information and support for students	-	-	-	-
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014*. Eurydice report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ministry of Education and Sience (2014): *Informatīvais ziņojums „Par augstākās izglītības studiju programmu izvērtējuma gala rezultātiem, kā arī augstākajai izglītībai piešķirtā valsts budžeta finansējuma izlietojumu 2012.gadā un budžeta vietu sadali 2014.gadā"* [A report on the results of higher education study program assessment, the use of public budget in 2012, and the distribution of state funded study places in 2014]. AvaliableAvailable online: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/nozares-politika/izglitiba/augstaka-izglitiba.html
- World Bank (2014a): *World Bank Proposes a New Higher Education Financing Model for Latvia*, Press-release September 24, 2014. Available online: http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/09/24/world-bank-proposes-a-new-higher-education-financing-model-for-latvia
- World Bank (2014b): *Higher Education Financing in Latvia: Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses*. World Bank Reimbursable Advisory Service on Higher Education Financing in Latvia. Available online: http://www.viaa.gov.lv/files/news/24067/lv_hef_output_1_final_18mar14.pdf

Lithuania

Country expert/correspondent: Rimantas Zelvys, Vilnius Pedagogical University
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In Lithuania, the stimulation of study success is very low on the agenda of national authorities. According to a general opinion too many students are enrolled. Thus, dropout is deemed a "natural selection" process to sift out students who are less prepared for HE studies. Discussions about a definition of successful studies are few. The general understanding is that successful students are those who pass examinations with positive grades and completes their study programme. There is no overall strategic approach towards study success. The main strategic document – the State education strategy for years - 2013-2022 – does not explicitly mention study success among its strategic goals. However, the document mentions planned measures to ensure conscious and informed study choice and measures to improve the content and progress of studies (European Commission 2012: 29).

2. National Policies implemented

Lithuania has policies in the field of funding, information, student support, and organisation of higher education. The table below details the policies that have been implemented nationally to improve study success (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Money follows the student	Students can receive state funding for studies in certain study fields, given a certain result in the national matura examination. The students can choose a HEI and a study program in a certain area and the money follows the students to the institution of their choice.	Increased motivation to study. In case of low academic results or drop out students have to pay back the money.	The instrument mainly achieved its goal as state-funded students seek to complete their studies and the drop-out rate is much lower than in the case of the fee-paying students.
	Tuition fee if students exceed regular length of study (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2014)	Students that are delayed or that for other reasons exceed the estimated time to degree have to pay tuition fees, while students who are not delayed pays no fees.	Intended to make students complete on time	No evidence available.
Information and support for students	Open system of information and consulting	Webpage created by The Ministry of Education and Science as an open vocational information, counselling, and guidance system providing a wide	To help individuals to choose a marketable profession, which can be obtained for the first time or through re-training at Lithuanian or	Difficult to measure

		range of users with information based on public, departmental, and other databases and registers.	European higher and vocational schools, by accumulating, processing, and presenting easily accessible information to a wide range of users.	
	Career Management Information System	Under development, to increase awareness among HEI students to develop skills to independently plan one's own career.		No measureable effect yet, as it is being implemented.
Organisation of higher education	Introduction of extended studies	The Law on Higher Education and Research (2009) introduced a concept of extended studies, where students can undertake the same program as in regular studies, which is less intense and lasts longer (e. g. 6 years Bachelor studies instead of 4 in regular studies).	To improve study success for students with work and family obligations.	Effects are still difficult to measure, the first students of extended studies will graduate in 2014.

References

- European Commission (2012): *Lithuania: National Reform Programme*. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2012_lithuania_en.pdf
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ministry of Education and Science (2009): Law on Higher Education and Research. Available online: http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Lithuania/Lithuania_Law_on_HE_and_Research_2009.pdf

Luxembourg

Country correspondents: Andreas Hadjar (University of Luxembourg) and Justin Powell (University of Luxembourg)
Summarised by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national experts, the stimulation of study success is not a high priority on the agenda of the responsible authorities, relatively to other higher education policy issues. Currently, study success (in terms of drop-out/retention and completion) is not closely monitored in Luxembourg. However, one can note that the ambition to do so has been growing.

The University of Luxembourg interprets study success as the successful completion of a study programme and is seen in connection to the student's further career or further educational pathway. The national authorities or stakeholders have not defined study success and drop out. Anecdotal evidence suggests that stakeholders are aware of study success issues but have been reluctant to propose particular policy changes.

2. National Policies implemented

The University of Luxembourg has few instruments available to provide a global picture of student success and failure across study programmes and faculties. However, the institution does have measures to widen access, reduce the drop-out rates and provide better career guidance (European Commission, 2014). On national level, no explicit policies to improve study success on the basis of surveys or other empirical instruments have been designed. Alumni surveys and external evaluations are the first (gradual) steps being taken to provide evidence and support policy change.

References

- European Commission (2014). Education and Training Monitor 2014; Luxembourg

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Country correspondent: Irena Kuzmanoska (Sagittarius / CHEPS)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert, stimulating study success is high on the agenda of the responsible authorities. Study success is considered an important issue because of labour market fluctuations, career development, research and development, and innovation technologies.
The prevailing interpretation of study success relates to completion of a study programme within a specific time period. To a large extent, different stakeholders (i.e. the Macedonian Chamber of Information and Communication Technologies, the Higher Education Accreditation and Evaluation Board, the Rectors Conference, the Student Parliament, and the Labour Union) share this understanding .

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Scholarships for students	Need- and merit-based Scholarships for: talented students, students in technical and medicine faculties, and students belonging to the socially deprived categories.	Improved access to HE, attract stronger students to HE and particular disciplines, promote better performance in university, and allows students to have more time to focus on their studies.	
	Vouchers for computers	Policy for undergraduate students from low income and socially deprived families to enable them to afford computers.	Increase the study success of students from low-income families.	Number of vouches awarded is monitored.
Information and support for students	Visibility and communication	Accessible public information through special events, printed materials and internet resources.	Provision of transparent information about programmes and services for better university performance	

			and quality of education.	
	Centres for improvement of students' literacy	Improve students' literacy in terms of using the most up-to-date literature (i.e. translated books and manuals).	Better academic preparedness, improved quality of teaching and learning, and improved study success.	The translated books are widely used by students.
Organisation of higher education	National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.	The system outlines the different educational pathways students can take within higher education, by linking the different qualifications.	To enhance the social dialog and intensify the cooperation between the higher education institutions and the professional field. The linkages between education and labour market is to motivate students to complete their studies	
	National strategy for entrepreneurial education	In light of demographic changes and aging population, the strategy's major objective is to create awareness of entrepreneurship as a career choice, promote young people's entrepreneurial spirit, support the development of their entrepreneurial skills and other individual skills.	Improving different skills: entrepreneurial, social competence, creativity, problem solving, team working, taking calculated risks, communication, leadership, decision making, and time management. Through the strategy the higher education is to align better with the country's economic development needs. The	

			framework allows for different study tempos.	
	Translation of 1000 professional books and manuals	Translate professional and scientific books and manuals in a broad range of academic disciplines (e.g. pharmacy, dentistry, and IT). Particularly looked at are books and manuals used at distinguished universities in USA, UK, France and Germany.	The aim is to use the world's most renowned professional and scientific literature to provide the students with the most up-to-date insights in their particular field of study.	Number of translated books and manuals are monitored.
	Procurement of equipment	Procuring up-to-date equipment for the improvement of scientific and teaching work of public institutions, mainly benefiting the science and technologic faculties.	Improve study success by improving teaching and learning	Procurement of equipment is monitored.

References

- Bahtovska, E., Janevska, G., Neshkovska, R., (2011) National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications for Republic of Macedonia, Guide, EC and TEMPUS Tempus Project No.145165-TEMPUS-2008-SE-SMHES (2008-4763), Designing and implementing of the National Qualifications Frameworks, Bitola: University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
- Kuzmanoska, I., Janevski, V., Stojanova V., Kermicieva-Panovska, A., Pecakovska, S. (2008) Macedonian Education Policy & Priorities in the Light of EU's Policy Direction, Turin: European Training Foundation.
- Law on Higher education, Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No35/2008; No103/2008; No26/2009; No83/2009; No99/2009; No115/2010; No17/2011; No51/2011; No123/2012; No15/2013; No24/2013; No41/2014; No116/2014.
- Law on National Framework for Qualifications (2013) Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No137/2013.
- Law on Vocational Education and Training (2014) Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No41/2014.
- Mickovska-Raleva A., Kostovska S., Nebiu D., Nikolovski D. (2010) Kako do pokvalitetno visoko obrazovanie (Quality tertiary education: How to achieve it), Skopje: Center for Research and Policy Making.

- Pop Ivanov L., Božinoska M., Božović, S. (2011) Sonuvame da patuvame: analiza na akademskata i studentskata mobilnost preku alatkata pristap do informacii od javen karakter (We dream to travel: an analysis of student and academic mobility by using the access to public information tool), Skopje: Youth Educational Forum.
- Pop Ivanov L., Velkovski G., (2010) ECTS - Reality or illusion in higher education, Skopje: Youth Educational Forum.
- Kuzmanoska, I., Popovski, Z., (2008, November 28-29) Rethinking governance – trends, policies, policy option, Final Proceedings, Occasional Paper publication of The UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge Global Research Seminar Sharing Research Agendas on Knowledge Systems, Paris:UNESCO, pp:5.

Malta

Country Correspondent: Maria Brown (University of Malta)
Summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the experts, study success is high on the national higher education agenda of the national authorities in Malta. A number of policy documents (e.g. the Framework for the education strategy for Malta 2014-2024: Sustaining foundations, creating alternatives, increasing employability) emphasize the relevance of study success. Despite its strong position on the policy agenda, the engagement with the study success topic is relatively low. There are rather definitions of study success indicators such as drop-out, completion or timely completion. Moreover, no research in drop-out and completion in higher education in Malta is conducted. This is also because monitoring the progress of students is forbidden, which in turn means that data on dropout and completion is unavailable.

because of national authorities' and stakeholders' low engagement with the term study success, in Malta there are no clear definitions and targets. According to the expert, the main targets of policy papers on study success are increasing the participation in higher education and providing teaching and learning that meets the demands of the labour market. Since these goals focus on employability, they are not within the scope of this study. The *Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020* developed by the National Commission for Higher Education (2009b) would have the potential to address study success in terms of completion, reduction of drop-out or decreasing the time to degree, but mostly these aspects are not addressed either in research on drop-out or in higher education strategies.

2. National Policies implemented

In Malta a number of policies, strategies and measures to reform and improve higher education have been implemented in the recent years. Among them, the 'Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024' (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.a.) and the 'Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020' (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.a.) are particularly important. However, although these policies are important for higher education in Malta, they did not aim specifically for an increase of completion or decrease of drop-out.

In general, the national expert points out that the absence of national policies and measures specifically addressing drop-out and completion in higher education is due to the want of data and research on these topics rather than to a lack of discourse about (the provision of) higher education.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding				
Information and support for students				
Organisation of				

higher education				

References

- Azzopardi, A. (2011). Young People in Gozo: A Study - 2. Gozo: Oasi Publications.
- Camilleri, J. (2010). 2020: Vision or Optical Illusion? Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 15 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/111090/uom2020.pdf
- European Commission / Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) / Eurydice. (2014). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://researchanddevelopment.gov.mt/en/Documents/Modernisation_Higher_Education_2014_full%20study.pdf
- European Commission. (2013). Education and Training Monitor 2013. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/monitor13_en.pdf
- Eurostat. (2013). Eurostat News release 56/2013 – Europe 2020 headline indicators on education, April 2013. RetreivedRetrieved September 18 2014, from http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=t2020_41&plugin=1
- Government of Malta. (2013a). Malta Government Scholarships Scheme (Undergraduate). Malta: Government of Malta. Retrieved September 17 2014, from https://education.gov.mt/en/education/myScholarship/Pages/MGSS-UG.aspx
- Government of Malta. (2013b). Malta Government Scholarships Scheme (Postgraduate). Malta: Government of Malta. Retrieved September 17 2014, from http://education.gov.mt/en/education/myScholarship/Pages/MGSS-PG.aspx
- Government of Malta. (2013c). STEPS: Strategic Educational Pathways Scholarships Scheme. Malta: Government of Malta. Retrieved September 17 2014, from http://education.gov.mt/en/education/myScholarship/Pages/STEPS.aspx
- Institute of Tourism Studies. (2014). PROSPECTUS FOR FULL-TIME PROGRAMMES 2014/2015 (capitalized in the source). Malta: Institute of Tourism Studies. Retrieved September 15 2014, from http://www.its.edu.mt/images/prospectus/ITS_Fulltime_Prospectus_2014_2015.pdf
- Laws of Malta., Education Act (CAP. 327): L.N. 294 of 2012; Malta Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning Regulations, 2012.
- Laws of Malta., Education Act (CAP. 327): L.N. 296 of 2012; Further and Higher Education (Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance) Regulations, 2012.
- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). (2013). why MCAST? A rewarding career. Retrieved September 15 2014, from http://www.mcast.edu.mt/MainMenu/whyMCAST/Arewardingcareer.aspx
- Malta Council for Science and technology (MCST). (2006). National Strategic Plan for Research and Innovation: 2007 - 2010: Building and Sustaining the R&I Enabling Framework. Malta: MCST. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.mcst.gov.mt/files/uploaded/R&Istartegy.pdf

- Malta Enterprise Corporation. (2012). Get Qualified. Retrieved September 17 2014, from http://www.maltaenterprise.com/en/support/get-qualified
- Micallef, R. & Miscat, A. (2014). Kunsill Studenti Universitarji: Social Policy Commission. Retrieved September 16 2014, http://www.ksu.org.mt/representation/social-policy-commission
- Ministry for Education and Employment. (MEDE) (n.d.a). FRAMEWORK FOR THE EDUCATION STRATEGY FOR MALTA 2014-2024: SUSTAINING FOUNDATIONS, CREATING ALTERNATIVES, INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY (capitalized in the source). Malta: Ministry for Education and Employment. (n.d.). Retrieved September 14 2014, from https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents%202014/BOOKLET%20ESM%202014-2024%20ENG%2019-02.pdf
- Ministry for Education and Employment. (n.d.b). Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020: Draft for Public Consultation. Malta: MEDE. Retrieved March 9th 2015, from https://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Malta%20National%20Lifelong%20Learning%20Strategy%202020%20-%20Draft%20for%20Public%20Consultation.pdf
- Ministry of Finance. (2013). Malta National Reform Programme. Malta: Ministry of Finance. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://mfin.gov.mt/en/home/popular_topics/Documents/National%20Reform%20Programme/2013/National%20Reform%20Programme%202013.pdf
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCHFE) (n.d.) Qualifications by Sector - Regular. Malta: NCFHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-register-of-further-and-higher-education-institutions/38928386/
- National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) (2009a). NCHE Annual Report 2008. Malta: NCHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/NCHE%20Annual%20report%202008.pdf
- NCFHE. (2012-2013a). Classification of Registered Institutions. Malta: NCFHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Classification%20of%20Registered%20Institutions%20-%20July%202014.pdf
- NCFHE. (2012-2013b). Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC). Malta: NCFHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-malta-qualifications-recognition-information-centre/52002817/
- NCFHE. (2012-2013c). Validation of Informal and Non-Formal Learning (VINFL). Malta: NCFHE. RetreivedRetrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-validation-of-informal-and-non-formal-learning-vinfl/6291470/
- NCFHE. (2012-2013d). Quality Assurance and Accreditation. Malta: NCFHE. RetreivedRetrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-quality-assurance-and-accreditation/5963821/
- NCFHE. (2012-2013e). About Us: Welcome to NCFHE. Malta: NCFHE. RetreivedRetrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-about-us/1343488/
- NCFHE. (2014). List of Accredited Universities / Institutions. Malta: NCFHE. Retrieved September 12 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-malta-qualifications-recognition-information-centre/52002817/
- NCHE. (2009b). Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020. Malta: NCHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from

http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf
- Pace Kiomall, L. (2013). NCHFE Further and Higher Education Statistics 2012. Malta: NCFHE. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/statistics%20report%20oct%202013.pdf
- Perry, J. (2014). Welcome by the Director. In PROSPECTUS FOR FULL-TIME PROGRAMMES 2014/2015 (capitalized in the source) (p.5). Malta: Institute of Tourism Studies. Retrieved September 15 2014, from http://www.its.edu.mt/images/prospectus/ITS_Fulltime_Prospectus_2014_2015.pdf
- Scholz, C. (2012). Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Malta. National Report Malta. Malta: EUROSTUDENT IV (2008-2011).
- School of Music - Malta. (n.d.) About: Mission Statement. Retrieved September 16 2014, from http://schoolofmusicmalta.skola.edu.mt/?page_id=269
- The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry. (2010a). Collaborating Partners. Retrieved September 17 2014, from http://www.maltachamber.org.mt/content.aspx?id=189732
- The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry. (2010b). The Human Resources Committee. Retrieved September 17 2014, from http://www.maltachamber.org.mt/content.aspx?id=189831
- The Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport. (2014). A Shared Vision for the Future of Young People - Draft National Youth Policy Framework 2015-2020. Malta: The Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport. Retrieved September 14 2014, from https://education.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Policy%20Documents%202014/Draft%20National%20Youth%20Policy%20Framework%202015-2020%20Discussion%20Document.pdf
- The Richard Clarke Academy Malta. (n.d.). Handbook. Unpublished handbook of The Richard Clarke Academy Malta.
- University of Malta. (2011). Office of the Registrar: Selection of Applicants for Admission. Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/faculties/ds/BChD-SelCrit-2005
- University of Malta. (2014a). Mature Students. Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 14, 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/prospective/faqs#Mature Students
- University of Malta. (2014b). Erasmus+. Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 14, 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/int-eu/erasmus
- University of Malta. (2014c). Office of the Registrar: Administrative Information for Students. Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/students
- University of Malta. (2014d). Studying at University. Retrieved September 15 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/about/study
- University of Malta. (n.d.). Welcome to DegreePlus. Malta: University of Malta. Retrieved September 14, 2014, from http://www.um.edu.mt/degplus
- von Brockdorff, P. (2013). Foreword. In NCFHE. NCHFE Further and Higher Education Statistics 2012. Malta: NCFHE (p.)1. Retrieved September 14 2014, from http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/statistics%20report%20oct%202013.pdf

Name	Position	Institution/Organisation

Borg, F.L.	*Head of Operations and Corporative Services*	*Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)*
Bromley, M.	*Director of Studies*	*Nefertiti Beauty Academy*
Cauchi, M.A.	*Head of School*	*Johann Strauss School of Music*
Falzon, R.	*Responsible for education matters*	*Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU)*
Galea, Maria-Elena	*Operations Officer*	*Malta International Training Centre (MITC)*
Micallef, J.M.	*Head of School*	*Malta School of Art*
Midolo, S.	*Head of School & Director*	*Saint Catherine's High School) (SCHS) Higher Education Tuition Centre*
Muscat, F.	*Responsible for education matters*	*Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU)*
Scholz, C.	*Research and Policy Manager*	*National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)*
Spiteri, M.	*Administration Executive*	*STC Training*
Tabone, M	*Client Service Executive*	*BPP Professional Education Malta Ltd.*
Tierney, M.	*Head of Administration*	*Malta Institute of Management*

Montenegro

Country correspondent: Djordje Jovanovic (University of Montenegro)
Summarized by: Andrea Kottmann (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is on the agenda for higher education policies of national authorities in Montenegro. The Ministry of Education and Sport's 2011 "Strategy for Development and Financing of Higher Education in Montenegro 2011-2020" defines objectives and measures to achieve an effective and high quality higher education and research system. The overall target of the strategy is to achieve a system that will stimulate the scientific and economic development of the Montenegrin society providing equal opportunities for all, according to principles of freedom and democracy. The strategy states three objectives related to study success.

Measure 1 refers to the reduction of drop-out rates, and measure 2 to the increase of the number of graduates in the STEM disciplines (APPROPRIATE FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO, Main Report, Jamil Salmi (World bank expert), Prepared for the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, 15 June 2013). The third objective deals with widening participation in higher education. The target is that 40% of the population between 30 and 34 year should have participated in higher education by 2020 and complete a degree.

In the fall of 2014 a new higher education law became effective. This new law foresees higher education institutions to carry out self-evaluations on the quality of study programmes, teaching and working conditions, including completion rates. These reports will be submitted to the Ministry and the Council. Based on the completion rates of individual institutions the Ministry and the Council will obtain data on the completion rate at the national level. Both, national and individual completion rates of institutions will be published on appropriate websites.

In addition to defining the reduction of drop out and the increase of the number of graduates as targets in the national strategy, national authorities and other higher education stakeholders propose a common definition of what study success includes. According to this definition, completion of a degree in a timely manner is study success.
As described above study success indicators like the completion rate, the retention rate and the time to degree are monitored at the institutional level and reported to the national level from 2015 onwards. Data on the indicators is not yet publically available yet.

2. National Policies implemented

The possibilities for funding of higher education in Montenegro has already been analysed in a 2013 World Bank report (Ministry of Education/Jamil Salmi, 2013). That study offers several strategies for financing Higher Education in Montenegro. The first strategy proposes to fund public universities based on the number of students and graduates, and research performance of the academic staff (for example the number of patents, number of articles in journals on SCI list with impact factors). The second strategy proposes that a certain number of vouchers (cash) are provided to students who meet a number of eligibility criteria. Students may choose where they want to enrol (for example at a public or private college). The principle purpose of vouchers—

which can be called education stipend or grant—is to promote greater competition among public and private HEIs by providing public support indirectly through the students rather than directly to the institutions.

Concretely, the voucher system could operate in the following fashion:

- the students and/or their families receive a coupon (voucher) which represents a certain amount of money to be used exclusively for higher education-related expenses;
- the students carry the voucher to the institution in which they enrol, and the institution then redeems the value of the coupon from the government. This allows for portability of funding and increased student choice.

Currently the debate on funding of higher education in Montenegro is still ongoing. As yet, dropout and completion do not play a role in the funding of higher education institutions.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Awards and cash prizes	The Ministry gives cash prizes and awards for students with certain results achieved	Motivate students to pursue and complete their studies, thereby reducing drop-out	Yes by the Ministry.
Information and support for students				
Organisation of higher education	National Strategy of Lifelong Career Orientation	The objective of the Strategy Development is to identify priorities, measures and activities which will provide to citizens (young and adult) high quality services of career orientation to assist them to develop their careers throughout their lives in accordance with their abilities, interests, characteristics and needs of the labour market□.	Establishment of Career Orientation Centres at HEIs	http://www.mpin.gov.me/biblioteka/strategije?
	National Council	Accreditation	Quality	Yes, by Ministry of

	of Higher Education (NCHE)	and Reaccreditation process. Insistence on compliance with the standards recommended by ENQA and adopted by NCHE	Assurance QA Quality Assurance includes monitoring of quality also in terms of monitoring drop-out. Namely higher education institutions are required each year to submit reports to the Ministry and the Council, which include drop out	Education and National Council of Higher Education
	Ministry of Education Montenegro, Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness Project, Review of the Quality Assurance System report 03 June 2013, by Fabrice Henard, Paris- France (financed by World bank).	Increase competition among universities, increase QA, and decrease drop-out	To motivate universities to strengthen QA mechanisms, and with them to decrease drop-out	Implementation of project and new measures are ongoing
	Reports of External Evaluation of Higher Educational Institutions in Montenegro (by EUA – European University Association	These reports provide a comprehensive picture of state of higher education institutions, dealing also with drop-out and its causes	Decrease drop-out	Yes, by the Ministry of Education and National Council of Higher Education

References

- Academy of Arts and Sciences of Montenegro: Development of Montenegro, Chapter Higher Education, 2011, http://www.canuorg.me/cms/
- APPROPRIATE FUNDING MECHANISMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MONTENEGRO, Main Report, Jamil Salmi (World bank expert),Prepared for the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, 15 June 2013.
- http://www.cep.edu.rs/sites/default/files/Izvestaj_o_o_implementaciji_sistema_kvaliteta_na_Univerzitetu_Crne_Gore.pdf

- https://www.google.me/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=strategy%20for%20financing%20higher%20education%202011-2020%20was%20created%20by%20the%20ministry%20of%20education%20and%20sport%20in%202011%2c
- Ministry of Education Montenegro, Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness Project, Review of the Quality Assurance System report 03 June 2013, by Fabrice Henard, Paris- France (financed by World bank).
- Montenegrin Vocational Education Development Strategy 2014.
- National Strategy of Lifelong Career Orientation, http://www.mpin.gov.me/biblioteka/strategije
- Reports of External Evaluation of Higher Educational Institutions in Montenegro (by EUA – European University Association)-2014, http://www.eua.be/iep/who-has-participated/iep-evaluation-reports.aspx
- Strategy for Financing Higher Education 2011-2020 was created by the Ministry of Education and Sport in 2011,
- Tempus DL@WEB Project (Enhancing the quality of distance learning at Western Balkan higher education institutions – DL@WEB 511126-TEMPUS-1-2010-1-RS-TEMPUS-SMGR) co-partner National Council of Higher Education (2011-2013), http://www.dlweb.kg.ac.rs/
- University of Montenegro Lifelong Learning Strategy 2012-2014, http://www.dellco.ac.me/userfiles/LLL%20Strategic%20Document.pdf, http://www.dellco.ac.me/eng/page.php?id=7
- University of Montenegro QA Procedures

The Netherlands

Country correspondents: Leon Cremonini (CHEPS) and Don Westerheijden (CHEPS)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster (CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

According to the evaluation of the national expert stimulating study success is high on the agenda of the responsible authorities. Key policy issues are related to reducing drop out of students in the first year of the study course and increasing the number of students that complete the study course in due time.

Although there is no explicit consensus between different stakeholders, study success appears to be mainly understood as completion of a study programme within a specific time period, which has been a key figure in external quality assurance and in national policy since the late 1980s.

2. National Policies implemented

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(Expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Prestatiebeurs (performance-related grant)	Changing loans into grants if students complete a decree within certain time limits	Increased completion rate; reduced time to degree; more conscious study choices	Student monitor since 2000
	Studievoorschot ("study advance instalment")	Changing student grants into loans	More conscious study choices; graduating on time	Starting September 2015
	Performance-based funding	Between 1998 and 2011 50% of funds for teaching we based on number of degrees conferred. Since 2011 this is about 25%.	Institutions to care for study success and to support and supervise students	Not explicit, though continuous debates
	Performance contracts between the minister of education and individual HEIs	Allocation of 5% of governmental education budget for HEIs rides on promised (and after 2016 probably: realised) improvements in study success and quality of study	Reducing drop-out and 1st year switch, increasing the percentage of students that reach their bachelor's degree with no more than one year delay; higher quality of provision (e.g. through qualified teachers)	The "review committee" that monitors the performance contracts for the minister, reports annually about progress at the national level. Final evaluation of Performance Contracts takes place in 2016.
Informatio	Information	Prospective students	Better match	There is the

n and support for students	and matching procedures	who apply for a study programme before 1 May have the right to have their study choice checked. This means that every study programme needs to offer some sort of check. This can be done using a digital survey, participating in the study for one day (proefstuderen), and / or through an interview with someone from the programme. Every study programme / HEI is allowed to set their own 'matching' activities. Some programmes / institutions have made it mandatory for prospective students to participate in matching activities. Mostly the check is done in an intake-interview.	between study programme and student's interests and capacities, thus improving study success	annual Monitor Beleidsmaatregelen looking at the effects and use of different policies in (higher) education
	Tightening and Extension of BSA (Binding Study Advice) to later years	The BSA is an institutional policy and happens at the end of year 1 (a negative BSA means the student cannot continue). In recent years, use of BSA has expanded to all study programmes, and requirements have been made stricter in order to select only capable students for the second year. In 2013, the ministry allowed HEIs to do it in later years too.	Create an ambitious study culture and improve success rates	The experiment will end in 2019
	Online student choice information provision	Foundation providing independent information on higher education through an	Better match between student and programme to avoid switch	These instruments are updated annually

	(studiekeuze123.nl)	extended national web portal aiming for (prospective) students to make well considered choices for their study career. Studychoice123 is based *inter alia* on the National Student [satisfaction] Survey (NSE) an labour market information. The portal also links to open days and similar orientation events, to online tests of interest in fields, etc. Studiekeuze123 is a joint initiative of the Association of Universities (VSNU). The Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, the Council for Training and Education (NRTO), and student unions ISO and LSVb. It is funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.	and drop out, and to increase satisfaction and study success.	And there is the annual Monitor Beleidsmaatregelen which looks at the effects and use of different policies in (higher) education
	Study in figures	A small fiche gives 6 or 7 key figures on study programmes (enrolment, intensity, satisfaction, completion rates, employment); it is included in flyers, on university websites, etc. This initiative of some UAS is now supported by government and will be extended to all HEIs.	Aims to make students choose their study programmes more efficiently.	None.
	Improved academic support	In exchange for the right to issue negative binding study advice (BSA; see above), HEIs had	To improve the academic counselling and support structures.	None. (Though national student unions report on it at

		to improve the academic counselling and support structures for their students in (especially) the first year of studies.		irregular intervals.)
Organisation of higher education	Increasing implementation of qualifications for teaching staff (BKO, SKO, Educational Leadership)	Improving didactic qualifications for university teachers within HEIs. Started as individual institutional policy (at University Utrecht) over 10 years ago and was seen to be successful. It is now national policy and included in performance contracts as indicators. Changes are gradual, hence it is seen as less controversial than other initiatives	Better teaching quality towards students	Proportions of staff with BKO are part of the performance contracts of research universities (see above), hence progress is monitored annually and will be evaluated in 2016.
	Selection policies	For numerus fixus programmes (less than 10% of programmes), there is a central ballot (*centrale loting voor numerusfixusopleidingen*). This will be stopped and substituted by a decentralized selection mechanisms as of year 2017 giving more freedom to institutions to select students who want to follow limited enrolment programmes. Other studies have been allowed to use decentralized selection due to their special character; it uses the same types of instruments as matching trajectories (see above) but	Increase completion rate; based on school results (weighted chances in ballot; GPA ≥ 8.0 means 100% chance), motivation and applicants' personality traits (in decentralized selection; instruments decided by HEI) (This is a change in the form of selection but there is no intention at national level to increase selection or introduce more selection because it is believed that this will reduce access)	New policy as of 2017.

		these programmes may deny students enrolment.		

References:

- European Commission (2014). Education and Training Monitor 2014; Netherlands.
- Vossensteyn, J.J. and D.F. Westertheijden (2013), *A country report Netherlands*, International Higher Education Monitor, Enschede: CHEPS

Norway

Country correspondent: Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU
Summarized by: Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, Ingvild Reymert & Vibeke Opheim, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is high on the nation HE policy agenda in Norway, and Norway is monitoring student completion and dropout rates through register data, both at national and institutional level.

The Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund (www.lanekassen.no) is in charge of the student support system. Norway can be considered to have a well-developed system that offers universal support (Opheim 2008: 75). As all the other Nordic countries HEIs in Norway are funded through a funding formula coupled with a performance-based mechanism (European Commission/ EACEA/Eurydice 2014:35).

2. National Policies implemented

Norway implemented a comprehensive HE reform in 2003, and with that the reform there were a range of measures that was intended to have a direct effect on student success.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Progression dependent grants	Depending on completed exams part of the loan is transformed to non-repayable grants, annual amount about €4800. There are also other requirements related to this (live out of parents home, earn less than given sum etc.). Students who do not fulfil these requirements only get the student loan.	Get students to complete faster, less study delays	Little visible evidence (Opheim 2008).
	Higher monthly allowance/less income restrictions	Modification of study support system, increase in allowance and less restrictions on income when studying	Less risk of study delays, less need for work as they get higher allowance	No decline in study delays, and increase in student's weekly working hours (Opheim 2011)
	Performance based funding for institutions	Part of the funding is based on number of students that complete their credits. This implies that institutions do not get fully paid for	Increase in completion within time to degree	Moderate, more credits are taken, but the output of candidates have not risen significantly

		teaching students that do not take the exam.		(Aamodt & Hovdhaugen 2011)
Information and support for students	Studie-barometeret	Student satisfaction survey, conducted yearly from 2013 and on. Publication of data at the study programme level, will work as information for prospective students and feed-back to current students and institutions. Interactive website/portal where students can compare programmes (3 at a time).	Creating a feed-back system that show institutions programmes that are doing good and programmes that are doing less good	New instrument, currently little info on impact, but quite a lot of media attention to publication of results and analyses based on the data
	Career centers	Even though not mandatory by law, most institutions have career centres to help students finding a job after degree completion.	Making career opportunities after degree completion visible may spur students to complete.	No evidence.
Organisation of higher education	Closer follow-up of students	One of the intentions of the reform was that students should get closer follow-up though out the studies, through more assignments and replacing lectures with seminars. Using more written assignments was a common way of doing this, and thus the pedagogy was changed (Dysthe 2007)	Closer follow-up would lead to more students completing faster	Students take more credits, but no increase in completion rate (Aamodt & Hovdhaugen 2011)
	More structured programmes	Change in structure of programmes at university, instead of accepting students at a faculty/school and let them combine subjects themselves, univ. now offers	Increase completion rates, speed up student study time and possibly also reduce dropout.	Have had a positive effect on transfer, but no effect on dropout (Hovdhaugen 2011)

		programmes that are set up on the basis of certain subject combinations.		
	Administrative follow up of students	Students that do not produce any credits are contacted and may lose their spot in the programme, due to lack of progress. Followed-up administratively via student registers	Only have active students registered as students	Reduced students numbers at many institutions, dropout seen partly as an administrative problem (Hovdhaugen et al 2013)

References

- Aamodt, P. O. & E. Hovdhaugen (2011) *Frafall og gjennomføring i lavere grads studier før og etter kvalitetsreformen. En sammenlikning mellom begynnerkullene fra 1999, 2003 og 2005.* NIFU Report 38/2011 (Oslo: NIFU).
- Dysthe, O. (2007) How a reform affects writing in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education,* 32(2)**,** 237–252.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Hovdhaugen, E. (2009): Transfer and dropout: different forms of student departure in Norway *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (1), 1-17
- Hovdhaugen, E., N. Frølich & P. O. Aamodt (2013): Informing institutional management: Institutional strategies and student retention. *European Journal of Education,* 48(1), pp. 165-177
- Opheim, V. (2008): *Student Finance in a Welfare State. Effects of Reducing Economic Barriers to Higher Education in Norway*. PhD dissertation, Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Oslo. Oslo: University of Oslo.
- Opheim, V. (2011): Changing the System of Student Support in Norway: Intended and Unintended Effects on Students, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 55(1), 39 — 59

Poland

Country expert/correspondent: prof. Marek Kwiek, Poznan University
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Compared to other policy issues on the higher education agenda study success is of moderate importance. Study success and dropout in Poland need to be viewed in the country's specific post-communist context. Poland' HE system has undergone significant changes since 1990 such as the establishment of a large demand-driven fee-based private sector, massification and universalization of HE in the last two decades with increased focus on teaching and fiscal constraints resulting in under-funding of research (Kwiek 2012). With the expansion of HE, academic requirements have been decreasing. This is especially true for the private sector, where completion of studies has become easier.

Generally in Poland study success is seen as completion of a programme. However, study success is increasingly also being linked to graduate success on the labour market. This is partly driven by the increase in institutions (particularly private), which also increases the number of graduates.

2. National Policies implemented

Poland has some policies directly related to enhancing study success. Students have some financial incentives to complete but for institutions completion or dropout are financially inconsequential (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:34-35). In addition, there are some measures related to information and support, but these are mainly directed at graduates.

Polish policymakers see the highest potential for change in the study programme/labour market needs mismatch in graduate surveys. They are expected to lead to lower students' frustrations, more informed student choice of study areas and hence to lower dropout rates (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(Expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Introduction of state-funded "contracted studies" in the study areas that have too few students (engineering, chemistry, computing, mathematics etc.)	Stipend to students enrolled in specific programmes (selected number of institutions): 50% of top performing students each year receive 1000 PLN (approx. 250 EUR) in stipend per month. Study	Recruit more student in selected areas (where there is a need), and lower dropout rates. Stipends substantially increase the willingness to study, and especially to finish studies in time.	No research evidence, but the number of graduates in the areas selected have increased – may be an indication of success.

		areas may vary from year to year but STEM areas are always included		
	Increased tuition fee for studies beyond 11 semesters in the second degree at public institutions	From Oct. 1, 2013 students who prolong studies beyond 11 semesters (BA+MA+1 extra semester), or take up a second study programme have to pay tuition fee also at public institutions (their first BA/MA in the public sector is free of charge) This is regulated in law (Revised Law on Higher Education, March 18, 2011)	Students are to complete quicker and enter the labour market quicker	Unclear what consequence fees will bring about related to dropout rates and the length of studies. But, in 2014 the practice of fees charged for prolonged studies have been said to be not compatible with the Polish constitution according to the Constitution Tribunal, and will therefore probably be abandoned.
Information and support for students	Career offices	New HE regulations require the strengthening of career office in every institution, including their involvement in institutional-wide graduate surveys.	Better fit between areas of studies and labour market positions, leading to better knowledge of labour market options among students, and this increases motivation to study (and lower dropout rates).	Still in progress, at the moment career offices are increasingly monitored by institutions themselves.
	Graduate surveys	New HE regulations require each institution to start graduate surveys, either at faculty levels or at an individual level. No national	Better fit between the choice of studies and labour market needs, leading to lower frustration and higher motivation of	Still in progress, at the moment graduate surveys are closely monitored by institutions themselves.

		survey is expected although, in the future, institutional-level surveys are expected to be integrated.	students (and hence lower dropout rates).	
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Kwiek, Marek (2012): The Public/Private Dynamics in Polish Higher Education. Demand-Absorbing Private SecotrSector Growth and Its Implications. In Kwiek, M & P. Maassen (eds): *National Higher Education Reforms in a European Context. Comparative reflections on Poland and Norway*. Higher Education Research and Policy (HERP) 2, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang
- Revised Law on Higher Education, March 18, 2011, with further amendments.

Portugal

Country correspondent: Claudia Saricco, University of Lisbon & Maria J. Rosa, University of Aveiro
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Compared to other policy issues on the higher education agenda study success is of moderate importance. Completion and dropout rates are measured systematically but the data is not published and has no impact on institutional financial conditions.

Since the 2008 economic crisis, Portugal has faced significant challenges in increasing efficiency and effectiveness of its HE funding system to provide quality education and graduates in fields that are needed (OECD 2015). Therefore, Portugal's main focus has been on measures to downsize spending and make better use of resources at all levels of education, including higher education (OECD 2015:16).

2. National Policies implemented

Portugal has a moderate number of policies that are directly related to study success. There are no direct policies related to funding of HE, but policies in the areas of information/services and organisation of HE (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	-	-	-	-
Information and support for students	Web-based information site, http://infocursos.mec.pt/	Site developed through government initiative to give more information to HE applicants. States relative performance of each study programme on progression rates, exit classifications, and unemployment rate	Students can make more informed choices	Too early to evaluate effects
Organisation of higher education	Tracking system for students	In 2012/13 a student tracking system was implemented, and therefore drop-out rates have not yet been calculated (European Commission/	-	-

		EACEA/Eurydice 2014)		
	New types of short degrees	Introduction of the new technical short cycle degrees called TESPs (Cursos Técnicos Superiores Profissionais, ISCED level 5). These are two-year specialised HE courses in areas of skills shortage (OECD 2015:9).	Intended to give skills needed in society, create graduates that will complete because there are jobs waiting for them to fill.	Started in 2014/15, no evidence available.

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- OECD (2015), *"Portugal", in Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, Paris: OECD Publishing. Available online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-30-en

Romania

Country correspondent: Luminița Nicolescu, Academy of Economic Studies
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is not a priority in Romania's higher education system, either at national or institutional level. In addition, research on the issue is scant. Completion rates in Romania are not measured directly but they may be deduced from the number of diplomas awarded. Hence, rates of completion and dropout are not systematically measured (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:37-39).

However, in 2013 Romania did develop the Unique Matriculation Register (*Registrul Matricol Unic* - RMU), to monitor and track students' educational pathways. This is an online platform developed at national level that could be used by HEIs, and where HEIs enter the data. However, to date the system is not operational because most universities have not yet entered the data.

2. National Policies implemented

Romania has few policies that are directly linked to study success although quality assurance regulations may contribute to improving study success by requiring new forms of assessment. Furthermore, there are no incentives for students to complete their studies within a limited period of time.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Financial support for students	Scholarships for students, different kinds: merit or performance and social scholarships (to under-privileged groups (Roma/rural).	Supporting mainly performing students to complete studies.	No evidence.
Information and support for students	Counselling of students	Counselling and career orientation services for students was introduced in 2005, and from 2011 is it part of the Education Law. Activities institutions should have are specified, and includes both advice during studies and on labour market options and work	Better counselling can prevent bad choice, which was the most commonly reason for university dropout (Pricopie et al. 2011)	Mandatory counselling offices is relatively new, cannot see results yet.

		placement. All HEIs have set up counselling and career development services/centres, as required by law.		
Organisation of higher education	Continuous assessment	Assessment and grading as a combination of both formative and summative evaluations – a requirement of ARACIS (The Romanian quality assurance agency)	Increased chances for success and completion for students, due to a diversified structure of the final mark: more activities are included in the evaluation, raising the chances of success of students as opposed to just one final exam and grade.	Not specifically monitored

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Methodology for Evaluation and Accreditation, available in Romanian at http://www.aracis.ro/fileadmin/ARACIS/Proceduri/Metodologie_de_evaluare_externa.pdf
- Pricopie R., V. Frunzaru, N. Corbu, L. Ivan & A. Bârgaoanu (2011): Access and equity in higher education in Romania, Editura Comunicare.ro, Bucharest, available at http://www.comunicare.ro/profesori/cv/pricopie_remus/Acces_si_echitate.pdf
- The Romanian National Agency for Quality Assurance (ARACIS), http://www.aracis.ro/

Serbia

Country correspondent: Predrag Lažetić, Centre for Education Policy, Belgrade
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is high on the higher education agenda in Serbia, and is defined as completion of studies within the estimated time to degree. However, this is measured to a limited extent. Attempts have been made to use available statistics but it is not possible to estimate completion and dropout rates with any accuracy. However, a study by Vukasović (2007) states that dropout rates are high and it is common to repeat courses, especially for men and students from less educated families.

2. National Policies implemented

Serbia has policies in all three fields: funding, information/support and organisation of HE. Many of these policies were introduced with the new Law on higher education in 2005, which also was the Serbian adaptation to the Bologna process.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Study grants and loans	Merit based loans/grants, small amount (>100€). Only about 10% received grant	Effect on completion as they promote efficient studies (requirement to be on time in order to continue receiving grant)	No evidence.
	Linking completion of a certain number of ECTS in an academic year with tuition fees	Students in state institutions pay no tuition fees, but if they lag behind they have to start paying tuition fees. Introduced by Law on higher education (2005), but similar system exited before.	These measures do lead to more efficient study efforts at least for state financed students.	No evidence.
Information and support for students	Centers for career guidance	Provide student counselling, with emphasis on skills necessary for work (EHEA 2012).	Promote completion and good study choices.	No evidence.
Organisation of higher education	Continuous assessment	Continuous assessment implies that final grades for a course cannot only depend on the final exams, minimum 30% and maximum 70% of the course grade has to consist of pre-exam activities (Law on higher education 2005)	Shorter average duration of studies, higher completion rates	No evidence yet.
	Shorter courses	Maximum duration of a course is 2 semesters, following introductory semester	Students are assessed more often, complete courses along the way to a degree	No evidence yet.

References

- European Higher Education Area, EHEA (2012): *National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2009-2012. Serbia.* Available online: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/National%20reports/Serbia.pdf
- Law on Higher Education (2005)

- Vukasović, M. (2007): *Higher education and social stratification in Serbia: 1990-2005*. Master thesis. Aveiro: University of Aveiro

Slovakia

Country correspondent: Alexandra Bitusikova, EUA, Brussels
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In Slovakia, the stimulation of study success is very low on the agenda of national authorities. According to the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014: 37), on the national level only the absolute number of students is measured. This includes new entrants and graduates. However, the central Student Register, currently in a testing phase, is expected to provide data on completion rates in the future.

The main interest shown in monitoring of study success and dropout is by the Accreditation Committee and the Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA), which monitor quality of teaching and research at each institution. The main reason why they monitor study success and dropout is efficiency in providing HE, public spending, transparency, accountability and quality assurance.

At present, there is no national approach or strategy to monitor study success and dropout. The problem of HE in Slovakia is a lack of continuity in national strategies since 1989 (and 17 ministers of education). The priorities of the present minister (and several previous ones) is to strengthen the quality of HE with emphasizing research results and innovations. This puts pressure on academics to publish and compete for external research funds, which in turn reduces the priority given to teaching students .

2. National Policies implemented

At the national level, policies that specifically address drop out, completion and time to degree are scarce and target primarily doctoral students. Hence, none of these policies is relevant for this study. However, some policies in the funding area aim directly at incentivizing students to complete earlier. Example include, *inter alia*, the policy requiring students to pay for their second degree or if they do not graduate within the regulated time-to-degree (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2011).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(Expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored
Funding	Tuition fees for part-time students	Introduction of tuition fees for part-time ("external") studies.	The regulation together with increasing quality requirements and demographic decline has led to a slow, but continuous decline in the interest in part-time studies.	Universities keeps records of the number of accepted part-time students
	Tuition fees for each year of	If the student does not finish a	Increased efficiency,	No record

	prolonged studies	Bachelor degree within 3 years, Master within 2 years and full-time PhD within 3 years, s/he has to pay an annual tuition fee which is usually up to 1000 Euro). The same works for students who want to study two study programmes at the same time (they have to pay tuition fee for the second study programme).	students spend shorter time in HE	
Information and support for students	-	-	-	-
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2011): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe 2011: Funding and the Social Dimension. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Slovenia

Country correspondent: Pavel Zgaga, University of Ljubljana
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

In Slovenia, study success is high on the national HE agenda. Traditionally, dropout rates in HE have been high, and according to the European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014) the percentage of students who enrol in HEIs and who fail to graduate is currently at currently 35 %. However, there is a national goal that this should be lowered by two thirds by 2020 (European Commission /EACEA/Eurydice 2014:32). Study success is usually understood as completion of a programme and, to a lesser extent, as completion within a specific time-period, but there is no official definition at the national level.

Therefore, an overall national strategic approach directly addressing study success cannot be identified. Nevertheless, there are ambitions presented in the National Programme for Higher Education (2011 – 2020). The implementation of the programme remains a challenge, mostly because of the political instability and the strained budgetary situation of the last few years. On the other hand, the national qualifications framework has not been formally adopted yet (Act on Slovenian Qualifications Framework is still in the pipeline).

2. National Policies implemented

At the national level, the following policies that specifically address issues related to study success have been identified. They are all in funding (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Regulation on public funding of higher education institutions (2011), article 9. Performance Indicator (implemented first time in 2002)	Funds to HE is calculated through a clearly defined formula based on a combination of input and output indicators added to a share of the previous year lump sum, to prevent too great fluctuations. Hence, this is a form of performance based funding, coupled with a funding formula (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014:35,	Encourage institutions to increase effectiveness / study success	No systematic study, but statistical data indicate some improvement. However, changes may also be due to other factors

		Vukasović et al 2009).		
	National Programme for HE (2011), measure 14	Establishing a system to monitor efficiency in the use of public funds in HE, through monitoring achieved results and effects at national level and at the level of higher education institution	To have a uniform methodology for monitoring of results and effects	No evidence, but collecting data creates awareness
	Tuition fee if students exceed regular length of study (National Programme for HE 2011: measure 39, European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2014)	Students that are delayed or that for other reasons exceed the estimated time to degree have to pay tuition fees, while students who are not delayed pays no fees. Hence, the first and second cycle is funded the first time an individual completes it.	Intended to make students complete on time	Not implemented - No evidence available.
Information and support for students	-	-	-	-
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014. Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- National programme for Higher Education (2011)
- Vukasović M. (Ed.) M. Babin, V. Ivošević, P. Lažetić, K. Miklavič (2009): *Financing Higher Education in South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia*. Belgrade: Centre for Education Policy

Spain - Catalonia

Country correspondent: Alicia Betts and Josep M. Vilalta (both Associació Catalana d'Universitats Públiques - ACUP)
Summarized by: Renze Kolster and Andrea Kottmann (both CHEPS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

The answers provided by the expert were focussing mostly on Spain and in some cases and specific information was provided on Catalonia (always indicated if different than the overall Spanish context). According to the Spanish expert study success has currently moderate relevance on the higher education policy agenda of national authorities in Spain in general and in Catalonia in particular. While there have been numerous policy reforms that might have had indirect effects on study success and drop-out rates, the these reforms were not meant to directly improve success or reduce drop-out rates (see examples in section 3).

Different terms refer to study success. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*), the Spanish Rectors' Conference (*Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas* – CRUE) and the Catalan (*Association of Public Universities (Associació Catalana d'Universitats Públiques* – ACUP) use:

- Success rate (*tasa de éxito*): ratio between academic credits passed/academic credits evaluated;
- Performance rate (*tasa de rendimiento*): ratio between academic credits passed / academic credits registered;
- Study success: the ratio of the number of students that graduate in a specific study programme in a normal graduation period related to the number of students that registered for that specific programme in a given year. With this definition they refer to study success as completion of a study programme in time.

The Ministry adds data on a few other relevant terms:

- Evaluation rate: ratio between number of credits evaluated and number of credits registered;
- Drop-out rate: percentage of students from a new cohort who are not registered in the two subsequent academic years.
- Change of study rate: percentage of students of a new cohort that register in other study programmes in the two subsequent academic years.

The quality assurance agencies *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y la Acreditación* (ANECA – for Spain) and *Agència per la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya* (AQU – regional agency for Catalonia) use a number of indicators to assess study success. ANECA uses: (1) graduation rate, (2) drop-out rate, (3) graduation efficiency rate (differentiating between full-time and part-time students), (4) course performance rate, and (5) average duration of the full-time and part-time students. AQU uses: (1) graduation rate (ratio between the number of graduates in a normal timeframe or in a normal timeframe plus one year and the number of students per cohort) and (2) drop-out rate (percentage between the number of students that abandon the studies in relation to the total number of students of a given cohort).

In general, there has been little research and analysis on drop-out and success rates in Spain and in Catalonia, and none that go in any depth and link the policy reforms of the last years to study success. The lack of research in this area is perhaps indicative of the lack of attention to the issue of study success. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no links between the policy areas and students' study success in higher education. Rather, it simply seems to indicate that study success has not been a top priority for the higher education policy sector, which has been more focused on the reforms to implement the Bologna Process, ensuring quality and internationalisation initiatives for the sector (See section 3 for specific policies).

2. National Policies implemented

Experts state that no national policies specifically addressing drop-out and completion have been implemented in Spain. However, some policies that might have an effect have been implemented. Thus far little to no research linking the policies to effects on these rates has been conducted. Hence, one cannot state with certainty whether such policies have indeed had an impact

A (non-exhaustive) list of policies implemented over the last 10 years includes:

- The LOMLOU (2007): considered to be a response to the Bologna process. The LOMLOU provides universities with the freedom to design and plan their study programmes (which previously were designed at national level) and arranges an ex-ante inspection of new programmes;
- The Royal Decree 1393/2007 modified by Royal Decree 861/2010: deepens the definition and expression of university autonomy asking for higher education institutions to create and propose, in accordance with the established legislation, the programmes and certificates offered. A series of measures are adopted that make the organization of training and education more flexible and allow universities to take advantage of their innovation capacity. Furthermore accreditation rules for study plans are defined;
- *Estrategia Universidad 2015* (launched in 2010). This initiative was a response to the Bologna Process and Lisbon Strategy as well as a direct response to the EC's Modernisation Agenda and the European Council resolution on 'the modernisation of universities with a long-term vision for the development of Europe as a world-class competitive knowledge economy and society'. The *Estrategia Universidad 2015* had the objective to improve university education and research so they respond to social needs and demands and are internationally competitive. The Strategy included the goal to have some of the best Spanish universities ranked among the top 100 in Europe. This was to be achieved by increasing university funding, augmenting institutional autonomy and securing quality mechanisms to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the whole university system in Spain. Unfortunately, few of the activities were implemented, are did not have the outcomes expected mainly due to lack of sufficient and continuous funding. The change of government brought the University Strategy 2015 initiative to a standstill with new policies and ideas.
- The Royal Decree 99/2011 regulates Doctoral studies.
- The Royal Decree 14/2012 on urgent measures for the rationalization of public expenditure in funding, modifies Organic Law 06/2001. It reforms the regulations pertaining to university tuition rates (increase), the involvement of teachers as measured in ECTS, and the financial management of universities (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2012). There was a debate about the validity of this

decree, as it impacts the fundamental autonomy rights of universities with regard to the organisation of teaching and human resources (as laid out in LOU), and affects the rights of students. Nevertheless the decree is being implemented.

- The LOMCE (2013) intended to improve the quality of the overall education system, not only universities, including decreasing school drop-out rates and improving pathways for all students to achieve their potential. This law also includes measures aiming at improving the quality of the programmes and links with the labour market, as well as a decrease in funding for student mobility. Student scholarships also change with this law, now prioritising students with the highest grades from low income family, potentially leaving out students from low income families that do not perform at top level.
- The Royal Decree 412/2014 by which the admission to official bachelor degrees is regulated. This decree strengthens the access links from professional training to university degrees.

Universities evaluated on the graduation rate

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Performance based funding	Performance base funding in Spain include completion and drop-out rates	Incentives for universities to introduce measures for low drop-out rates	By each Autonomous Community
Funding	Quality Universities are evaluated on the graduation rate	Universities have to regularly submit data on the employment of their graduates (the graduate employment rate one year after graduation; the graduate employment rate five years after graduation; and the percentage of graduates who five years after graduation achieve a higher level of income than the	How this information affects the universities' funding depends on the Autonomous Communities.	i.e. AQU Catalunya and other regional quality agencies

		population with secondary studies) .		
Funding	financial incentives for students to complete within a limited period of time	Students in **Spain** pay 15 % of the actual costs of credits when registering in a subject for the first time, 50 % the second time and 100 % as of the third time.	Incentive students to pass credits on time.	Yes, by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports.
Funding	Financial support to students from low income families	Financial support to students from low income families, these students must perform at top level to receive the full grant.	Top performance.	Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport.

References

- Gairín, J. et al. (2010). L'abandonament dels estudiants a les Universitats Catalanes, Informe AQU, 2010.
- Rue, J. (2014) El abandono universitario: variables, marcos de referencia y políticas de calidad. Revista de docencia universitaria. Vol. 12 (2), August 2014, pp.281-306.
- Santiago, P., Brunner, J.J., Haug, G. & di Pietrogiacomo, P. (2009). OECD Reviews of Tertiary Education; Spain.

Sweden

Country correspondent: Carina Carlhed, Uppsala University
Summarized by: Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is high on the nation HE policy agenda in Sweden, and student completion rates are measured and analysed systematically (see *Universitetskanslerämbetet*/SHEA[16] 2013, European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014). Completion is also the commonly used definition of study success. Dropout rates on the other hand are not systematically measured, but this may be linked to the fact that not all students in Sweden "decide to take out their degree diploma", which complicates measurement of dropout and completion (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:37).
Sweden has an extensive student support system, and *Centrala Studiestödsnämnden* (CSN) is the Swedish government authority in charge of financial aid for studies at secondary and post-secondary level (see http://www.csn.se). As all the other Nordic countries, HEIs in Sweden are funded through a funding formula coupled with a performance-based mechanism (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:35).

2. National Policies implemented

Sweden has implemented some policies related to funding, information and student support and organisation of HE during the last years (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Strengthened requirements for progression, amendment to Law of Study Grants, 2010 (§§ 6 & 7)	If the student has studied in HE earlier, at least 75 % of the study commitment has to be completed in order to be eligible for more grants and loans. This is just a tightening of requirements; students were also before required to complete in order to get continued support.	Make students complete the studies they start, goal to enhance study progression	No obvious effect on study progression
Information and support for students	Follow up of inactive student (U2012/7213/UH & U2013/7791/UH)	The government has instructed SHEA to develop a method to monitor inactive student in HEIs.	Monitoring study progression more closely, enhance study progression	Too early to say, system still under development

[16] SHEA= Swedish Higher Education Authority, Universitetskanslerämbetet in Swedish.

Organisation of higher education	Aptitude test for teachers/pre-school teachers (prop. 2013/14:1)	In 2014, an aptitude test for students applying to pre-school teacher and teacher programmes is introduced, as a test programme in some HEIs.	Minimize late dropout	Too early to say
	Reforming teacher education (prop. 2009/10:89)	Reform of teacher education, to give the programme a more clear structure.	Reduce dropout, and enhance completion among men as well as women	No evidence

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Universitetskanslerämbetet (2013): *Social bakgrund och genomströmning i högskolan. En studie av långa och medellånga yrkesexamensprogram*. Rapport 2013:4. Stockholm: Universitetskanslerämbetet. Available online: http://www.uka.se/download/18.197eccc1140ee238b5810ee/1403093618688/Social-bakgrund-och-genomstromning-rapport-1304.pdf

Switzerland

Country correspondent: Benedetto Lepori, Università della Svizzera italiana
Summarized by: Martin Unger (IHS)

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Study success is generally understood in Switzerland as completion of a study programme within a specific time period.
According to the national HEDOCE expert, compared to other issues in higher education policy, the stimulation of study success is ranked average on the agenda of the responsible national authorities. One of the reasons is the strong federalisation of the country, hence the absence of any relevant national policy on study success. However, , study success and dropout is an issue on the institutional level but not at the political level. The new higher education act does e.g. not contain the goal of reduction of dropouts.

Drop-out is not seen as a system problem. Drop-out rates have remained moderate and stable over time and they seem to be considered as a physiological issue since some selectivity is considered a positive aspect of the HE system. Moreover, most drop-out occurs in the first two semesters and, therefore, it is less of a problem in terms of resources. This explains why attention at the political and institutional level is very limited and there are no explicit policies to reduce dropouts. Generally, it is considered that drop-outs are not necessarily negative and individuals not finishing the HE study can have reasonable perspectives on the labour market as well; alternative training opportunities at the tertiary level are also offered by professional diplomas.
This issue is perceived as a problem more by student support services within HEIs and student associations , it but receives limited attention at the political level, as well by the HEI management.

2. National Policies implemented

There are hardly any national policies implemented in the area, as this delegated to the HEIs themselves.

Funding:
Only for Universities of Applied Sciences funding per students is calculated on the basis of the awarded credits and thus drop-outs leads to financial losses.

Information and support for students:
Most higher education institutions have fairly well developed student support services. They take care of their problems and of critical situations and advise them. Student support services are usually well aware of the issue of dropout and the need to limit it.

Organisation of Higher Education:
On the national level, the only policy considered to have a moderate relevance towards study success is represented by efforts to facilitate a better combination of working and studying. However, there is no specific policy implemented to improve study success (also due to the federal organisation of the system). The implementation of the Bologna structure has been monitored to assess its effect on drop-out rates but no significant correlations were found.

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	UAS: Funding per student	Only for Universities of Applied Sciences funding per students is calculated on the basis of the awarded credits and thus drop-outs leads to financial losses.		
Information and support for students				
Organisation of higher education	Combining study and work	On national level, the only policy considered to have a moderate relevance towards study success is efforts to facilitate a better combination of working and studying. This is mostly developed in Universities of Applied Sciences, which offer the possibility of part-time study.		

References:

- Bundesamt für Statistik (Hrsg.) in Zusammenarbeit mit NFP 33: Die Wirksamkeit unserer Bildungssysteme. Neuchâtel: BFS, 1999.
- Bundesamt für Statistik, Bologna-Barometer 2012, Neuchâtel 2012.
- Bundesamt für Statistik, Erfolgs- und Abbruchquoten an den Fachhochschulen, Neuchâtel 2005
- DIEM M., MEYER T., Studienabbruch aus der Sicht der Studierenden, Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativbefragung der Studierenden der Schweizer Hochschulen, Neuchâtel, BFS, NFP33, 1999.

- GALLEY F., Abandons des études de 1re année à l'EPFL, volée 2001–2002, Lausanne.
- Lepori, B. & Fumasoli (2010). Reforms in Governance and Funding of Swiss Higher Education. Report for the EU Governance and Funding project. .
- Lepori, B. & Fumasoli (2010). Reforms in Governance and Funding of Swiss Higher Education. Report for the EU Governance and Funding project. .
- Lepori, B., Huisman, J. & Seeber, M. (2013). Convergence and Differentiation Processes in Swiss Higher Education: an empirical analysis. Studies in Higher Education, .
- Lepori, B., Huisman, J. & Seeber, M. (2013). Convergence and Differentiation Processes in Swiss Higher Education: an empirical analysis. Studies in Higher Education, .
- Meyer Thomas, Diem Markus, Droz Rémy, Galley Françoise, Kiener Urs, Hochschule – Studium – Studienabbruch: Synthesebericht zum Forschungsprojekt Studienabbruch an schweizerischen Hochschulen als Spiegel von Funktionslogiken, Chur/Zürich, Verlag Rüegger AG, 1999.
- OECD (2003). Tertiary Education in Switzerland Paris: .
- Swiss Rector's Conference, Bologna Monitoring 2014, Bern.
- Wolter S., Diem A., Messer D., Studienabbrüche an Schweizerische Universitäten, SKBF Staff paper, 2013.

Turkey

Country correspondent: Fatma Misikaci, Ankara University
Summarized by: Sabine Wollscheid & Elisabeth Hovdhaugen, NIFU

1. Importance of study success on the national agenda for higher education policy/Study success orientation

Turkey is one of the countries where study success is not on the Higher Education policy agenda since other topics are seen as more important. As Turkey has a comparatively young population and with increasing demand for HE, improving access to HE and equity between (urban/rural) regions are deemed more important policy issues. However, a recent OECD report states that in addition to focussing on these issues Turkey should also improve completion in HE and secure adequate funding for the whole education system (OECD 2015:4). Yet, Turkey only monitors completion rates at the end of the first and the second cycle (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2014:37).

2. National Policies implemented

There are limited policies regarding student success in place in Turkey. However, Turkish HE policy focuses on increasing participation rates (gross enrolment rate in HE). Thus, study success and dropout are usually ignored at the national level.
However, Turkey does have some funding policies funding that could impact dropout and completion (see table).

Policy area	Name of policy	Description of policy	(expected) effects of policy	Policy monitored?
Funding	Abolition of tuition fees	Tuition fees are no longer charged in public universities in 2013	Lower dropout rates and higher participation in HE	No evidence
	Tuition fee if students exceed regular length of study (European Commission/EACEA/ Eurydice 2014)	Students that are delayed or that for other reasons exceed the estimated time to degree have to pay tuition fees, while students who are not delayed pay no fees.	Intended to make students complete on time	No evidence available.
Information and support for students	-	-	-	-
Organisation of higher education	-	-	-	-

References

- European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2014): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access Retention and Employability 2014. Eurydice report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- OECD (2015), "Turkey", in *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, Paris: OECD Publishing. Available online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264225442-32-en

HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
  via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
  from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
  from the delegations in non-EU countries (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
  by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm) or
  calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (free phone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu).

Catalogue number
NC-04-15-781-EN-N



doi: 10.2766/263798
ISBN: 978-92-79-52354-0