

New Perspectives for Learning - Briefing Paper 57

Reforming higher education for lifelong learning and enlargement of the European Union

This is an Interim Briefing Paper of the project that started in November 2001

Context of the Research

Across the world institutions are being encouraged to widen participation to learning and increase access to higher education for up to half the workforce. There is also pressure on higher education to provide portable, economically relevant qualifications within a system that is fully accountable. Within Europe including countries that are soon to join the European Union, there is a need to accommodate a diversity of cultural and economic influences whilst moving towards a compatible qualifications system.

This project has established the Higher Education Reform Network to explore how different cultural contexts influence the procedures for the governance, decision-making, quality assurance and accountability of higher education with particular reference to issues of gender, disability, access and inclusion. It aims to help improve European integration strategies for the future and involves organisations from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Sweden, Poland and the United Kingdom.

Key Issues

Within the framework of the states of the European Union together with the accession and candidate countries, the network is addressing the key question:

“What is the relationship between higher education and society in a world of change?”.

The key issues are those that define this relationship, especially:

- Past and present social trends and their consequences for higher education;
- Value systems underlying national strategic and decision making processes that apply to higher education in a changing society;
- The implications for higher education systems of policies to assure inclusion with particular reference to the roles of gender and disability;
- Higher education’s responsibility towards the development of tomorrow’s “European” citizens;
- The implications for higher education of the development of lifelong learning and continuing education;

This Briefing Paper has been prepared by pjb Associates with funding from the EC DG for Research

- The perceived and actual relationships between higher education and transitions to work.

Further Information

The full title of the project is: "Higher Education Reform Network". The final report is due in October 2004.

The project web site at: <http://www.hereform.net/>

[Partner details](#)

Key Publications

No publications have been produced yet, but work in progress can be seen on the project web site.

Research Institutions

University of Surrey Roehampton, London, United Kingdom

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Sofia University, Sofia , Bulgaria

Centre for Higher Education Studies, Prague, Czech Republic

Department of Psychology, National and Capodestrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

Continuing Education Development Foundation, Ministry of Education, Riga, Latvia

Centre for Educational Research, Vytauto Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania

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