

European Commission  
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
Economic Policy Committee

**Efficiency and effectiveness of public  
expenditure  
on tertiary education in the EU**

**ANNEX : COUNTRY FICHE  
SPAIN**

**Joint Report by the Economic Policy Committee  
(Quality of Public Finances)  
and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs**

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# Brief characterization of the tertiary education system

## 1. Main features

In Spain there are 77 universities: 50 public and 27 private (including some Church-dependent). Five of them are distance-learning universities. There are two additional universities offering only specific master and/or doctorate programs.

The decentralization of tertiary education powers to Spanish Autonomous Regions started in 1985.

In parallel, Spain has witnessed a huge increment in the number of universities last decades: from 28 in 1975, to 35 in 1985 and 77 currently. In 1952 there were already 4 private universities, all Church-related. Since 1991 the number of private universities has grown substantially: from 1993 to 2008 22 private universities have been created (private or Church dependent).

The organisation of degree courses is currently in change with the adaptation to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The new structure establishes three differentiated levels, bachelor, master and doctorate.

- Bachelor.
- Master.
- Doctorate.

The last system (still with student enrolment) was organised as follow:

- University system:
  - Short cycle courses
  - Second cycle courses.
  - Long cycle courses (first and second cycle together).
  - Third cycle courses (post graduate programmes such as PhD).
  
- Non university tertiary education

A significant reform was passed via the Organic Law 4/2007 modifying the Organic Law of Universities (hereby the LOMLOU). Within the framework of the EHEA, the objectives of the LOMLOU are to improve the quality of the university system, to foster the mobility of students and teachers, to respond to the challenges of distance higher education, by means of

ICTs, and lifelong learning, and to integrate the system competitively in the European university area that is beginning to take shape.

### Main figures

- Academic staff per 1000 inhabitants is still above EU average although it has decreased recently (2,32 in 2008)
- Students per 1000 inhabitants is still above or around EU average but it is decreasing (32,6 in 2008).
- Students per academic staff is one of the lowest in the EU and continues to diminish (14,32 in 2008)
- Graduates per 1000 inhabitants is below the EU average and continues to diminish (4,9 in 2008).
- Graduates per academic staff is below the EU average and continues to diminish (2,14 in 2008)

The above figures are influenced by demographic changes suffered by Spain in the last ten years. In the last decade population aged 18-24 has decreased by 18% whereas total population has grown 15%. This demographic evolution is due mainly to immigration, a population group with lower enrollment rates in tertiary education than native population.

There are big differences in the education level of the population between Spain and OECD average. In Spain there is a much higher proportion of population only with primary education (49% vs 20% in OECD), a much lower proportion of population with secondary education (22% vs 46%) and a higher proportion of population with tertiary education (29% vs 24%). Education levels for population aged 25-64 have improved during 1997-2007:

- population with primary education only has diminished from 69% to 49%
- population with secondary education has increased from 13% to 22%
- population with tertiary education has increased from 19% to 29%

The employment rates of tertiary educated population are similar to the OECD average (89% men and 81% women in Spain, vs 90% men and 80% women in OECD). Unemployment for tertiary educated population has decreased substantially from 13,7% in 1997 to 4,8% in 2007, reaching similar levels to OECD average. In 2008 unemployment for those with higher studies has increased by one p.p.

Relative earnings: tertiary educated population earns only 32% more than secondary educated population (the figure being 52% for the OECD). That is, the rate of return of tertiary education is much lower in Spain.

Public expenditure on tertiary education institutions (% GDP) is below EU and OECD average.

Public expenditure on tertiary education institutions per student relative to GDP per capita is near the OECD average. Public expenditure on tertiary education per student has increased by 27% during 2000-2006.

Public expenditure on R&D (% GDP) is below the EU average.

Expenditure on R&D in tertiary education institutions (% GDP) is similar to the EU average.

Personnel employed in R&D in firms is 43,5% (52,1% in EU), in tertiary education institutions is 37,4% (31,8% in the EU) and in public administrations is 18,9% (14,8% in EU).

In light of these figures it can be affirmed that there is a challenge to change the structure of R&D spending so to augment the presence of the private business sector.

92% of the university staff is in public institutions and 8% in private. In both types of universities staff is made of research/teaching staff (65%) and administrative staff (35%). Women are 36,4% of the research/teaching staff and 58,9% of the administrative staff. As regards public universities:

- Research/teaching staff: 53% are civil servants and 47% are hired.
- Administrative staff: 57% are civil servants and 43% are hired.

## **2. Structure of institutions and funding arrangements**

Spain's tertiary education system includes the following:

- University education.
- Non-university tertiary education, which is subdivided into
  - Post-secondary higher vocational education (which covers approximately 89% of non-university tertiary education). It includes higher vocational, professional visual arts and higher design as well as higher sports studies.

- Various types of courses that are governed by specific legislative provisions and offer a specific qualification. They include military education (army, air force and navy) and specific forms of specialist education.

## **University education**

### Objectives of university education

According to the LOMLOU, universities should serve society in the following ways:

- By creating, developing, transmitting and appraising science, technology and culture.
- By training students to undertake professional activities that require the application of scientific knowledge and methods or by training students in the arts.
- By disseminating, appraising and transferring knowledge with the aim of enhancing culture, quality of life and economic development.

The Spanish constitution of 1978 guarantees universities' academic and research freedom and their freedom to manage and administer their own resources independently. According to the Spanish Law of Universities (LOMLOU), the governing board of each university, presided by the rector, is responsible for establishing strategies and programmes for organising research and allocating human resources and funding.

Universities play a central role in the Spanish research and innovation system, carrying out almost all tertiary education research. Together with the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC)<sup>1</sup>, they constitute a large part of the current Spanish research infrastructure and are responsible for doctoral courses. Private universities only account for 5% of university spending on R&D&I; that is, most research activity takes place in public universities.

Universities are organised into faculties, schools (in the case of engineering) and colleges. Faculties and schools teach all university education cycles, whereas colleges only teach first cycle courses.

Universities also have research institutes. Their activity focuses on scientific and technical research or artistic creation. They can also organise and run postgraduate programmes and courses, including Master's and doctoral degrees.

### ***Non-university education***

Vocational education and training can be delivered in both public and private schools. The latter can be subsidized. This educational level can also be delivered through distance courses.

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<sup>1</sup> 12 The CSIC is a relatively public research organisation composed of many research institutes spread out all over the country. In some cases these institutes work closely with universities

**Higher vocational education** has been traditionally delivered in secondary schools, even though some Autonomous Communities have some specific schools for vocational education. Nevertheless, the final secondary education diploma (*bachillerato*) is required to enrol in the highest level of vocational education. This is why it should be considered as tertiary education. The Organic Law establishes that higher education encompasses both university studies and vocational education, as well as higher artistic education, higher design, visual art and higher sports studies, in agreement with the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-5).

Specific vocational schools are known as *Integrated Vocational Schools*, which may be set up and authorised by regional Governments. They offer courses leading to diplomas within the educational system, with academic and professional value, and occupational certificates, issued by the Labour Administration, related to the labour market, and they both referred to the National Catalogue of Occupational Qualifications. Both systems interrelate by means of units of competence, which, once they have been assessed and accredited, can be capitalized in order to achieve a diploma.

- Other vocational schools include the Schools of Art. These are governed by general regulations for the entire state, as well as by the conditions set by each autonomous region when it authorises their creation. Music Conservatories are public or private institutions in charge of teaching higher education in music and dance. **Drama Schools** offer dramatic arts education.
- Schools that teach **Visual Arts and Design** go by a variety of names according to the types of courses they offer and their management. Public institutions that offer higher education are called Schools of Art in the corresponding discipline. At present, there are Schools of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Assets, Schools of Design and a School of Pottery. Private institutions may act as authorised centres of the corresponding discipline.
- **Sports education** institutions may be public or private. They must fulfil a series of requirements in terms of space, equipment and number of students per classroom. Lastly, institutions that teach **Military Education** are organised by agreements between the MEC and the Ministry of Defence.

### 3. Governance and regulatory framework

In keeping with the decentralised model, governance over education is generally divided up among the state, the autonomous regions, local governments and educational institutions, as set out in the Constitution, the Statutes of Autonomy and the regulatory framework.

The responsibility for higher education policy and research is distributed between the central government and the government of each of the 17 autonomous regions. The process of transferring the responsibility for universities to the autonomous regions began in 1985 in some regions and finally finished in 1997. Since then, these regions have decided on the universities' financing, among other things. Thus, most of the income of each university in Spain's different regions comes from financial aid provided by the regional governments.

According to the Spanish Constitution universities may be publicly or privately owned. Public universities are set up by means of a law passed in the legislative assembly of the autonomous region or through legislation passed in the Spanish Parliament, in accordance with the government of the autonomous region. Any person or legal entity may constitute a private university with the approval of the autonomous government. There are two different types of private universities; lay universities and universities belonging to the Catholic Church. The latter are governed by special agreements between the Spanish State and the Vatican.

- The central government keeps control over the legal framework that guarantees the homogeneity and unity of the education system and guarantees the equality of Spanish citizens. The state exercises the powers that guarantee the uniformity and unity of the education system and guarantees the equality of Spanish citizens in exercising their fundamental right to education as set out in the Constitution. The state is also responsible for the overall planning for investment in education and, specifically, the policies for grants allocated from the state budget, as well as the ownership and management of public institutions abroad, the legal framework of foreign institutions in Spain and international cooperation in education. The state maintains the right to regulate the conditions for obtaining, issuing and validating academic and professional qualifications. The Ministry of Education (ME) is the governmental department entrusted with exercising these powers. The executive and management body through which the ME carries out its functions is the General Secretariat for Universities. There are two Universities that directly responsible to the ME: The National Distance-Learning University (UNED) and Menendez Pelayo International University.
- The autonomous regions, on the other hand, have the ability to regulate and administer education. Frameworks are in place that develop the basic state regulations and exercise the general administrative capacity of managing the education system in the autonomous region. The government of each autonomous region is responsible for administering the educational institutions within its territory. It has the jurisdiction to set up, authorise and oversee the running of public and private institutions, staff, and to build and equip new educational facilities and renovate existing ones. According to the Statutes of Autonomy, the autonomous regions administer education across the board, including the structures of the degrees and specialisations. The autonomous regions are responsible for the general funding of their public universities. They have regulatory frameworks which implement basic country-wide laws and exercise the



administrative powers of managing the education system within their territory, with the exception of the powers reserved for the state. It also coordinates all aspects of the universities located within its jurisdiction through its own university board, except those aspects reserved for the General Conference of University Policy.

In the last two decades, local, regional and national governments in Spain have made a considerable effort to construct university facilities and infrastructures in the whole of the Spanish territory. A large part of current university facilities are less than 20 years old. This policy of regionalising higher education has played an essential role in generating and maintaining —localized capabilities.

In addition, the range of services has been extended. This has reinforced the university's role as a supplier of services to students and to the rest of society in the region. Universities no longer only provide traditional services, such as residence halls, career services and university extension services. They now offer high value-added services that are adapted to the new demands required of them, such as alumni services, bodies devoted to promoting innovation and boosting the creation of university-based companies, technology parks and so on.

Since the Science Law was enacted in 1986, policies have been drawn up to boost science and technology. Currently, each of the autonomous regions has created or is creating innovation systems to increase companies' competitiveness. In addition, they all have regional R&D&I plans. Many agents and instruments are involved in the plans and programmes for boosting innovation. However, the science and technology parks have a prominent, vitally important role in the regional impact of such plans. This aspect will be discussed in greater depth later on.

There are two coordination bodies:

- The University Council (CU). It is composed of all the university rectors. Most proposals related to higher university education have to be reported on by the CU, although not necessarily its recommendations are compulsory.
- The Sectoral Education Conference, a meeting point for coordinating the diverse policies carried out by the different Autonomous Communities. It is composed of members of all the Autonomous Communities. The purpose of the presence of those responsible for CCAA Higher Education in the General Conference on University Policy, approved in the recent LOU reform, is to improve coordination tasks among universities, those responsible for CCAA Higher Education, and the central government.

The recent past of Spanish universities has taken place within the framework of university reforms, the first of these under the University Reform Law (LRU), which came into force in 1983, and the second under the Organic Law of Universities (LOU), which was introduced in

2001. The first of these focused on universities' social embeddedness, democratic organisation and scientific modernisation. The LOU's main concerns were the instrumentalisation of quality assurance policies and preparations for the Spanish university system's entry into the EHEA. Other measures envisaged in this law, such as regulations governing the functioning of universities, have been the centre of debate on education. The organic law that amends the LOU was approved in April of 2001. The modification of the LOU in 2007 introduced changes related to rector elections, teaching staff accreditation, teacher selection, and the coordinating bodies of university policy.

### Responsibilities of each level of government in the education system

Level of government	Responsibilities	Structures
<b>Central government: Ministry of Education</b>	Overall organisation of the education system, minimum requirements for educational institutions, international cooperation in education, promotion and overall coordination of research, overall programming of education and regulation of academic and professional qualifications, high inspectorate, grant policies, ownership and management of public institutions abroad, legal framework of foreign institutions in Spain, educational statistics for governmental purposes.	ME central services. Regional services: a) High inspectorate in the autonomous regions. b) Provincial offices in Ceuta and Melilla.
<b>Autonomous government</b>	Administration in its region, creation and authorisation of institutions, staff management, development of academic programming, guidance and information for students, grants and subsidies.	Departments of Education.
<b>Local government</b>	Information for citizens, the supply of plots of land for the construction of state schools, maintenance of nursery and primary schools, extracurricular and supplementary activities, enforcement of compulsory education.	Municipal Education Departments and Municipal Education Institutes.

## 4. System's strengths and weaknesses

*An open, extended system of tertiary education.* The Spanish system of tertiary education is an open, extended and accessible system. A high proportion of young people obtain a tertiary education degree. The widespread development of continuing education and the increasing number of adults enrolling in higher education is also important to mention. As a consequence, the increase in Spanish human resource qualifications is one of Spain's major assets. This is, by far the most relevant strength of the system.

*Research development.* Spanish universities, the main contributors to research in the country, have increased their research production significantly. Although there are still some shortfalls, the relationship with the productive sector must improve, research in Spanish universities is currently in a relatively good position. Number of academic publications in referred journal has increased considerably in the last years. Now is necessary to improve the relationship with the Productive sector.

*Financial problems.* Spanish tertiary education's funding levels are similar to European average. More resources will be required to achieve higher levels of quality.

*Poor student aid system.* Student mobility is very scarce because of cultural tradition but also is necessary an efficient student aid programme. Grant expenditure in 2006 was only 0.08 percent of GDP..

The financial commission is working in a new model of grants more appropriate to EHEA needs. This new model improve mobility and grants that cover the living cost

*Staff status.* The civil servant status of professors has several negative consequences. The lack of incentives for salaries, an inefficient system of selection and promotion and the tenure slow down proactive attitudes of Spanish university teaching staff.

*University governance.* All decision-making power remains in collegial bodies in which non-academic staff and students make up a considerable percentage. Boards with large numbers of members make decisions on universities, faculties and departments, and elect rectors, deans and heads of departments. The Social Council was established as an external body to represent the wider interests of society in the University.

*University management.* In addition to governing universities, the main responsibility for managing institutions lies with academics. Although some institutions hire professional managers for some managerial positions, they are always in dependent positions, while most of the decision-making power lies with academics who are temporarily occupying a managerial post.

*Steering system.* Universities depend on eighteen authorities. Although universities would not need to be closely co-ordinated under an open, competitive system, common goals for the whole public higher education system is being developing. The correct functioning of the system, especially in the context of growing internationalisation, requires coordination of many aspects such as a student aid system, mobility of students and academics, quality assessment procedures and many other areas that are more efficiently managed from a broader perspective. The current system has little ability for steering public higher education.

*Flexibility.* Vocational Education structure is modular, accumulable, and allows partial accreditation by recognizing units of competence. It can be capitalised in order to facilitate the acquisition of a diploma.

*The quality challenge.* The tertiary education system has grown enormously, but this is the moment for tackling the challenge of quality. Quality agencies have emerged within the new organization of tertiary education. Increasing quality and assessing and demonstrating it is a real challenge for the near future.

*The LOMLOU reform.* The main objective of this reform is to adapt Spanish universities to the new context. The *LOMLOU* reform gives universities greater autonomy to decide on their organisational model, choose their staff and decide what degree courses they wish to teach. Moreover, it strengthens assessment systems, establishes greater cooperation between the different authorities which have educational competences and promotes university research and the transfer of results to society. The new law will also give way to the creation the General Conference on University Policy with the participation of both regional and central governments to coordinate higher education policies. Obviously, it is too early to estimate the consequences of this reform.

*Curricular reform.* A new legal framework for developing thorough curricular reform in order to adapt the Spanish system to the EHEA. The most outstanding fact in this reform is that universities will have full autonomy to define their own curricula. This is a tremendous conceptual change because it means the system is leaving behind the concept of national diplomas.

*New loan system for students.* A system of income contingent loans for Master's degree students was launched. This is another step in the new student aid scheme.

## **Explanatory factors for efficiency**

### **1. Staff Policy**

#### **1.1. Hiring/Firing**

In Spanish public universities, human resources are divided into two groups: teaching and research staff (PDI) and administrative and service staff (PAS). Each of these groups includes civil service staff and non-civil service staff. These groups are further divided into various categories that fulfil a wide range of tasks and needs. In higher vocational education, human resources are also divided into two groups: teaching staff and administrative and service personnel.

The academic staff (PDI) of public universities is made up of non-civil service academic staff, who are hired by each university, and members of the civil service academic staff, who are employed by the government and form part of the public administration. Civil service academic staff are divided into the following categories: full professor (*catedrático*, CU), associate professor (*profesor titular*, TU, or *catedrático de escuela*, CEU) and college teacher (*titular de escuela*, TEU, a category designed for teaching in first cycle professional courses). Non-civil service academic staff are divided into several categories. Some are new categories (2002 onwards) and have a regular permanent labour status (this is the first time in years that

this has happened), whilst other categories are for contracting people on the first steps of their academic career. A third group (associate teachers) is designed for outside professionals wishing to collaborate in university teaching in a particular professional area. Finally, there is a fourth group for special cases such as emeritus or visiting professors.

Spanish academic staff have traditionally been trained at universities. As early as 1857, the Spanish Public Instruction Law required that professors had a doctorate, among other requirements. Until the General Education Law (LGE) was passed in 1970, the training of academic staff had always focused on the field of study to be taught and not on teaching methods. This law, for the first time, established that university teachers could receive specific pedagogical training from the Institutes for Educational Sciences (university bodies created with this objective in mind), in addition to their specialist qualifications.

Under the organic laws that have regulated the Spanish university system for the past two decades (LRU and LOU), research has been overemphasised at the expense of teaching duties. In the interests of promoting research—which had historically been the system's weak point—these laws called for academic staff to be evaluated mainly on the basis of research-related indicators. Some of the pay bonuses available to academic staff are based on these criteria as well. Incentives to perform teaching duties are more scarce and the need to implement career reforms and provide incentives for teaching is considered important.

A first step to providing more incentives and recognition for teaching activities is to promote specific pedagogical training and the assessment of teaching quality. At present, university teachers are not required to receive any specific pedagogical training. The European convergence process offers an opportunity to introduce teacher assessment and continuous pedagogical training.

The number of non-civil service academic staff—calculated as the equivalent number of full-time employees—may not exceed 49% of the total number of academic staff at a particular university. At both private and public universities, at least 50% of the teaching staff must hold a doctorate. Furthermore, at least 50% of the academic staff (non civil-servant) must have received a favourable assessment from Spain's National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) or from the quality agency in the autonomous region. Active members of the civil service academic staff working at a public university and full-time non civil-servant academic staff are not allowed to join the teaching staff of a private university.

The proposed amendment to the LOU changes the way academics obtain university posts. Under the new amendment, candidates no longer need to take the national qualification examination. Instead, they need to obtain merit-based accreditation, in which a committee assesses the documentation submitted by the candidates. The rest of the process is still similar.

## 1.2. Wages

The Spanish government establishes a single pay scale for all civil service academic staff throughout the university system. The autonomous regions have established pay scales for non-civil service academic staff. Either the central government or the autonomous regions may establish pay bonuses based on individual merit in any of the following areas: teaching, research, technological development, knowledge transfer and management.

Part of academic staff salaries are based on the favourable assessment of each individual's research activity. This is a major incentive behind the quality and quantity of the research conducted at some Spanish universities. At private universities, academics' salaries are established in their employment contracts, within the limits prescribed by the legislation currently in force. The collective agreement for university teachers establishes that a teacher's pay consists of his/her salary plus other possible bonuses, such as seniority privileges and bonuses.

<b>Basic salary</b>	This is established at national level depending on the category of each position.
<b>Seniority</b>	Seniority is established by length of service and professional category. Civil servants are paid a bonus after every three years worked.
<b>Teaching bonus</b>	This bonus is paid every five years for teaching merits. Each individual may receive a maximum of 6 such payments. Only full-time civil servants receive this bonus.
<b>Research bonus</b>	This is based on the research activity conducted in a six-year period and is conditioned to the favourable assessment of an external committee. Only full-time civil servants may receive this bonus.
<b>Autonomous region bonuses</b>	These "discretionary and individual" bonuses are based on merits in teaching, research or management. They are paid following a favourable assessment made by the agency or body designated by the region. The criteria and amount of the bonuses vary from region to region

## 2. Output flexibility

### 2.1. Course content and exams

The Spanish Constitution, the LRU (1983) and the LOMLOU (2007) grant autonomy to universities. The LOMLOU establishes the general rules for the organisation of public universities. Nevertheless, universities are free to define their own structure and organise their educational programmes. Private universities establish their rules of organisation and operation independently, but they are required to guarantee the constitutional principle of academic freedom. They must also be recognised by legislation passed in a regional Parliament or by the Spanish Parliament.

The autonomy granted to universities allows them to:

- Draw up their own statutes and, in the case of private universities, their own internal rules of organisation, operation, etc.
- Choose, designate and change their governing and representative bodies.
- Draw up plans for courses, research and specific areas of study. Study plans are fixed to a great extent by the Ministry, following the tradition of the national diploma.

There are two coordination bodies:

- The University Council (CU). It is composed of all the university rectors. Most proposals related to higher university education have to be reported on by the CU, although not necessarily its recommendations are compulsory.
- The Sectoral Education Conference, a meeting point for coordinating the diverse policies carried out by the different Autonomous Communities. It is composed of members of all the Autonomous Communities. The purpose of the presence of those responsible for CCAA Higher Education in the General Conference on University Policy, approved in the recent LOU reform, is to improve coordination tasks among universities, those responsible for CCAA Higher Education, and the central government.

## **2.2. Offer of short studies and other diversifies studies**

Universities may introduce new official courses, provided that they have received the authorisation of the autonomous region and the courses appear in the official catalogue of government-approved degrees. Under the proposed reform of the LOMLOU, all degrees would need to be included in the Register of Universities, Schools and Degrees, which would replace the catalogue. In addition, the Ministry will no longer issue specific directives for study plans. Universities will be totally autonomous for defining the content of their own degree courses.

## **2.3. Student choice**

A significant element to be considered is the high number of students that work and study at the same time. This circumstance can indicate low levels of coverage by scholarships and study grants in the country, and may have an effect on student academic performance.

People aged over 25 who wish to take university courses can gain access to university without having successfully completed the final, non-compulsory stage of secondary education or equivalent by following a special procedure that values the academic courses they have completed and, especially, their work experience.

## **2.4. Numerus clausus**

A number of vacancies is agreed at the General Conference of University Policy, paying particular attention to vacancies in medicine.

## **2.5. Regional/ European/ global mobility**

The trend towards internationalisation and globalisation in the Spanish tertiary education system has accelerated in recent decades and plays a significant role in shaping higher education policies. European convergence has taken this trend to a new level, affecting every aspect of university life.

Internationalisation and universities have gone hand in hand throughout History; however in our time the term acquires a specific meaning. Internationalisation policies that are being carried out in Spain can be put into context in the definition of *internationalisation* proposed by the International University Association (IAU) in 1999, which indicates that it is a process that involves an international or intercultural aspect or perspective into the four main functions of universities, which are teaching, research, services, and institutional administration. Due to this, both externally and internally, a fundamental change in higher education institutions is involved. Said change necessarily carries with it the establishment of institutional policies and strategies that attempt to stimulate and facilitate the internationalisation of higher education.

Because Spain belongs to both the European Union and the historical and cultural community of Latin America, a large proportion of its multilateral internationalisation initiatives in tertiary education are focused on Europe and Latin America.

This section focuses on Spanish university participation in convergence processes, international mobility and student and teacher exchange and their involvement in cooperation programmes, curriculum development and joint degree courses with institutions in other countries.

With views to promote the internationalisation of higher education, recently legislative reforms and political proposals have been carried out, both on a national level and by the CCAAs and Higher Education's own institutions, with the idea of favouring the access of foreign students to the Spanish university system: recognizing the access systems of other EU countries to allow foreigners to enrol in Spanish universities; making the recognition of foreign student university degrees more flexible; calling for scholarship and grant applications for the study of foreign languages. Universities have also centred on carrying out curricular initiatives implementing bilingual or shared classes and degrees, or preparing internships abroad for the last few years before graduation. Even a few have been putting into practice



their own initiatives to attract foreign students by translating their webpages into several languages or editing their guidebooks specifically for this type of group. These are some of the steps that are being carried out, mostly in Europe and Latin America. The result is that, in the 2008-2009 academic year, a total of 65581 foreign students were enrolled in a complete course in Spanish universities and an additional 31129 students only in the Erasmus Program.

## **Europe**

### ***The Bologna process***

The regulatory framework for implementation of the main instruments proposed in the Declarations and Communiqués of the Higher Education Ministers in Bologna (1999), Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007) and Louvain (2009) is complete. Regulations are already in force on the use of the credit system (September 2003), on the Diploma Supplement to be issued by universities (September 2003), on recognition and accreditation of degree courses and qualifications (January 2004) and on the organisation of university education and the regulation of graduate and postgraduate study (January 2005).<sup>32</sup>

The latest regulation developments reinforce the European nature of higher education and encourage the development of joint degree courses between Spanish and European universities. Up until now the main obstacles to recognising foreign qualifications in Spain have been the rigid requirements for accrediting degree courses. This is why there have been very few joint degree courses to date.

Most of the cooperation in education with the European Union has been channelled through the Socrates programme, the first stage of which was approved in 1995. The Socrates Agency in Spain, under the guidance of the General Subdirectorate of European Programmes at the Ministry of Education (ME), is responsible for managing Spain's participation in the Socrates programme, in collaboration with other ministry departments. The Socrates Programme's higher education program, known as Erasmus, aims to enhance the quality of education and reinforce its European dimension by encouraging transnational cooperation between universities, thus boosting European mobility and improving the transparency and academic recognition of courses and standards throughout the EU.

Since 2000, Spain has received the largest number of Erasmus students from the 31 participating countries. In the 2008-2009 academic year, more than 31,000 Erasmus students were enrolled in Spanish universities.. The participants came mainly from Italy (6,713), France (5,979) and Germany (5,594). In that same year, 24,984 Spanish Erasmus students were enrolled in universities in other European countries thus more than doubling the figure ten years before. The main host countries were Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Germany.

## **Latin America**

Due to Spain's historical ties with Latin America, cooperation with Latin American countries and Portugal has traditionally played a key role in the internationalisation of Spanish tertiary education. A substantial part of this cooperation work and of the commitments made at Ibero-American summits, has been carried out within the framework of the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), which has its headquarters in Madrid.

The OEI was set up at the First Ibero-American Congress on Education, held in Madrid in 1949 in the form of an international agency known as the Ibero-American Education Office. One of its most outstanding higher education cooperation initiatives is the Academic Mobility and Exchange Programme (PIMA) which started in 1999. This programme is organised into networks of least three universities from different countries working on specific themes. Courses of study completed in the host university must be recognised by the home university. The three rounds of exchanges organised to date have included a steadily growing number of (mainly public) universities from 18 Ibero-American countries.

Spain has also played a prominent part in the Ibero-American Science and Technology for Development Programme (CYTED). Created in 1984 as the result of an agreement between 19 Latin American countries, Spain and Portugal, CYTED is a scientific and technological cooperation programme for Latin America based on international and multilateral links across institutions. Its main goal is to contribute to the harmonious development of Ibero-America by establishing mechanisms for cooperation between university research groups, and by setting up research and development establishments and innovative companies in Ibero-America, with a view to producing scientific and technological developments that have practical applications in production systems and social policy.

Various public and private institutions in Spain foster cooperation and mobility between universities on both sides of the Atlantic. Besides the MAE-AECI grants awarded by the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, as mentioned in Section 10.4, the Carolina Foundation offers grants for young graduates, qualified professionals and researchers in the countries that make up the Ibero-American Community of Nations.

## **3. Evaluation**

### **3.1. Institutional evaluation**

In 2001, after 10 years' experience in quality assurance, the LOU formally introduced external quality assessment mechanisms based on objective criteria and transparent procedures. Degree courses and qualifications were to be regulated by guaranteeing the quality of

recognised degrees and syllabuses. Article 13 of the LOU states that assessment and accreditation are the responsibility of the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA) and such other higher education quality-assurance bodies as may be established by regional legislation. In 2002, in compliance with the LOU, the government created the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA). Since 1996, 11 autonomous regions have created their own quality assurance agencies.

As regards quality, the public Administration shall guarantee the quality of training offers and cooperate in the definition and implementation of the evaluation process of the National Qualification and Vocational Education and Training System after consultation with the General Council on Vocational Education, and taking into account the responsibilities of the Autonomous Communities. The Ministry of Education is coordinating the establishment of a quality network with the participation of the administrations of the Autonomous Communities.

## **Quality assurance in universities**

### ***Institutional assessment***

In April 2001 a new University Quality Plan was established. This Plan was a transitional arrangement between the PNECU and the activities due to be carried out and coordinated by the soon-to-be-created National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA). The goals of the Second University Quality Plan were:

- To continue the institutional assessment process and encourage universities to implement integrated quality assurance systems for continuous improvement.
- To promote the participation of the autonomous regions in implementing and managing the Second University Quality Plan, by encouraging the creation of regional agencies, with the aim of setting up a Network of University Quality Assurance Agencies overseen by the University Coordination Council.
- To develop methods in line with those in use in the rest of the European Union, so as to establish comparable standards for measuring quality performance.
- To create an information system using result-based evaluation and a catalogue of indicators that universities, government and society can use as a basis for decision-making.
- To establish a system for the accreditation of degree courses, qualification levels and academic institutions to guarantee compliance with international quality standards,

covering doctoral programmes and postgraduate education as well as undergraduate courses.

Both ANECA and AQU have a panel of foreign experts that form part of the Advisory Council that, basically, is responsible for using international standards to analyse the actions, methodologies, and tools used by ANECA. At the same time, it also acts as an external body as far as methodologies and best practices to be used are concerned.

Evaluation is intended to promote quality assessment and in so doing encourage the creation or maintenance of quality assurance processes in higher education. It is also intended to provide students and their families, society at large, university administrations and government bodies with information on the quality of university education and its future plans.

### *Self-assessment*

Self-assessment is the process by which the university to be assessed analyses and evaluates its present situation and draws up an evaluation report. Through self-assessment a university learns how each of its degree courses compares to the standard model, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and formulates proposals for improvement as the basis for an improvement plan. The parties involved in self-assessment are the university's Self-Assessment Committee and its Quality Department.

The Self-Assessment Committee is responsible for carrying out the actual self-assessment process. Ideally, it should be chaired by the head of the unit being assessed, who should also lead and coordinate the assessment. The Quality Department is responsible for providing the Self-Assessment Committee with all the information it needs in order to analyse the data obtained.

The information collected includes statistics, management data and indicators for the inputs, processes and results of the unit being assessed, as well as the results of any opinion and/or satisfaction surveys conducted among the unit's various stakeholder groups. The final result of this phase is a self-assessment report.

The Council of Universities developed self-assessment guidelines (which are improved with each call for submissions), detailing the steps to be taken. These guidelines also provide essential information on the role of the main agents involved, such as the Self-Assessment Committee, and explain the various tasks to be performed in this phase.

### *External assessment*

External assessment begins with an analysis of the self-assessment report by the External Evaluation Committee (CEE). The CEE is made up of evaluators from outside the unit to be

assessed. The evaluators are appointed by the competent agency, which guides and oversees the Committee's work. The composition of the committee will depend on the unit being assessed. As a rule, the committee is made up of experts in the field to which the unit to be assessed belongs such as an academic, a person from outside the university world and an expert in assessment methods. None of them have any connection to the institution being assessed.

The CEE analyses the self-assessment report and visits the unit in question. During the visit, the committee members will gather any data, opinions or judgments that help them make their own assessment. They must also have access to statistics, management data and indicators for the unit. Finally, the committee issues its recommendations and proposes improvements in an external assessment report, which is the final result of this phase.

The aim of the analysis is to guarantee quality standards in the agency or the institutions or the program (depending on the subject of the evaluation) and report back to society as a whole. The secondary aim is to become aware of and exchange good practices.

#### *Final report*

Before the final report is written, the external assessment report is subjected to as broad a public scrutiny as possible. The final report sums up the assessments of the various areas of the unit, as reflected in the internal and external assessment reports. The improvement plan for the unit is drawn up during this phase. The plan specifies the improvement actions identified in the self-assessment phase, the tasks to be performed in order to complete these actions, the people responsible, the resources required and the deadlines for completion. It also defines the indicators to be used to monitor progress, and outlines the expected benefits.

The final report is distributed to the unit concerned and subsequently submitted to the university's Quality Committee. A copy is also delivered to the appropriate agency in order that it may meet the stated objectives:

- To report to the supervisory body on the implementation and outcome of the assessment programme.
- To serve as a reference point for the university's Quality Committee in drawing up a university-wide assessment report.
- To commit the members of the unit that has been assessed to fully implementing the measures proposed in the report.

- To obtain the support of the university's Quality Committee for the proposed improvements, so that the committee facilitates and supports whatever measures are necessary.

### **Quality distinctions for doctoral programmes**

Quality distinction awards certify the quality of doctoral programmes. The quality distinction award is a way of recognising the scientific, technical and educational merit of doctoral programmes and of the groups or departments that provide doctoral education. Obtaining a quality distinction award entitles universities to grants from the Ministry of Education and Science. ANECA determines and applies the procedure for evaluating, auditing and validating applications for the award. The award of a quality distinction certifies compliance with objective standards and offers benefits in the form of recognition of the quality of doctoral studies.

In the 2004-2005 academic year, 55 universities (75.4% of Spanish universities) submitted doctoral programmes for the quality distinction award. Of the 800 programmes submitted, 565 (70.6%) obtained the quality distinction. They represented approximately 20% of all the doctoral programmes in Spain.

### **Other activities**

System of indicators for the Spanish public university system

The University Coordination Council (CCU) had defined and approved a catalogue of indicators to provide quantitative information about universities which will be useful to university administrators and users of university services and will allow comparisons to be made between universities.

SGU is working to promote information transparency and to develop information systems to enable the Indicators for the decision making and the quality assessment.

### **National agencies**

National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA)

ANECA is a state foundation established under private law. It is protected by the Ministry of Education and Science pursuant to Law 50/2002 on Foundations and to Royal Decree 316/1996, which enacted the regulation of foundations under the authority of the state. It receives approximately 99% of its funding from the Ministry of Education and Science, through the State Secretariat for Universities and Research. Under the Draft Organic Law to amend the LOU (30-06-2006), ANECA is classified as a government agency.

Its primary purpose is to provide assessment, certification and accreditation services for measuring the performance of the public university education system, following objective procedures and transparent processes. It also aims to promote and guarantee quality in public and private Spanish universities and facilitate their integration in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by reinforcing transparency and comparability.

ANECA fulfils the following functions:

- It fosters improvement of university teaching, research and management.
- It uses objective procedures and transparent processes to measure the performance of higher education.
- It gives the government the information it needs to make decisions.
- It informs society about how successful universities are in fulfilling their objectives.

ANECA achieves this through the following programmes:

- Institutional quality assessment
- Certification
- Quality distinctions for doctoral programmes
- Quality certificate for university library services
- Accreditation
- Assessment of teaching staff
- European convergence
- Training programme for evaluators
- Library service assessment programme
- Pilot project for the assessment of international relations
- Assessment of university teacher training plans

ANECA is also required to report to the Ministry of Education and Science and the CCU on the progress of assessment, certification and accreditation processes in Spain. To do so, it is entitled gather information from assessment bodies in the autonomous regions.

#### *National Committee for the Assessment of Research Activity (CNEAI)*

The National Committee for the Assessment of Research Activity (CNEAI) was created more than a decade ago. It is an agency which belongs to the Ministry of, under its General Directorate of Universities. Its task is to assess the research activity of university teaching staff and scientists on the research staff scale of the Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC), with a view to granting research bonuses.

The CNEAI assesses the research activity of university academics and CSIC researchers in order to decide whether to grant a six-yearly productivity bonus. The assessment is conducted

annually. To obtain the productivity bonus, researchers must submit research work carried out over a period of not less than six years. To make its assessments, the CNEAI uses Advisory Committees made up of experts to examine submissions. The CNEAI may also appoint other experts for advice in specific areas or for other tasks.

The members of the advisory committees are appointed by the Chairperson of the CNEAI, at the CNEAI's request and in consultation with the Academic Committee of the University Coordinating Council. They are selected from among university professors and CSIC research professors. As a rule, members are appointed for a maximum of 2 years, except for the Chairperson, who may serve for a third year.

#### *National Agency for Assessment and Prospective Studies (ANEP)*

The National Agency for Assessment and Prospective Studies (ANEP) is a unit attached to the State Secretariat for Universities and Research at the Ministry of Education. ANEP was created in 1986 to meet the need for rigorous and independent assessment to support decision-making on research project funding and other subsidies for research, development and innovation.

ANEP's mission is to provide objective and independent assessment of the scientific and technical merit of research proposals, research teams and research units that apply for funding to participate in research and/or technology programmes and projects. It also monitors the results of the funded projects and programmes.

Another of ANEP's tasks is to carry out prospective studies and analyses of scientific research and technological development. Prospective studies analyse the present state of knowledge in a particular field (in this case a scientific field) and its future development prospects. These studies are indispensable for determining strategies and guiding policy-making in science and technology. ANEP's assessments play a vital part in ensuring that resource allocation decisions for research, development and innovation are made on the basis of excellence and scientific and technical quality.

#### *Regional quality assurance agencies*

To date, 11 autonomous regions have created their own agencies. Two of them did so before the Organic Law of Universities (LOU) came into force: the Quality Assurance Agency for the University System in Catalonia (AQU), in 1996, and the Quality Assurance Unit for Universities in Andalusia (UCUA), in 1998.

## **4. Funding rules**

In the last few decades, university funding requirements in Spain have increased steadily, due to the expansion of the university system and rising enrolment rates. On the other hand,



funding has become a regional responsibility. As a result, the traditional incremental allocation systems have been progressively abandoned in favour of regulation-based or formula-based models. At the same time, university institutions have made a greater commitment to defining their functional goals, increasing their productive efficiency, achieving more transparent results and becoming more embedded in society and in the economy.

The Spanish public university system has four main sources of funding:

- *Regional government subsidies.* Each autonomous region is responsible for the general funding and investments of the public universities in its region.
- *Student aid.* The central government is responsible for most grants and scholarships. The student aid system represents 0.08% of GDP.
- *Tuition fees.* Student fees are not particularly high and they represent around 18% of total costs.
- *Revenue from research activities and other services.* These funds come mainly from knowledge transfer, continuing education, contracts, patents, collaboration agreements with other institutions or individuals and the creation of foundations and other entities. Central government and the European Union, through their competitive Call for Proposals are an important part of these sources.

The regional subsidy that each university receives is given to universities in different ways depending on each government. Traditionally an incrementalist model was in use in all regions. In the early 90s, the Valencian Community was the first to implement a formula-based model made up of basic funding (closely related to student numbers) and a goal-oriented funding component linked to performance. This model, with different variations, has recently been implemented in most regions which have several universities.

Most models link a proportion of funding to performance indicators or are connected to specific programme-contracts with each university in order to improve performance. These programme-contracts are adopted by regional Parliaments and usually cover 4 years. In addition, autonomous regions provide funds for infrastructure and for improving facilities by means of multi-year investment plans.

The General conference on University Policy and the University Council has created a “joint Commission for the financing of the university system”, where autonomous regions, central administration and universities are represented and so can benefit from coordination on this particular issue. This Commission should propose a basic model for the financing of the

Spanish Universities for 2015, as an agreement between autonomous regions and central administration.

Public funds are the main source of funding for university R&D&I. There are two types of public funding: general university funds, and funds allocated to specific R&D&I projects. The first type takes the form of a general subsidy that universities receive from the corresponding autonomous governments which covers research and teaching activities. In the Autonomous regions' University Funding Plans the methods of allotment of resources are established as well as the weight that research has in the allotment of resources. For example, in the case of the 2006-2010 Community Funding Plan, part of the funding is conditional on research results. The second type of funding takes the form of grants, most of which are awarded by the National Research Plan through annual public competitions.

The system of grants and scholarships of the central government has the objective of ensuring an access to education for those in most vulnerable socioeconomic situation, irrespective of the region. The system is income threshold based, but it also grants aids to those that must change residence because of studies. In addition to that there is a system of student loans to support enrollment in masters and doctorates. These loans have zero interest rate and must be repaid in 15 years.

At public universities, students are required to cover a portion of the cost of their education by paying tuition fees. Each autonomous region establishes the fees for courses that lead to official university degrees, within a range established by the central government. The board of trustees of each university establishes the fees for all other (i.e. university-specific) courses. Students at public universities can have their fees fully or partially waived in exchange for providing academic services and other collaborative university services activities.

Private universities are not eligible for public funding (although they can apply for competitive research funds). Therefore, educational costs are totally covered by the students through tuition fees. Each private university sets its own fees.

## 5. Impact on Employability

### Unemployment rates (1997-2007)

Year	With higher education	With secondary education only
1997	13,7	16,8
1999	11,1	13,4
2001	6,9	8,5
2003	7,7	9,6
2005	6,1	7,5
2007	4,8	7,2

1) Integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European labour market

Spanish higher education policy aimed at integration into the EHEA, which will involve creating courses that can be more easily compared at a European level and greater focus on student learning, will also entail new relations with the labour market. The European Diploma Supplement will facilitate student mobility and integration into the European labour market, as it is an easier, more transparent mechanism for conveying information on the knowledge acquired by students to other universities and European institutions.

Introducing the European credit as the unit of educational attainment involves evaluating all the work carried out by students on their courses and not just the hours spent in class. This will make it easier to insert in-company work placements into students' academic records, thus promoting greater contact with the labour market at an earlier stage.

Higher vocational education, whose curricula are currently under revision, is going to be credit counted in order to facilitate further university studies, since, using a different counting measure, like ECVET, would make such progression difficult to fulfil.

Another consequence of the integration of Spanish tertiary education into the EHEA is the definition of the Spanish Qualification Framework for the EHEA. This framework, which is currently under development, will allow learning processes to be defined in relation to the competencies required by the labour market. This framework will help to transform the design of degree courses at university level thus bringing them closer to real social and economic demands.

2) Other initiatives in the universities:

- Universities often have centres (COIEs), that provide career guidance and information to graduates and final year students who are looking for work or wish to know more about educational and professional opportunities. These centres facilitate access to work placements in companies and vocational education and labour market insertion courses, the organisation of forums to promote contact between students and local businesses, and offer companies a free pre-selection service for certain posts.
- In recent years, there has been an increase in agreements between universities and companies intended to facilitate student access to work placements as part of the curriculum..

- ANECA runs a labour market insertion observatory and ANECA, some regional quality assurance agencies and many universities carry out studies on labour market insertion of young graduates.
- Two initiatives are currently underway involving work placement programs in European companies: the Argo and Faro projects. The Argo project is intended for university graduates from any Spanish university and provides 840 work placement programmes in European companies, with an average duration of six months. The Faro project consists of 500 grants to enable students in the final years of their university courses in Spain to do a period of work placements in European companies, with an average length of six months per grant. Both initiatives are part of the European Union's Leonardo da Vinci programme, and are coordinated by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science.

### 3) Higher vocational education

In the Spanish education system, vocational education has excellent direct links with the working world. All vocational education courses include a specific module carried out in the workplace, which constitutes an ideal way for pupils to become familiar with work situations and establish direct contact with the working world. However, pupils are never directly employed by the company. Training modules established in the workplace have become one of the most effective means of obtaining employment. Pupils who have carried out work placement schemes in a company are often employed by the same company when they graduate. Students who successfully complete higher vocational education studies obtain an Advanced Technician (*Técnico Superior*) degree.

### 4) Special vocational courses

The qualifications obtained after following special vocational courses are professional qualifications that enable students to enter the labour market. Vocational education courses in Visual Arts and Design contain a phase of practical training in companies, studios and workshops, which has become a key tool for labour market insertion. In Sports Education, all students take a professional development module, which guides and facilitates their insertion in the labour market. It contains information on the labour market, professional associations, and legal requirements for exercising the profession of advanced sports specialist. Students who successfully complete these studies obtain a university diploma.

## 6. Recent and planned reforms of the tertiary education system

The so called University Strategy 2015, already adopted, is a global strategy that aims to position Spanish universities among the best in Europe by 2015, and ensure that the university system as a whole continues to progress towards excellence:

- It adapts the study programs to the EHEA, while giving universities more flexibility. The Council of Universities has approved 1,235 bachelor's degrees, 1,527 masters and 972 doctorates, which will be included in the curriculum as from the 2009-2010 academic year. More than 50% of the new qualifications will be included as from the 2009-2010 academic year once approved by their respective Autonomous Communities. All qualifications on offer in the 2010-2011 academic year are expected to conform to the EHEA, in compliance with Spain's commitment with Europe. Other lines of action in the area of adaptation to the EHEA include: creation of a Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES), which includes levels for bachelor, master and doctoral degrees; promotion of lifelong learning through the creation of a framework that recognizes it as part of higher education; and promotion of research in the area of humanities.
- But the University Strategy 2015 is more ambitious and goes beyond, looking to the 2015 horizon. In this sense, and among other initiatives, it is worth mentioning:
  - The International Campus of Excellence Programme. The Programme will fund institutions which share a campus and draft a common strategy with a view to creating an academic, scientific, entrepreneurial and innovative environment with a high level of international visibility and to being an international benchmark campus. Eighty-four per cent of public and one-third of private universities in Spain responded to the first Campus of Excellence announcement; the 15 most outstanding, ambitious and viable projects will awarded funding.
  - The university and R&D. On the one hand, the new Law on Science and Technology (being drafted currently) will coordinate the role the mission of Universities in researching. In addition to that, a new researcher career must be defined, more modern, open, international and competitive. On the other hand, the General Pan for Transfer of Knowledge and Technology will create a new model of transfer of knowledge and technology to increase competitiveness and create new productive activities.
  - Adoption and implementation of a new Teachers and Researchers Statue and the Students Statue.

- Funding. As mentioned earlier, the goal is to promote an agreement among central government, universities and regional governments on a financing system for 2015.
- Internationalization. Internationalization of Universities must be promoted, among other, by increasing financing to the Erasmus program, promoting the mobility of researchers and teachers, etc.
- Improve the system of grants and loans to students.
- Increase the use of expost evaluations, by redefining the role of current institutions (ANEP, CENAI, ANECA) and strengthening their coordination with regional institutions.