

## **NATIONAL REPORT for SWEDEN 2005-2007**

### **BOLOGNA PROCESS TEMPLATE FOR NATIONAL REPORTS: 2005-2007**

- A. Background information on the Higher Education system
- B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements
- C. Current issues in Higher Education.

Elements that will inform the scorecard element of stocktaking are clearly indicated in the template.

Information for the stocktaking, including the scorecard element, will also be drawn from the Eurydice survey "Focus on the Structure of Higher Education in Europe". These elements are also indicated in the template.

#### **A. Background information on your Higher Education system**

##### **Details**

Country	Sweden
Date	December 14, 2006
BFUG member (one name only) Position	Annika Pontén, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education and Research <sup>1</sup>
Email address	<a href="mailto:annika.ponten@educult.ministry.se">annika.ponten@educult.ministry.se</a>
Contributors to the report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- different departments within the Ministry of Education and Research</li><li>- the National Agency for Higher Education</li><li>- the International Programme Office for Education and Training</li><li>- the Association of Swedish Higher Education (the rectors' conference)</li><li>- the Swedish Association of University Teachers</li><li>- the Swedish National Union of Students</li></ul> (no comments received)

#### **Main achievements since Bergen**

1. Describe the important developments relating to the Bologna Process, including legislative reforms, since Bergen.

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry has changed name several times the last years, but in this report it will be referred to as the Ministry for Education and Research or the Ministry.

In June 2005 the former Swedish Government presented proposals in order to reform the Swedish higher education system along the lines of the Bologna Process (Government bill 2004/05:162, New world – new university). The bill was adopted by the Parliament in February 2006. Changes in the Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance have been decided and issued according to the decision in Parliament.

The reform mainly concerns a new structure for educational programmes, courses and degrees. The reform covers the whole system for higher education and will come into effect starting July 1 2007.

These are some of the main characteristics of the reform:

- Higher education degrees and courses will be divided into three cycles.
- All degree descriptions have been reviewed and the degrees have been placed at either first, second or third level<sup>2</sup>. The new degree descriptions are based on the expected learning outcomes of the student and related to the Qualifications Framework of the Bologna Process. The higher education institutions (HEIs) should also specify the learning outcomes at the conclusion of each course.
- A new two-year Master's Degree will be introduced within the second cycle.
- The credit system has been reformed and the new system will be in line with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- Diploma Supplement will be introduced also for the third cycle.

There are no indications of changes in the reform because of the new Government that came into power in October 2006.

## National organisation

2. Describe any changes since Bergen in the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education, the main agencies/bodies in higher education and their roles.

Please include:

- whether higher education institutions (HEIs) report to /are overseen by different ministries
- how funds are allocated to HEIs
- areas for which HEIs are autonomous and self governing.

There have been no major changes in the structure of public authorities within higher education since Bergen. A new public agency within higher education has been created: the Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education. The agency has three main tasks: to widen recruitment to higher education, to stimulate pedagogical development (including in relation to the new degree and course structure) and to continue developing ICT-based distance learning in relation to the Swedish Net University. These tasks have been transferred to the new agency from other agencies or bodies.

<sup>2</sup> All degrees except the Teacher Degree have been placed at a particular level within the new structure. The placement of the Teacher Degree is still being considered.

All HE institutions and the Ministry engage in a dialogue on their annual budget allocation. The annual budget is decided by Parliament following a proposal from the Government. The criteria, the same for all HEI, are enrolment data and calculated in terms of full time equivalents (FTE) and study achievements (calculated in terms of annual performance equivalents for the students) include performance-related indicators (number of students finishing their studies) and there is a ceiling sum (maximum funding) which constitutes the highest aggregate compensation for FTE students and annual performance equivalents permitted for the fiscal year. The funds per capita vary according to which educational area the HEI in question offers. The HEI itself decides on the distribution of funds among faculties and other units and whether the Government subject classification should be used locally.

Research and doctoral education is funded by way of special grants from the national budget to the HEI. The resources are distributed in lump sums to maximum four areas of research (depending on the competence of the institution) – humanities/social science, medicine, natural science and technology. A special grant for artistic development work is allocated to the university colleges of art and other HEIs with art faculties.

With the exception of the private institutions, universities and university colleges in Sweden are formally Government agencies under the jurisdiction of the Government and Riksdag and are subject to the same general body of regulations as apply to other Government authorities and agencies, but with a complementary set of sector-specific laws and regulations designed, among other things, to safeguard academic freedom. Decision-making in HE is decentralised with a relatively high degree of powers and responsibilities delegated to the HEIs. The institutions are required to report back to the Government in various ways. All state HE institutions but one report to the Ministry of Education and Research. The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences reports to the Ministry of Agriculture.

### 3. Describe any changes since Bergen to the institutional structure.

Please include:

- the number of public/private HEIs
- are there different types of institutions delivering higher education (i.e. academic/professional, university/non-university etc.)
- the number/percentage of students admitted in academic session 2006-2007 to each type of institution
- the extent to which different types institutions are covered by the same regulations.

In Sweden higher education is provided at universities (*universitet*) and university colleges (*högskolor*). Sweden has a unitary system for higher education and both universities and university colleges follow the same regulations. In terms of level, education corresponding to the first and second cycle is equivalent at university colleges and universities. Both offer general academic degrees, professional degrees and/or degrees in the arts. What differentiates the two types of institutions is mainly that universities cover more fields and faculties and that they provide doctoral education within one or more areas of science. Five university colleges have been

assigned a specific area of science in which they provide doctoral programmes.

The main part (about 95 per cent) of higher education and research is carried out at the 14 state universities and 22 state university colleges. In addition to the state institutions, there are 13 private institutions, partly funded by the state, of which 10 are very small. The other three have been given the right to provide doctoral education. During the last years the question of enhanced cooperation between institutions – and sometimes possible mergers of institutions – have been increasingly discussed.

The institutions of higher education presently have more than 350 000 registered students and approximately 62 000 individuals employed. About half of the employees are academic staff. Since the Swedish system is unitary the question about admission to different types of institutions is not relevant.

There have been no large changes in the institutional structure since Bergen, but the question of appointment to the boards of the institutions is presently under discussion.

## Partnership

4. Describe the structure which oversees the implementation of the Bologna Process in your country.

Please include:

- the membership and role of any national Bologna group (for example policy committee, promoters' group)
- the membership and role of students, staff trade unions, business and social partners in any national Bologna Group.

The Minister of Education is responsible for the Bologna Process. Implementation of the Bologna Process is an open process built on dialogue between the actors in higher education. Different public authorities and agencies/bodies have hosted conferences, seminars, hearings and meetings to inform and discuss relevant issues related to the Bologna Process. Individual institutions, that have their own internal organisation of Bologna implementation groups etc, carry out the realisation of elements of the Bologna process in the Swedish higher education system.

In 2000 an informal Bologna coordination group was set up. The group now consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Agency for Higher Education, the International Programme Office for Education and Training, the Association of Swedish Higher Education (the Swedish rectors' conference), the Swedish Association of University Teachers (staff trade union) and the Swedish National Union of Students. The group meets at regular intervals to exchange information and discuss Bologna-related issues.

On the initiative of the European Commission, the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science delegated to the International Programme Office for Education and Training the task of putting together a National Team of Bologna Promoters. The

members of the National Team were nominated by the actors in higher education, including the national student union. The group is functioning well and has been enlarged to be able to meet the demand from institutions and students. The group has the assignment of supporting higher education institutions in Bologna related matters. The Team has organised a number of seminars on different Bologna themes and has carried out numerous individual counselling visits to HEIs across the country.

Before, during and after the work on the Government bill related to the implementation of the Bologna three cycle structure all relevant actors such as students, institutions, labour market actors and social partners, have been continuously consulted through formal and informal contacts and included in various working groups.

5. Describe the arrangements for involving students and staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

Please include:

- precise references (preferably with web links) to any legislation (or equivalent) in place to ensure students and staff are represented on HEI governing bodies
- the role of students in the governance of HEIs
- the role of staff trade union/representative bodies in the governance of HEIs.

*Higher Education Act (chapter 1, 2 and 4)*

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/21540;jsessionid=aJ8jEutnhNCf>

According to the Higher Education Act the students have a right to exercise influence over the education at the HEIs. The HEIs should promote students taking active part in the work of developing the education. The quality assurance work is a common concern for the staff and students at the institutions. The students and teachers have a right to be represented as full voting members at the board of the institution, the faculty, the department and other decision-making bodies. Representatives of the staff trade unions have a right to be present and speak at the board meetings. The members of the faculty board are to be elected by academically competent (defined in the Higher Education Ordinance) teachers within the faculty.

Student course evaluations are compulsory in all higher education institutions by law, as well as follow-up of such evaluations. All students are by law obliged to membership in a student union. The purpose is, among other things, to ensure strong student influence.

*Higher Education Ordinance (chapter 1, 2 and 3)*

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/574/a/21541;jsessionid=aJ8jEutnhNCf>

In the HE Ordinance student and staff participation is regulated further. According to the Higher Education Ordinance the local student union has the right to deliver a statement on the results and development of the institution in relation to the annual financial report. If they do so the HEI has to deliver the statement to the Government. The students have a right to be represented within all decision-making and advisory bodies that are of importance for the education and the situation of the

students. Students have a right to be represented by 3 delegates on the board of the institution (chair, rector + maximum of 13 others). This is the same as for the teacher representatives. Teachers have a right to be represented by 3 delegates on the board of the institution. Students have a right to be represented by at least 3 delegates on the faculty board. The election of student representatives are organised by the local student unions.

The student representatives are entitled to financial remuneration for participation in state boards and committees (incl. institutional level).

*Other forms of participation*

There is no legislation to ensure student or teacher representation in higher education governance at the national level in relation to the Ministry. There are however regular contacts between the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Students' Union and the staff trade unions through formal or informal meetings, including in commissions and working groups. Basically all proposals concerning higher education are referred to the National Students' Union and staff trade unions for consultation (they consult the local unions). Student representatives sometimes take part in the annual budget dialogue between the institutions and the Ministry. At the national level the student and staff representatives are participating in the informal Bologna coordination Group. Students are also represented in the National Team of Bologna Promoters and at the Board of the National Agency for Higher Education.

6. Describe the measures in place to ensure the co-operation of business and social partners within the Bologna Process.

Before, during and after the work on the Government bill related to the implementation of the Bologna three cycle structure all relevant actors such as students, institutions, labour market actors and social partners, have been continuously consulted through formal and informal contacts and included in various working groups. At least four different proposals have been referred to these groups during the different stages of elaboration and introduction of the three cycle system. Collaborations at various degrees with business and social partners also take place at the institutional level.

## **B. Main stocktaking questions, including scorecard elements**

### **Degree system**

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

7. Describe the progress made towards introducing the first and second cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of the total number of students below doctoral level

enrolled in the two cycle degree system in 2006/07.

The reform (a result of the Government bill 2004/05:162, New world – new university) covers the whole system for higher education and will come into force July 1 2007. This means that all students within higher education will be enrolled in the three cycle degree system on July 1 2007. However, the placement of the Teacher degree within the new structure is still under consideration and it is not clear whether teacher education will be part of the new degree structure from the start.

The professional degrees that are more than three years of length have not been split into bachelor and master degrees, but they are nevertheless part of the reform. All educational programmes consist of courses that have been placed at either first, second or third level and the professional degrees have been placed at either first or second level depending on the expected learning outcomes of the students and the length of the studies.

( Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of the third cycle

8. Describe the progress made towards implementing doctoral studies as the third Bologna cycle.

Please include:

- the percentage of 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle students following structured doctoral programmes
- the normal length of full-time doctoral studies
- the elements that are included in doctoral study programmes, e.g. do they include taught courses or independent research only
- the supervisory and assessment procedures for doctoral studies
- are doctoral studies included in your country's qualifications framework and are they linked to learning outcomes
- are interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills integrated in doctoral studies
- are credit points used in measuring workload in doctoral studies?

On July 1st, 2007, a new structure for programmes and qualifications will come into force. All three cycles of the Bologna Process will be introduced.

To be a doctoral candidate in Sweden, one must be admitted to a doctoral study programme. Even though the structure and organisation of doctoral studies vary among departments, disciplines, and institutions there is a shared legal framework. The ultimate responsibility for doctoral education lies with the relevant faculty board, but a great deal of the responsibility is frequently delegated to individual departments.

The Licentiate degree and Doctorate degree will be placed at the third level in the new system and will require the same workload as in the present system. However, it will be possible to include credits acquired in the second master year in certain courses.

Doctoral studies can either be concluded with a Doctorate degree (Doktorsexamen) corresponding to four years of full-time study or a Licentiate degree (Licentiatexamen) corresponding to two years of full-time studies. For a Doctorate degree the thesis work must be equivalent to at least two years of full-time study, while a thesis corresponding to at least one year of full-time study is required for a Licentiate degree. For a Doctorate degree the average net study period is 4.5 years.

Doctoral studies in Sweden include taught courses. The scope of these courses varies from subject to subject, but they are often worth credits corresponding to one or one and a half years of full-time study and in any event no more than two years.

To be awarded a Doctorate degree, students must pass the courses that are included in the doctoral programme. The defence of the dissertation is oral and public and in front of an opponent and an examination board consisting of three or five members. The faculty board will decide the number of members and name them. At least one of the five should come from another of the faculty boards or from another university.

All doctoral candidates are assigned one or more supervisors who will give help and support during their studies. After July 1st 2007 every doctoral candidate is assigned at least two supervisors, of whom at least one must have received training in supervision or be considered to have corresponding qualifications. According to the Higher Education Ordinance, doctoral candidates are entitled to change supervisors if they request it. Everyone admitted to a doctoral programme must have an individual curriculum agreed with his or her supervisor and approved by the faculty board. This document will make clear what the rights, duties and expectations are between faculty, supervisor and doctoral candidate. It is common that doctoral candidates teach during their doctoral studies and qualify for teaching posts also through conducting pedagogical studies.

From July 1st 2007 the Licentiate degree and the Doctorate degree will be described in the Higher Education Ordinance using learning outcomes and be part of the national qualifications system for higher education. These will specify the requirements for the award of a degree. Transferable skills as autonomy, communication and problem solving are integrated in the doctoral studies.

In Sweden a number of interdisciplinary graduate schools at doctoral level are run in co-operation between several departments or disciplinary areas. The higher education institutions themselves have established most of them and various research foundations also have initiated graduate schools. In addition, the Government has initiated and developed interdisciplinary graduate schools.

Access<sup>3</sup> to the next cycle

9. Describe the arrangements for access between the first and second cycles and second and third cycles.

Please include:

- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the second cycle
- if appropriate, the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- the percentage of first cycle qualifications that give access to both the second and third cycles
- the percentage of second cycle qualifications that give access to the third cycle
- specify any first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle
- specify any second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.
- specify any examples where bridging courses are necessary to transfer between cycles in the same subject area
- any measures planned to remove obstacles between cycles.

Starting 1 July 2007 all Swedish higher education degrees, programmes and courses will be placed at either first, second or third level.

Access to the second cycle:

a, General academic degrees and degrees in the arts:

A person who has a first level degree comprising at least three years of full-time study, or an equivalent foreign degree, meets the basic eligibility requirement for a programme leading to a second level degree. In addition to the basic eligibility requirements the higher education institutions can also apply special eligibility requirements. Individuals who through Swedish or foreign education, practical experience or for some other reason are capable of profiting from second level education should also meet basic as well as special eligibility criteria.

b, Professional academic degrees:

The professional academic degrees have been placed at either first or second cycle (except for the Teacher degree) depending on the duration of the studies and the amount of specialisation required to obtain a degree. Long educational programmes (four years or more) leading to professional degrees (generally leading to regulated professions) have not, however, been split in two parts. This means that students in these long programmes do not have to apply again after the first cycle once admitted to the programme.

<sup>3</sup> Access as defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Access: the right of qualified candidates to apply and be considered for admission to higher education.

There are, however, also several programmes at the second level leading to professional degrees and that do build on first level professional degrees of a duration of less than four years.

Access to the third cycle:

Studies at second level are necessary in order to be eligible to the third cycle. The basic eligibility requirement for third level study is met by anyone who

- has taken a second level degree or
- has completed course requirements for at least four years of full-time study, including at least one year at the second level, or
- has acquired the equivalent knowledge in some other way in Sweden or abroad.

In addition to the basic eligibility requirements the higher education institutions can also apply special eligibility requirements.

There are no major transitional problems concerning access between cycles foreseen (since compensatory measures required for students coming from another study field are not counted as major transitional problems). There are no first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle. There are no second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle.

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

#### Implementation of national qualifications framework

10. Describe the stage of implementation of the national qualifications framework to align with the overarching Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA<sup>4</sup>.

Please include:

- the stage of development of your national qualifications framework (for example: has your national QF been included in legislation or agreed between all relevant stakeholders; has a working group been established; have national outcomes-based descriptors of the main types of qualifications been prepared; has a timetable for implementation been agreed?)
- the extent to which your national qualifications framework is in line with the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA
- the role of stakeholders in the development of your national qualifications framework.

In the Government bill New world – new university (prop. 2004/05:162) the Government announced that a national qualifications framework for higher education would be established. The Government also proposed a three-cycle system, which the Parliament later approved. The cycles are described in the Higher

<sup>4</sup> A Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA: <http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/>

Education Act in terms of what should characterise education in each of the cycles. These descriptions have been inspired by the Dublin descriptors.

Since the bill was approved, the remaining essential parts of a framework have been developed in the Higher Education Ordinance. This includes descriptions with learning outcomes of six general degrees, four degrees for the arts and almost 40 degrees for different professional degrees. The degrees are placed at one of the cycle levels. The Higher Education Ordinance also contains regulations for access to higher education and for access to the different cycles within higher education. This may also be included in the qualifications framework to be published by the Agency.

The descriptions have been created in an open process where relevant stakeholders were invited to take part in the preparation of the learning outcomes for each degree. In the drafting, the Dublin Descriptors were one of the most important starting points for the learning outcomes. The whole revised Higher Education Ordinance including the appendix for the degrees was then circulated to the stakeholders including all higher education institutions, the national student union, the rectors conference, the labour market organizations and relevant Government agencies.

The opinions expressed by the stakeholders in the circulation were then worked in to the Ordinance, which was later adopted by the Government. The revised Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance will come in to force the 1 July 2007. In these documents the essential parts of the qualification framework are established. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education will be given the task to compile and publish the national qualification framework for higher education on the basis of the legal documents.

11. What measures are being taken to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications?

Please include where possible:

- the percentage of first cycle graduates who found employment after graduating in 2005/06
- the percentage of first cycle graduates who continued into the second or third cycles in 2005/06
- the extent to which this is expected to change in 2006/2007.

The question is difficult to answer since the three cycle structure is only being introduced in 2007. However, Sweden has a longstanding tradition of shorter degrees (less than three years of study) within higher education.

There are no available statistics regarding graduates in 2005/06 yet. We do have elaborate statistics concerning the establishment on the labour market for those graduating in 2002/2003. Being “established” on the labour market means being employed in a given month in 2004 and having a salary above 18 315 euros during 2004. There should be no indications of unemployment or involvement in labour market measures.

These statistics show that the level of establishment depends more on the field of study

than on length of study. When comparing 3-year degrees the level of establishment within for example nursing, some teaching professions and theology is above 80 percent, but below 30 in the arts. The pattern for the master degrees is very similar. If we compare the long engineering degrees (4½ years) with the shorter engineering degrees (3 years) the individuals with shorter degrees are equally well established, and sometimes to a higher degree, as the individuals with longer degrees.

We do not expect any major changes as a consequence of the new three cycle structure. The variations in employment possibilities are often due to the economic situation on the labour market.

## Quality assurance

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

National implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA<sup>5</sup>

12. To what extent is your national system of QA already in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA?

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of the national quality assurance system in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action that has been taken to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any deadlines set for taking action to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA
- any action planned to ensure that the national quality assurance system is in line with the standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

The national quality assurance system has been evaluated by an external expert team, who have found that the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education complies fully with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines. The Agency has since submitted this evaluation and additional information to ENQA in order to fulfil the requirements for full membership. The ENQA Board re-confirmed the Full Membership in a decision taken on 6 September 2006. However, the Board felt that “the lack of an appeals process remained a matter for further clarification and consideration”, and recommended that the Agency explore this question further before the next national review within five years. A resolution of this issue requires an amendment of the law, and The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has initiated a discussion concerning this with the Government.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.enqa.net/files/BergenReport210205.pdf>

Stage of development of external quality assurance system

13. Describe the quality assurance system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of your external quality assurance system
- the scope of your external quality assurance system: does it operate at a national level; does it cover all higher education<sup>6</sup>
- which of the following elements are included in your external quality assurance system:
  - internal assessment
  - external review
  - publication of results
- whether procedures have been established for the peer review of the national agency(ies) according to the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

The national quality assurance system, which has been in place since 1995, and in its present form since 2001, comprises three major elements:

- a) Accreditation of master's degrees awarded by university colleges and of professional degrees awarded by all higher education institutions
- b) Assessment of all subjects and programmes leading to a bachelor's degree and higher degrees including Ph.D
- c) Thematic evaluations of aspects of quality of higher education

#### **Accreditation**

The assessment process for accreditation involves an external panel of assessors, usually including international experts, appointed by the Agency. The criteria applied, which are predefined and public, are based on an interpretation of the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. The aim of the exercise is to ensure that the institution has the prerequisites in terms of human resources, academic qualifications, administrative support and finances to provide the programme in question. The results of the assessments for accreditation are published on the Agency's website and, usually as printed reports.

#### **Programme and subject reviews**

Reviews are based on self-evaluations by the units under review, on a set of predefined criteria and on external evaluation by a team of peers. The peer team, appointed by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and always includes students, undertakes a site-visit, which lasts for one day at each institution where the subject/programme is taught. The aim of the visit is to provide an opportunity to probe

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<sup>6</sup> higher education: all types of courses of study or sets of courses of study, training or training for research at the post secondary level which are recognised by the relevant authorities as belonging to a country's higher education system.

the teaching and learning environment and to discuss the information provided in the self-evaluation with groups of students, staff and management. The conclusions drawn by the peers together with their recommendations are summarised in a report submitted to the Head of the Agency, who makes a decision whether the institutions may retain their right to award a degree in the programme/subject under reviews. If the quality of a subject or programme is queried, the institution is given one year in which to improve. If, after this period, sufficient improvements have not taken place, the entitlement to award the degree is revoked.

Three to four months after the publication of the report the evaluation is concluded in a feedback conference. A follow-up exercise aiming at establishing the impact of the evaluation takes place after three years.

### **Thematic evaluations**

The Agency has developed a complementary form of evaluation/audit to assess the capability of higher education institutions to handle specific quality aspects and in order to find and disseminate examples of best practice. The focus is primarily on enhancement. So far, evaluations of five such themes have been conducted: Gender equality, student influence, social and ethnic diversity, internationalisation and cooperation with the surrounding community.

### **Peer review of the Swedish National Agency**

In accordance with the principles of the Standards and Guidelines supported by the Ministers of Higher Education at the 2005 Bergen Meeting, a quality assurance policy for the quality assurance processes and procedures has been developed by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. The following items are in place:

- Processes have been developed to avoid conflicts of interest or bias when appointing assessors are established;
- Procedures are in place for the implementation of the evaluation processes from start to finish,
- Exchange with different kinds of evaluation organisations nationally and internationally;
- The preparation of an analytical summary of each year's evaluations
- Continuous internal monitoring of the evaluation processes;
- Feedback from assessors, project staff, higher education institutions and students;
- Continuous external monitoring by an international advisory group, who follow activities closely and meet annually with the management and representatives of the staff;
- Evaluation by external assessors of evaluation activities at least every five years.

A revision of the quality assurance system is currently being considered.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of student participation

14. Describe the level of student participation in your national quality

assurance system.

Please include:

- whether students are included in the following aspects of quality assurance:
  - the governance of national agencies for QA
  - as full members or observers in external review teams
  - as part of the decision making process for external reviews
  - in the consultation process during external reviews (eg arrangements for external reviewers to consult with students)
  - in internal evaluations.

Students are represented on the Board of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and in all advisory and decision-making bodies in higher education institutions by law. All external review teams include as full members at least one student and in the case of reviews of doctoral programmes one doctoral candidate. Consequently they are also part of the decision-making process for external reviews. In all reviews external groups consult with groups of students. The students also take part in the self-evaluation process by the units under review. Course evaluations are compulsory in all higher education institutions by law, as well as follow-up of such evaluations. Other internal evaluations of teaching in universities and university colleges will include students.

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

Level of international participation

15. Describe the level of international participation in your national quality assurance system.

Please include:

- whether there is international participation in the following aspects of quality assurance
  - the governance of national agencies for quality assurance
  - the external evaluation of national quality assurance agencies
  - teams for external review, either as members or observers
  - membership of ENQA
  - membership of any other international network.

The boards of Swedish Government agencies do not include international participation and this is true of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education as well. It is not permitted by the Constitution, but the new Government has started a discussion on this issue. However, the National Agency has recruited an International Advisory Board, including (at present) members from Denmark, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In accordance with the Standards and Guidelines, external evaluation of the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has included international experts.

Teams of external review of higher education provision and institutions always include international experts as members. Until now these experts have been individuals that understand Swedish (experts from the other Nordic countries for example), but the Agency is aiming for an enlargement of possible experts.

The Swedish National Agency has been a member of ENQA since its establishment. The Agency is also a member of INQAAHE (The International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), of NOQA (The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education), of EAIR (The European Higher Education Society) and EES (The European Evaluation Society).

## Recognition of degrees and study periods

(Scorecard and Eurydice )

Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement

16. Describe the stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement in your country.

Please include:

- the percentage of students graduating in 2007 who will receive a Diploma Supplement
- which of the following apply to Diploma Supplements issued in your country:
  - issued in a widely spoken European language
  - free of charge
  - automatically
  - correspond to the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format.

Since 1 January 2003 every student who graduates within *grundläggande högskoleutbildning* (the equivalent of the first and second cycles) receives a Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format in English, automatically and free of charge. Starting 1 July 2007 the Diploma Supplement will also be introduced for degrees within the third cycle.

(Scorecard)

## National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention

17. Describe the stage of implementation of the main principles and later supplementary documents<sup>7</sup> of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Please include:

- whether your country has ratified the convention (including depositing ratification instrument at either CoE or UNESCO)
- whether all appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents
- which of the following principles are applied in practice
  - applicants' right to fair assessment
  - recognition if no substantial differences can be proven
  - demonstration of substantial differences, where recognition is not granted
  - provision of information about your country's HE programmes and institutions
- whether you have a fully operational ENIC
- any action being taken to ratify or fully implement the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents.

In 2001, Sweden ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention. All appropriate legislation complies with the legal framework of the Convention and the later Supplementary Documents. All of the following principles are applied in practice:

- applicants have a right to a fair assessment and the right to appeal a decision in the case of non or only partial recognition.
- there is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven.
- recognition is not granted only if there is demonstration of substantial differences.
- information on HE programmes and institutions is provided to the relevant international and national ( Swedish HEIs concerning recognition procedures for example) actors. The Swedish Institute and the National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges provide foreign students with information about the Swedish HE system and the validation of foreign upper secondary education.
- there is a fully operational ENIC/NARIC office

<sup>7</sup> Recommendation on the Criteria and Procedures for Recognition (2001); Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004); Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education (2001)

Stage of implementation of ECTS

18. Describe the credit and accumulation system operating in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- the percentage of first and second cycle programmes using ECTS in academic year 2006/2007
- how any other credit or accumulation system in use relates to ECTS: is it compatible with ECTS; what is the ratio between national and ECTS credits.

The use of a credit system is mandatory throughout the Swedish higher education system. The student's workload is expressed in credits where one week of full-time study equals one credit (one year = forty credits). One credit equals 1,5 ECTS credits. ECTS credits are used in international exchanges and sometimes in parallel to the Swedish credit system. Starting 1 July 2007 all higher education institutions will use a new credit transfer and accumulation system in line with the ECTS. Full-time study during one year will amount to 60 higher education credits. The credit system covers all three cycles and all courses, programmes and degrees within higher education.

19. Has your country produced a national plan to improve the quality of the process associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications<sup>8</sup>? If so, give a brief description of the plan and attach a copy.

Sweden ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2001. The convention was implemented into national legislation in 2001. All negative decisions on recognition of previous studies and access to higher education can be appealed to the Board of Appeals for Higher Education, an independent juridical body.

The Department for Evaluation of Foreign Higher Education within the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education is responsible for de facto recognition of foreign qualifications and acts as the Swedish ENIC/NARIC office.

The majority of higher education institutions now have internal policy documents on recognition based on the Code of Good Practice. The principle of generous attitude towards acceptance of foreign qualifications is followed. Only necessary documents are requested. Students have to submit detailed course descriptions only in exceptional cases. Students automatically receive information on their right to appeal against negative decisions.

The Agency inspects a number of higher education institutions every year. These visits are intended to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations that apply to

<sup>8</sup> ENIC/NARIC has produced guidelines for National Action Plans for Recognition.

higher education. Inspections focus in general on legal rights of students. The Government, the Agency itself, organizations or individuals can also initiate investigations of a specific issue. This has been the case for recognition of prior studies.

In general only qualifications that are recognized in the country of origin are recognized in Sweden. If outcomes of quality assurance are prerequisites for the state recognition of qualifications in the country of origin then they are used in recognition in Sweden. There are plans for development of a principle that results of the national quality assessments should influence recognition of foreign qualifications.

## Lifelong Learning

(Scorecard)

### Recognition of prior learning

20. Describe the measures in place to recognise prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

Please include:

- the stage of development of any procedures or national guidelines to recognise prior learning
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for assessing prior learning as a basis for access to HE
- a description of any procedures or national guidelines for allocating credits as a basis of exemption from some programme requirements.

Since the Autumn of 2003 all higher education institutions are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand such an assessment and who lack the formal qualifications (or the documentation of such qualifications). The obligation is stated in the Higher Education Ordinance and accreditation decisions can be appealed. Accreditation of prior and experiential learning has only been available for a few years but it seems to open a new possibility for non-traditional learners. To put it into figures; in 2004 more than 5 500 applicants asked to get their non-formal qualifications validated, which is around 1 000 more than in 2003. Almost 1 000 applicants were considered to meet the admission requirements for the programme or course they applied for, although only around 300 applicants were admitted due to competition with other students. The number of applicants has dropped by more than 1 400 in 2005.

The Association of Swedish Higher Education (the Swedish rectors' conference) has conducted development work in relation to the accreditation of prior learning. In November 2003 the Association issued a recommendation to the HEIs on this issue. This kind of assessment procedures is still in an early stage of development. The HE institutions consider it to be rather expensive and time consuming.

According to the HE Ordinance a student also has the right to be allocated credits for

prior, non-formal or informal, learning if the level and amount of knowledge largely corresponds to the education for which allocation of credits is sought. In some cases, in order to prevent a lack of professionals within nursing and teaching, the Government has given some HEIs the task to elaborate models for recognition of prior and experiential learning in order to use the experience of people already working in these sectors and to shorten the formal educational needed for these individuals.

21. Describe legislative and other measures taken by your country to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in higher education.

Please include:

- any flexibility in entry requirements
- any flexible delivery methods
- any modular structures of programmes.

An important feature of the Swedish education system is that “dead-ends” should be avoided. It should be possible to go on to higher education from all forms of education. Swedish higher education institutions have a long tradition of offering their courses and programmes to students with different backgrounds, students working part- or full-time etc. For example, many courses and programmes at the institutions are given as part-time courses or distance courses. The fact that the system of higher education is built on an accumulation of modules and credits enhances the possibilities for lifelong learning and for moving in and out of the system.

Recent measures undertaken by the Government in order to facilitate lifelong learning and access to higher education:

- Since 2003 all higher education institutions are obliged to assess prior and experiential learning of applicants who demand. See also under 20.
- Preparatory studies aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualifications for a given programme, especially programmes in natural sciences and engineering, have been widely used.
- A college-year – a “bridge” between adult education/upper secondary education and HE (half of the courses are university level courses, the other half of upper secondary level courses) – has been introduced.
- Higher education institutions have been given the opportunity to decide on the grounds of selection to be used for recruitment (20 per cent max), in order to widen access paths to higher education.
- The Swedish Net University was established in order to widen access to higher education and to encourage lifelong learning. The agency responsible for the Swedish Net University coordinates and markets the distance education already offered by the institutions.
- New courses, part-time courses, evening-courses etc., that better match the demands of students with varying backgrounds, have been developed.
- More vocational training programmes of shorter duration have been set up.
- Universities have been encouraged to be active in offering attractive contract-training programmes to public and private institutions/industry for staff qualification improvement training.

- See also actions under 25 and 26 Social Dimension.

## Joint degrees

(Scorecard and Eurydice)

### Establishment and recognition of joint degrees

22. Describe the legislative position on joint degrees in your country.

Please include:

- the stage of implementation of any legislation to establish joint programmes
- whether joint<sup>9</sup> degrees are allowed and encouraged in legislation
- whether joint degrees are allowed and encouraged in all three cycles
- an indication of the percentage of HEIs that have established joint programmes and are awarding nationally recognised degrees jointly with HEIs of other countries
- any action being taken to encourage or allow joint programmes.

The award of joint degrees is not possible at present but the ambition is to solve this issue as soon as possible. There are no legal obstacles to establish joint programmes and to award and recognise double or multiple degrees. Joint programmes can be established and double or multiple degrees can be awarded within all three cycles.

The establishment of joint programmes has been encouraged by the Government and after a Government initiative the National Agency for Higher Education has adjusted the template for the Diploma Supplement in order to better describe degrees that have been awarded after the completion of programmes carried out jointly by two or more HEIs.

In Sweden the universities and university colleges are responsible for their activities concerning admission, mobility and examination within the framework given in the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance. It is therefore not possible to give a just picture of the number of joint activities. However, we do know that Swedish HEIs have a high participation within the Erasmus Mundus programme.

## C. Current issues in Higher Education

### Higher education and research

23. Describe the relationship between higher education and research in your

<sup>9</sup> a joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, and where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate.

country - what percentage of research is carried out in HEIs; are any steps being taken to improve the synergy between HE and other research sectors.

According to the Higher Education Act the state shall, as the entity responsible, provide institutions of higher education for education based on science or art and on tested experience, and research and artistic development and other development. Activities shall be conducted so that there is a close relationship between research and higher education. The state is responsible for basic research and for the main part of doctoral education. Sweden allocates almost four per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) to research and development (a total of 96 billion SEK). Out of these 24 billion SEK is state funded research, which corresponds to almost 1 % of GDP. Most state-funded research is carried out at the higher education institutions. Of these 24 billion only 8 % is allocated to research institutes. 80 percent of the research funding at the HEIs come from public entities directly or indirectly.

Since 1997 the state has allocated permanent resources for research to all universities and university colleges. The boards of governors of the individual higher education institutions are responsible for their own research environments. The boards make the decisions that affect strategic investments and the reallocation of priorities. Doctoral education is considered to be an important link between education and research.

In the last research bill the Government allocated 25 Million SEK for research schools and 50 million SEK for postdoctoral positions to The Agency for Innovation Systems who among other things should promote the mobility between academy and industry.

24. What percentage of doctoral candidates take up research careers; are any measures being taken to increase the number of doctoral candidates taking up research careers?

A large proportion of those awarded doctoral qualifications in 2000 (38 per cent) were employed as teachers in higher education three years later. It is reasonable to think that the majority also were researchers.

Measures have been proposed to increase the number of appointments offering further postdoctoral qualifications, both additional funding for the higher education institutions for research and doctoral programmes and also increased funding for the research councils and the Swedish Agency for Innovation Systems. One career problem for young researchers, however, is the lack of postdoctoral positions. Inequality between men and women is also a problem – particularly in the high academic positions – within the institutions, partly due to insecure employment conditions for young researchers.

A commission has been established by Government decision in 2006, to examine current academic employment categories within Swedish universities and institutions of higher education. Part of the assignment is to review the current employment structure and to propose improvements, in order to accomplish a coherent and well-functioning career and qualification system.

## The social dimension

25. Describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education.

Please include:

- any financial or other measures to widen access in higher education amongst socially disadvantaged groups
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to widen access to higher education, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the widening access measures already in place.

The chief goal of the educational system is that each citizen should have access to high quality education regardless of gender, social or economic background, place of residence etc.

Swedish HE policies to *increase and widen participation* hitherto:

- The Act on Equal Treatment of Students in Higher Education (2001:1286) stipulates that the HEIs are to implement purposeful measures to actively promote equal rights for students and applicants, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, religion or other creed, sexual orientation or functional disabilities.
- No individual tuition fees in Swedish higher education.
- A large expansion in the number of student places has taken place during the last 15 years in order to increase participation in higher education.
- There has also been a geographical expansion of HE institutions and there is now at least one HEI in every county.
- Everyone has the right to receive financial study assistance, regardless of the income of the parents. The study support system (grant and loan) should cover the living costs and study related costs of students. 34 percent of the support received is grant and 66 percent loan. Students with children receive an additional grant. It is also possible for some students to receive further supplementary loans and loans for additional costs in connection with their studies. Financial study assistance cannot generally be awarded after the year of the student's 54th birthday and is restricted to a period of six years. The study loan is an annuity loan with a maximum repayment period of 25 year, or up until the year in which the borrower is 60 years old.
- The Higher Education Act lays down that the HEIs should actively promote and widen recruitment to higher education. The Act also states that equality between men and women always should be borne and kept in mind in the operations of the HEIs.
- Since 2002 HEIs have been allowed to offer bridging courses ("college year programmes") between adult education/upper secondary education and HE in cooperation with for example adult education providers. Two-thirds of those who graduate transfer to regular HE.
- In order to widen participation foundation year courses (in cooperation between HEIs and adult education) were also introduced in 1992/93 for those who want to achieve eligibility requirements for enrolment in a given course or programme

(mainly within natural sciences and technology). The transfer rates is quite high – two-thirds of those who participate has entered a HE programme a year later.

- Higher education institutions have been given the opportunity to decide on the grounds of selection to be used for recruitment (20 per cent max), in order to widen access paths to higher education.
- A new agency – the Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education, that replaced and widened the mission of the Swedish Net University – was established in 2006 to support recruitment efforts by the HEI. The Agency has also been given the responsibility for support in teaching issues, particularly in relation to widened access.
- The HEIs have to reserve a certain amount of the funding for helping disabled students. The state also provides additional funding for expenses related to support needed in the learning situation.
- A Special Committee on Recruitment to Higher Education was a Government initiative for the period 2002-2004.
- Another temporary committee – the Delegation for Regional Cooperation – was operating 2002-2004 with the aim of supporting projects between HEIs and local and regional authorities in order to create sustainable growth in the regions and at the same time promote recruitment to higher education.
- All HEIs perform various activities in order to increase diversity. These activities include the alteration of programmes and courses as well as actions such as student ambassadors visiting upper secondary schools etc.
- See also the initiatives under 20 and 21 Lifelong learning.

#### *Monitoring*

- In 2002 and 2005 the HEIs have been obliged to produce action plans with measurable objectives on how to widen recruitment to higher education. The institutions have also reported on the results of the 2002 action plans to the Ministry. In addition the institutions report annually on how they follow the obligation “to actively promote and widen recruitment to higher education” in the Higher Education Act.
- Since 2003 the National Agency for Higher Education has had a Government assignment to follow-up the different initiatives taken during the last years, such as the college year programmes, the foundation year courses and the procedure of accreditation of prior and experiential learning. The Agency has also been given the task to follow-up the work of the HEIs on widened recruitment.
- The Special Committee on Recruitment to Higher Education was evaluated by Uppsala University in 2006. In the evaluation report it was stated that the work of the Committee had been successful and that more than half of the initiated projects continued after the termination of financial contribution from the Committee. The main result of the work, however, was that legitimacy was given to the work on widened recruitment and that this will indirectly affect recruitment to higher education. The Delegation for Regional Cooperation was evaluated by the Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies in 2005. The evaluation showed that the Delegation did have a positive effect in the areas concerned.
- The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman, the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, the Ombudsman against Discrimination because of Sexual Orientation and the Disability Ombudsman are to ensure that the Act on Equal

Treatment of Students is complied with.

*New initiatives*

- Several initiatives were launched in the budget bill for 2007 regarding the integration of individuals with foreign degrees into the higher education system and the labour market.

The work so far has been successful: the number of students with working class backgrounds has doubled in ten years and the proportion of students with foreign backgrounds now equals that of students with Swedish backgrounds. However, recruitment differences still remain, particularly within the longer, more prestigious programmes. Within the group “students with foreign backgrounds” there are large differences in participation in higher education between the different ethnic groups.

26. Describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background.

Please include:

- any guidance or counselling services and any other measures to improve retention
- any measures in place to monitor the impact of policies to improve retention, including results if possible
- any further measures planned, following evaluation of the retention measures already in place.

- The financial study support system is an important factor to facilitate for students to complete their studies. Financial study assistance is restricted to a period of six years. Most students are able to complete their first and second degree within this time.
- According to the Higher Education Ordinance the HEIs are obliged to provide study guidance and career counselling services to the students.
- Almost all HEIs arrange language laboratories in order to support the students when carrying out different assignments. The laboratories are primarily aimed at students with difficulties with the Swedish language, but the laboratories are also important for students wanting to develop their language and writing skills.
- The establishment of a new commission on the social situation of the student has been announced by the new Government.
- According to the Higher Education ordinance the HEIs are responsible for students having access to health care, in particular preventative health care aimed at promoting the physical and mental health of the students.

*Monitoring*

- The National Agency for Higher Education is currently evaluating the support and service student receive in terms of study and career guidance as well as health care. The evaluation will be published in 2007.

## Mobility

27. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward student mobility
- any measures to increase outward student mobility.

The introduction of the three cycle system, a qualifications framework for higher education, an ECTS compatible credit system and Diploma Supplement for all three cycles are important measures to enhance inward as well as outward student mobility.

In the bill New world – new university from 2005 the Government presented a strategy for internationalisation of higher education. Attracting foreign students and sending an increasing amount of Swedish students to other countries are important parts of that strategy. In the annual Government budget document to the higher education institutions for 2006 the Government has also stated that the international activities at the institutions should be enhanced and strengthened, that they should be an integral part of the quality and development work at the HEIs and that mobility of staff and student should increase. How these objectives are achieved should be reported to the Government in early 2007.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training (IPK) has a special assignment to increase student mobility within the European Union programmes for education and training. IPK has put together a group of representatives from HEIs where the Erasmus participation has been in decline. The work of the group (2003-2004) has been to identify problems and find solutions to improve the participation of Swedish students in the Erasmus programme.

After a Government assignment the International Programme Office for Education and Training has also been working (2005-2006) together with ten HEIs to increase the international mobility of teacher training students and teachers. In 2007 a continuation of this project will focus on the mobility of teachers within teacher education.

Sweden is active in all EU programmes for education and training, such as Socrates and Leonardo, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa and Asia-Link. There are also several Nordic cooperation initiatives through the Nordic Council of Ministers. Apart from the EU programmes, there are several national initiatives to support student mobility, especially regarding exchanges with developing countries. Such initiatives include the Linnaeus-Palme programme, which supports exchange of academic staff and students between Sweden and HEIs in developing countries. Scholarships are granted for both outgoing and incoming academic staff and students.

The Swedish Institute is responsible for information about and the marketing of higher education studies in Sweden for international students and for awarding scholarships to Swedish and international students.

At institutional level international offices provide considerable support for mobility. Among their tasks are to provide induction for incoming international students and advance preparation for Swedish students travelling abroad. The Swedish student organisations also play an important part in this work.

Contact has been established at civil servant level between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Justice regarding visas for incoming students.

28. Are portable loans and grants available in your country? If not, describe any measures being taken to increase the portability of grants and loans.

Swedish students are entitled to use their state grants and loans for studies abroad, provided that the foreign institution is approved by the competent Swedish authority. The same study support conditions apply nationally and internationally. The students also have the possibility to apply for an additional loan (for example for tuition fees, travel and insurance costs) when studying abroad.

29. Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Please include:

- any measures to increase inward staff mobility
- any measures to increase outward staff mobility.

The International Programme Office for Education and Training has a particular Government assignment to increase outward staff mobility. In 2007 focus will be on the mobility of teachers within teacher education. The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) also provide scholarships for both incoming and outgoing academic staff and students.

A commission appointed by the Government recently presented proposals on how to implement the EU Council Directive 2005/71/EG concerning a new procedure for third-country nationals requesting admission for the purpose of conducting research. Sweden has also launched a mobility portal for researchers connected to the European Researcher's Mobility Portal of the European Commission.

### **The attractiveness of the EHEA and cooperation with other parts of the world**

30. Describe any measures being taken in your country to promote the attractiveness of the EHEA.

In the bill New world – new university from 2005 the Government presented a strategy for internationalisation of higher education.

The HEIs in Sweden bear the main responsibility for marketing their programmes internationally and providing information about them.

The Swedish Institute (SI) has been assigned the task of marketing Swedish HEIs abroad. This is done mainly through [www.studyinsweden.se](http://www.studyinsweden.se), which is a comprehensive resource for information about higher education in Sweden, geared towards prospective students from outside Sweden.

## Future challenges

31. Give an indication of the main challenges ahead for your country.

- Joint degrees
- Staff mobility
- Student mobility
- Maintaining the quality of higher education and the link between higher education and research.