

Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA

Proposal of indicators for P4-P6

Produced by the BFUG Working Group on Social Dimension – SUBGROUP 2

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Principles

4. **Reliable data is a necessary precondition for an evidence-based improvement of the social dimension of higher education.** Higher education systems should define the purpose and goals of collecting certain types of data, taking into account the particularities of the national legal frameworks. Adequate capacities to collect, process and use such data to inform and support the social dimension of higher education should be developed.

Guidelines:

- a. In order to develop effective policies, continuous national data collection is necessary. Within the limits of national legal frameworks, such data collection should provide information on the composition of the student body, access and participation, drop-out and completion of higher education, including the transition to the labour market after completion of studies, and allow for the identification of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.
- b. In order to make such data collection comparable internationally, work on categories for administrative data collection that are relevant for the social dimension should be developed at the EHEA level through Eurostudent or similar surveys. With the aim to rationalize the process and avoid administrative burden on public administration and higher education institutions, this development should take account of existing national practices and relevant data collection processes.
- c. Such national data collection exercises could, where relevant and necessary, be complemented by higher education institutions undertaking additional surveys, research and analysis to better understand vulnerability, disadvantages, and underrepresentation in education, as well as transitions of students across the education system.

Indicators

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| 1. Existence of policies at the system/HEI level that define the purposes of data collection and the methods for such data collection |
| 2. The existence and frequency of centralised administrative national data collection on the composition of student body in HEI |
| 3. The existence of graduate tracking surveys at institutional and/or national level |
| 4. The existence of institutional and/or national surveys on the social dimension of HE (covering some or all topics from Eurostudent Survey) |
| 5. Participation in Eurostudent survey |
| 6. Participation in Eurograduate survey |

The collection of national data regarding access and participation, drop-out and completion of higher education combined with student background characteristics (such as age, gender, ethnicity, family background etc.), educational characteristics (EQF level, fields of study, mode of study, full-time/part-time etc).
7. The employment of internationally comparable taxonomies for data collection (e.g. ISCED for fields of study, EQF for levels of study, the definitions of multirank for underrepresented, disadvantages and vulnerable groups etc.)
8. The availability of datasets from administrative/surveys for research purposes.
9. How often top-level authorities collect (administrative/national survey) data on higher education student characteristics
10. What kind of collecting methodology is used e.g qualitative, quantitative or combination of the two of them
11. PA provides support in financial means/ tools/ other support for HEIs to undertake research and analysis on higher education students.
12. PA and HEI can provide information on the percentage spent on research and data collection on higher education students
13. Existence of organisational support structures at the system/ HEI level for representatives of the target groups to be able to autonomously consult the design, implementation and evaluation of data collection exercises.
14. How many first gen / second gen / third gen or more students are there? How selective is the school system prior to higher education? How does it affect social permeability in higher education?
15. How much time do students have to put into work and how much into their studies each week? How is one's study progression impacted by (not) having to work?
16. What are the factors hindering prospective students from accessing/participation/completion HE?
17. Administrative data collected at first enrolment and at (each) graduation combined with type of HE, degree level attended and field of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sex/Gender (whatever is available) ● Age ● Highest secondary school degree and location (domestic/abroad) ● Traditional / non-traditional access route to HE ● Educational background of parents (guardians) by ISCED-Levels ● Migration background of parents (guardians) ● Full or part time student ● Residence status and working permission ● Persons belonging to recognised ethnic or linguistic minorities in the respective country
18. Data collected from student surveys combined with type of HE, degree level attended and field of study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial difficulties ● Mental health situation ● Impairment/ chronic disease ● Caring (and financial) duties (children or other) ● Hours of paid employment per week ● Time span between finishing school and starting university studies ● Participation in student mobility ● All indicators from above to be able to cross the variables

19. Data collected on transition of graduates to the labour market after completion of studies:

- If possible from administrative data (e.g. social security system), alternatively from graduate surveys
- Was gainful employment intended after graduation?
- When did you take up your first job after graduation (before, x months after)?
- Employment status 6 months, 12 months and 36 months after leaving university (graduates and dropouts)
- Limited or unlimited contract
- Full or part time working
- Job related to studies (horizontally (field) and vertically (degree level))
- Graduates still in country/ share of graduates who have left the country

? if and how to distinguish between domestic, international and degree mobile students

5. Public authorities should have policies that enable higher education institutions to ensure effective counselling and guidance for potential and enrolled students in order to widen their access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies. These services should be coherent across the entire education system, with special regard to transitions between different educational levels, educational institutions and into the labour market.

Guidelines:

- a. Public authorities should create conditions that enable collaboration between different public institutions that provide counselling and guidance services together with higher education institutions in order to create synergies and omit duplication of similar services. These services should uphold the principles of clarity and user-friendliness, because end users must be capable to understand them easily.
- b. Within a diverse student body, special attention should be directed towards students with physical and psychological health challenges. These students should have access to professional support to secure their success in accessing and completing higher education studies. Special focus should be placed on prevention of psychological challenges caused by the organisation of study and students' living conditions.
- c. Public authorities should also consider setting up ombudsperson-type institutions that will have the capacity and knowledge to mediate any conflicts, particularly related to equity issues that may arise during accessing or participating in higher education, or conflicts that hinder the completion of studies.

Indicators

1. The existence of a top-level legal requirement to provide academic guidance services/ psychological counselling services/ careers guidance services to

- Upper secondary school students
- higher education students
- adults interested in accessing higher education

2. The existence of a top level requirement provide services to mediate any conflicts during accessing or participating in higher education, or conflicts that hinder the completion of studies.
3. The provision of guidance services, psychological counselling services and careers guidance services within HEIs. The number/share of HEIs guidance services, psychological counselling services and careers guidance services within the country linked to characteristics of HEIs (public/private, region, number of students enrolled etc)
4. The existence of synergies between different public institutions that provide counselling and guidance services with higher education institutions
5. The existence of ombuds offices in HEIs. The number/share of HEI with ombuds offices within the country linked to characteristics of HEIs (public/private, region, number of students enrolled etc)
6. PA can provide information on the percentage of budget spent on - counselling and guidance services. - services to mediate any conflicts during accessing or participating in higher education, or conflicts that hinder the completion of studies.
7. The existence of laws that make the quality assurance of counselling and conflict mediating services a requirement. Who is legally responsible?
8. The existence of mechanisms and/or guidelines for internal and external quality assurance of guidance services, psychological counselling services and careers guidance services provided within HEIs.
9. Can academic guidance services/ psychological counselling services/ careers guidance services be accessed by all higher education students? // Do guidance services focus on students with specific characteristics and needs?
10. Data collected on - Mental health and wellbeing of students (ability to balance social life) - who would students turn to if they needed academic guidance, psychological counselling, careers guidance or services to mediate any conflicts during.. - if students are aware of existing counselling and guidance services as well as services to mediate any conflicts - Experiences of discrimination - Classroom experience
11. Is there a legally recognised autonomous student led body to hear and democratically represent all students regardless of..
12. Survey among potential students (at least during last year in school and on non-traditional pathway to HE) ● Sex/Gender (whatever is available) ● Age ● Type of school ● Educational background of parents (guardians) by ISCED-Levels ● Migration background of parents (guardians) ● Residence status and working permission ● Impairment/ chronic disease ● Financial situation of family ● What kind of counselling and information do they need? ● What kind of counselling and information do they get? ● Helpfulness of the counselling ● Potential barriers to HE
13. Survey among students ● In addition to indicators from Principle 4

- Awareness of any counselling specifically for students on study career, transition to labour market, mental health, impairments/chronical disease, student mobility, financial issues, any specific group of students (e.g. with children, first generation)
- Use of such counselling
- Helpfulness of the counselling
- Awareness of an ombuds(wo)man

6. Public authorities should provide sufficient and sustainable funding and financial autonomy to higher education institutions enabling them to build adequate capacity to embrace diversity and contribute to equity and inclusion in higher education.

Guidelines:

- a. Higher education funding systems should facilitate the attainment of strategic objectives related to the social dimension of higher education. Higher education institutions should be supported and rewarded for meeting agreed targets in widening access, increasing participation in and completion of higher education studies, in particular in relation to vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. Mechanisms for achieving these targets should not have negative financial consequences to higher education institutions core funding.
- b. Financial support systems should aim to be universally applicable to all students, however, when this is not possible, the public student financial support systems should be primarily needs-based and should make higher education affordable for all students, foster access to and provide opportunities for success in higher education. They should mainly contribute to cover both the direct costs of study (fees and study materials) and the indirect costs (e.g. accommodation, which is becoming increasingly problematic for students across the EHEA due to the increased housing, living, and transportation costs, etc.).

Indicators
1. The extent to which additional public funding is attributed based on the attainment of targets by higher education institutions for widening access, increasing participation or completing higher education
2. Are any specific characteristics of academic and/or administrative staff considered for determining the amount of public funding that higher education institutions receive?
3. Are there special fundings for programmes concerning the advancement of women or other vulnerable groups?
4. The number/share for short, first, second and third cycle students that receive needs-based and universal grants linked to student characteristics
5. The existence of grants for short, first, second and third cycle students to cover direct and for indirect costs and criteria for providing such grants.
6. The number/share of short, first, second and third cycle students that receive grants to cover direct and indirect costs
7. The extent to which additional public funding is attributed based on the socio-economic context of higher education institutions
8. The extent to which additional public funding is attributed based on the characteristics of the academic and administrative staff of higher education institutions

<p>9. Survey to HEIs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barriers to build adequate capacity to embrace diversity and contribute to equity and inclusion in higher education
<p>10. Is there a mechanism to ensure the automatic valorization of financial aid? Is the financial aid comparably high to other federal social benefits or significantly lower / higher?</p>
<p>11. How much do students generally need to work in order to afford to study? How much do students depend on their families to help them financially? What are the consequences if one does not have any family support?</p>
<p>12. How affordable / expensive is the housing situation at one particular university location? What are the most popular housing choices? Is there governmental financial aid to cover the housing costs?</p>
<p>13. Data from government authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is a specific part of the funding of higher education institutions earmarked specifically for embracing the diversity, equity and inclusion of the student body? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes, what is the share of total funding? ● Is a certain part of the total university budget specifically earmarked for the promotion of diversity, equality and inclusion of the student body, which is given to institutions other than the universities themselves?

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

This glossary defines the three central terms in this document, namely underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students. The definitions are not to be understood as legal definitions and therefore do not conflict with any existing legal regulations, rather they are intended as explanatory definitions used in relation to the contents of the Principles and Guidelines.

Underrepresented students:

A group of learners is underrepresented in relation to certain characteristics (e.g. gender, age, nationality, geographic origin, socio-economic background, ethnic minorities) if its share among the students is lower than the share of a comparable group in the total population. This can be documented at the time of admission, during the course of studies or at graduation. Individuals usually have several underrepresented characteristics, which is why combinations of underrepresented characteristics ("intersectionality") should always be considered. Furthermore, underrepresentation can also impact at different levels of higher education – study programme, faculty or department, higher education institution, higher education system. This definition is complementary to the London Communiqué, *"that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations"*, but does not fully cover it.

Disadvantaged students:

Disadvantaged students often face specific challenges compared to their peers in higher education. This can take many forms (e.g. disability, low family income, little or no family support, orphan, many school moves, mental health, pregnancy, having less time to study, because one has to earn ones living by working or having caring duties). The disadvantage may be permanent, may occur from time to time or only for a limited period. Disadvantaged students can be part of an underrepresented group, but do not have to be. Therefore, disadvantaged and underrepresented are not synonymous.

Vulnerable students:

Vulnerable students may be at risk of disadvantage (see above) and in addition have special (protection) needs. For example, because they suffer from an illness (including mental health) or have a disability, because they are minors, because their residence permit depends on the success of their studies (and thus also on decisions made by individual teachers), because they are at risk of being discriminated against. These learners are vulnerable in the sense that they may not be able to ensure their personal well-being, or that they may not be able to protect themselves from harm or exploitation and need additional support or attention.