

Latvia

Introduction

The analysis of efficiency in St. Aubyn et al. (2009) suggests the tertiary education system in Latvia is below the production possibility frontier. The comparison of the two outputs of the tertiary education system suggests a weakness in research, while teaching is rather efficient. However, an above average number of students per capita, relatively large number of students per academic staff and average graduates per student suggest relatively high drop-out rates. There was a rapid expansion in the number of study applicants which was accompanied by an increase in the funds for TEIs. Since 2009, the number of students has been decreasing as well as the state budget financing.

Indicators

Table - Summary of indicators in St. Aubyn (2009)

	Scores of efficiency indicators					
	Average ISI citation		Recruiter review		Peer review	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank
LV	2.21	24	:	:	:	:
best performer	NL - 5,51	1	IE - 2	1	FI - 2	1
worst performer	RO - 1,63	26	CZ -1.06	16	GR - 1.02	16

	Academic staff	Students	Graduates <i>per capita</i>	Publications	Students <i>per academic staff</i>	Graduates <i>per student</i>	Graduates <i>per student</i>
LV	1.5	41.0	8.2	0.1	27.7	5.5	20.0
EU27	1.9	33.7	7.1	0.6	17.8	3.7	19.8

Unfortunately, PISA ranking, funding rules and staff policy/ evaluation indicators are not available for Latvia. The evaluation seems thorough. It has no impact on funding decisions. The evaluation requires examining research results after 1 year, which might be a short period for obtaining research results.

Academic staff is elected through an open competition.

Student choice is good (well defined credit point system; wide range of long and short study programmes and broad availability of subjects within study programmes). However, as St. Aubyn et al. (2009) show, this could hamper efficiency of the system and resources risk being insufficient to support broad student choice).

Policy developments

Latvia has undertaken a number of governance reforms which have no public finances implications, namely increase autonomy to TEIs. Private funds are important in Latvia, as most students pay tuition fees and there are also other sources of private income.

Latvia has developed an action plan for necessary reforms in higher education and science for 2010 – 2012 (approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in August 3, 2010) based on the Informative Report "On Necessary Structural Reforms in Higher Education and Science for Increasing Latvian Competitiveness Internationally".

The Action Plan prescribes particular measures within the four main directions for action:

- Improvement of quality of studies and scientific activities,
- Modernising the resource basis of the higher education and science institutions and increase of resource use efficiency,
- Internationalising higher education and increasing export capability,

- Integrating the higher education and science sector with the economy and social development.

The system for allocating the state budget financing was improved by supplementing with the principle of performance based allocating of financing and by achieving appropriate transparency and orientation towards the attraction of additional financing from private sector and other sources of financing.