

2012-15

ACHIEVE THE DEMOCRATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

the challenge of the first cycle

Over and above training and research, higher education plays a major role in the guidance and professional future of a very large number of young people. In our country, employability is strongly dependent upon the level of qualification, and future roles in society are essentially decided, too often irreversibly, at the end of the initial training period.

*Between 1970 and 2010,
the total number of students increased from
850,000 to 2.3 million*

*In 2010,
42% of people leaving the education system
held a higher education qualification*

The higher education landscape is also characterised by its heterogeneity: vocational training courses (licences to exercise a trade, BTS vocational training certificates, DUT University Technical Diplomas, post-baccalaureate establishments) have developed alongside traditional channels (classic university and college disciplines) and many have opted for a selective recruitment method. In practice, these different paths offer opportunities for success and present very unequal risks of failure and dropout. Universities are virtually the only higher education institutions today which are open to everyone post-baccalaureate. But the means available to them in terms of educational support are proportionately much inferior to those of other options. In these circumstances degree courses give rise to high rates of failure which lead to considerable wastage both in human and financial terms, which particularly affects young people from the working class, all the more so when they hold a technological or vocational baccalaureate diploma.

The ESEC is of the view that a priori regulation of student admissions in the various options cannot be a real solution and in fact goes against the objective of the democratisation of higher education.

In order to give impetus to a successful outcome they emphasise two key guidelines:

- on the one hand, promote a better balance between the different baccalaureate holder profiles in the recruitment of the technical and vocational education structures (particularly IUT institut universitaire de technologie and STS section de technicien supérieur);
- on the other hand, provide assistance and support for first-year degree students so that they can achieve real success at university.

The problems which today's universities would face in adapting should nonetheless not be underestimated and in particular the financial problems involved in such a transformation. The debate should take place, with whatever is needed, in respect of the various possible sources of finance.

*50% qualified
in higher education
in each age group
is a national
and European objective*

*Only 30% of those enrolled
obtain a university qualification
in 3 years*



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BETTER FOCUS AND GUIDANCE

- **Develop**, in advance of the final year, relevant information relating to strategic decisions to be taken;
- **Strengthen** training for guidance-psychologist counsellors and provision of information for secondary school teachers and CPEs (Principal Educational Advisers) about higher education;

*Universities only admit
56% of students
compared to
75 % in 1970*

DEVELOP THE COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF THE VARIOUS HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTES AVAILABLE AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL

*Less than 46%
of general baccalaureate holders
choose
nowadays to go to university*

- **Make** the STS and IUT play a full role in the admission of technological and professional baccalaureate holders and increase the number of places on offer in these sectors
- **Develop** the links between universities and post-baccalaureate school classes to facilitate appropriate directional adjustments and the validation of acquired knowledge

RESTORE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEREBY ENSURE SUCCESS

- A plan for success in the first cycle
 1. **Improve teaching conditionst**
 - Systematise teaching in small groups and limit the number of lectures;
 - Ensure that occurrences of failure/dropout are monitored;
 - Expand tutoring and the use of teaching supervisors;
 2. **Improve the induction of students**
 - Improve information about university services and make them more accessible to students;
 - Promote community life in universities, which is a socialisation factor for students;
 3. **Improve the transition between high school and university**
 - Prepare school children at secondary level for independent work based on the reintroduction of tutored personal work in the final year;
 - Reduce the number of qualification headings and give a more multidisciplinary character to teaching in the first cycle;
 - Take into account the needs of students through the introduction of upgrade modules and adjustment training at the beginning of a course.
- **Provide** staff with all the necessary means to carry out their jobs successfully
 - Ensure that all teachers in higher education receive teacher training;
 - Promote the organisation of teaching teams to mentor students in the first cycle;
 - Put in place a multi-year plan for recruiting teacher-researchers;
- **Emphasise** the career-centred aspects of university training
 - Expand the use of work placements and develop the use of “sandwich” courses;
 - Entrust the professional training of public and local authority employees to the universities;
 - Develop continued adult education at university;

FINANCING AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING

- **Put an end** to the underfunding in university training in order to take greater account of the mentoring needs of the students;
- **Better coordinate** the activities of the various government departments with responsibility for higher education establishments;
- **Finalise** regional plans for higher education in a structured way with a national education map.