



EUA

European University Association

University Autonomy in Europe III **Country Profiles**



APRIL 2017

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University Autonomy
in Europe III
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Foreword

In 2007 the European University Association (EUA) started to collect data on university autonomy to provide a foundation for a Europe-wide comparable database through the analysis of certain crucial aspects of autonomy. The starting point for this was rooted in the basic four dimensions set out in EUA's Lisbon declaration from the same year, that is to say, organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy.



The first study “University Autonomy I” released in 2009 compared 34 European countries in the four key areas of autonomy. The EUA Autonomy Scorecard, which was launched in 2011 developed for the first time a methodology to score and compare data on university autonomy. A core set of over 30 indicators was developed to offer an institutional perspective on institutional freedom.

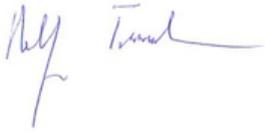
Since then EUA has contributed to many national policy dialogues and reform processes by providing a comparative and more detailed picture of the different elements of university autonomy. EUA's work has been essential in moving the debate on university autonomy from a basic discussion on the need for more autonomy in exchange for more accountability, to a more in-depth structured and fruitful exchange that allows benchmarking and setting of concrete reform procedures on a more objective footing.

While acknowledging that there are different models and that comparing autonomy can never be completely objective, the dialogue developed through EUA's comparative approach in the last 10 years has set the basic principles and conditions which universities need to have to best fulfil their missions and tasks. We are proud that the EUA Autonomy Scorecard has become the reference in discussions and analysis of institutional autonomy in, but also beyond, Europe.

“University Autonomy in Europe III” provides a timely update 10 years after the beginning of the first data collection. With the release of 29 country profiles, it offers more qualitative information which allows a description of developments that cannot be measured or scored. It also gives the opportunity to our collective members to reflect on the current challenges and future developments.

The analysis reveals that there is no uniform trend towards university autonomy in Europe. The present update uncovers the diversity of settings in which universities evolve. Our monitoring indeed shows that the topic continues to be heavily discussed across Europe. In a tense international political environment, promoting university autonomy as a core principle continues to be highly relevant and important, as attempts to limit or undermine it can take many forms. Therefore, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard seeks to support a structured, fact-based dialogue, in partnership with the sector and public authorities.

Finally, I would like to thank the presidents and secretaries general of our national rectors' conferences and their expert staff, who have again contributed to make this update possible. I also invite all our members to make good use of the Scorecard and EUA's expertise to contribute to further reform processes in their countries.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rolf Tarrach', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor Rolf Tarrach

EUA President

Acknowledgments

Monitoring, comparing, and measuring different elements of institutional autonomy in around 30 European higher education systems has been an ambitious undertaking from its beginning in 2007. The Autonomy Scorecard has become one of EUA's flagship tools which could only be possible through the active support of many individuals and organisations. The update in 2017 has met new challenges, not only because of the expectations, but also because of the additional complexity to compare development over time. "University Autonomy in Europe III" covers more elements than the previous editions and includes 29 country profiles next to the comparative analysis and an updated scorecard tool.

EUA is deeply grateful for the active support of its collective members. The input, expertise and commitment of the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences and their expert staff, since the beginning of collecting data for the first report on University Autonomy, were instrumental in the success of the Autonomy Scorecard.

The many EUA Council members who made use of the Autonomy Scorecard in their national debates to improve the higher education systems in their countries have made it possible for this work to be used not only in an academic context, but more importantly in policy development to improve autonomy in Europe.

We would further like to thank the many partners, experts and individuals who have been involved in the development, dissemination and use of EUA's work on autonomy throughout the last decade. In this way, they have contributed to making the EUA Autonomy Scorecard the reference in discussions and reflections on institutional autonomy.

We would also like to thank experts and colleagues at EUA who have helped during various stages and with diverse input: Catherine Marston and Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik for their support in the first part of the development, in particular with the interviews, protocols and country descriptions, and Christel Vacelet, Jessica Carter and Imane Benchaou for their support with regard to communication and design.

Enora Bennetot Pruvot, co-author of the reports, deserves particular acknowledgement, not only for writing and undertaking parts of the interviews, but also for her committed work on the data analysis, scoring work and engagement in the complex validation that was so crucial for delivering the update in time for the 10th anniversary of EUA's work on university autonomy in Europe.

We hope that this update will again be used extensively to support holistic and coherent reforms of higher education systems across Europe and beyond.

Thomas Estermann

Director Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development

Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

1. Introduction

1.1 Nature and objectives

University governance and the relationship between the state and higher education institutions are issues that have generated intense debate and reflection over the past decade. Institutional autonomy is widely considered as an important prerequisite for modern universities to be able to develop institutional profiles and to deliver efficiently on their missions. Discussions around university governance and autonomy emerged across Europe in different contexts as a response to diverse challenges. As a result, the need became manifest to develop a common terminology and structure to address such an important topic, with an increasing demand for comparability and benchmarking across borders.

The EUA Autonomy Scorecard, which was first launched in 2011, offers a methodology to collect, compare and weight data on university autonomy. A core set of autonomy indicators was developed to offer an institutional perspective on institutional freedom.

The Scorecard is based on more than 30 different core indicators in four key dimensions of autonomy. These include:

- organisational autonomy (covering academic and administrative structures, leadership and governance);
- financial autonomy (covering the ability to raise funds, own buildings, borrow money and set tuition fees);
- staffing autonomy (including the ability to recruit independently, promote and develop academic and non-academic staff);
- academic autonomy (including study fields, student numbers, student selection as well as the structure and content of degrees).

By generating information on the current state of university autonomy and governance reforms, the Scorecard allows a more successful benchmarking of national policies with regard to university autonomy as well as the exchange of good practice. On one hand, the scorecard provides European institutions and policy-makers with data, which inform decision-making processes and feed into initiatives aimed at driving the modernisation of European higher education. On the other hand, it contributes to raising awareness in the university sector of the changes needed to create a regulatory environment favourable to university autonomy.

1.2 The added value of the Autonomy Scorecard

The original Autonomy Scorecard report and the ensuing University Autonomy Online Tool were largely welcomed and extensively used by the EUA membership, and in particular the national rectors' conferences, in the context of national policy debates. Both the report and the tool were instrumental in providing an updated overview of the state of university autonomy in Europe and allowed systems to benchmark themselves in this context. EUA contributed with tailor-made comparisons and advice in many national policy debates.

The scorecard methodology has further been used in the ATHENA project to contribute to the development, reform and modernization of higher education systems in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Data has also been used by EUA to inform policy discussions at European level to provide information on what universities can do independently and where there are limitations. EUA's campaign on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), for example, has used the information on the limited capacity of universities to take loans to inform policy-makers, which has been essential to avoid further cuts to Horizon 2020, the European Framework Programme for Research.

Since its creation, the scorecard has become the point of reference when discussing university autonomy.

1.3 From the Exploratory Study to the Autonomy Scorecard and its update

EUA's report "University Autonomy in Europe I" (Estermann & Nokkala 2009) provided an important basis for the development of the Autonomy Scorecard. This first study provided the basis for the list of indicators and sets of related restrictions. "University Autonomy in Europe II, The Scorecard" was first released in 2011, in the form of a comparative report as the result of a major data collection in 28 higher education systems¹. The scorecard enabled evaluation of the status of institutional autonomy in 2010. In 2011 an online tool was launched that allows users to obtain information on the scores of each higher education system for each autonomy dimension, and to compare it with the situation prevailing in other countries. The tool also shows the relative ranking of each system per autonomy dimension.

The difficulties involved in quantifying degrees of autonomy have been acknowledged from the beginning (see section "Challenges and constraints"). However, the creation of a scorecard, which enables the benchmarking of one system's 'autonomy performance' vis-à-vis that of another, fostered a lively debate and drove positive policy developments in this area. Following the release of the report, Flanders (Belgium) was included in the online tool, in 2011, on the basis of the same methodology and processes. A specific report was also produced in 2014 focusing on Ireland, which analysed the evolution of autonomy in the

¹ This work was carried out in the framework of a EU supported project (2009-2011), through the Lifelong Learning Programme (503328-LLP-1-2009-1-BE-ERASMUS-EMHE)

country on the basis of developments reported by the Irish Universities Association between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015, considering the success and extensive use of the Autonomy Scorecard, the EUA Council (composed of the presidents of the member national rectors' conferences) decided that EUA should carry out a general update.

1.4 The Autonomy Scorecard update 2017

The experience of the use of the original scorecard, the update on Ireland in 2014 and multiple policy dialogues, showed that the scorecard has been very helpful in structuring national policy discussions, allowing for a comparative view of a system's development in relation to others as well as general trends. It became evident that the scoring itself allowed a broad comparison across Europe but that several developments could not be captured by scoring alone. A more in-depth qualitative evaluation and setting in context was therefore necessary. It was decided that a change to scoring and weights or adding new indicators and restrictions would not provide a better understanding. In order to take account of the need for more qualitative information, the decision was taken to provide more information on all participating countries, in addition to the scoring and analysis of trends in the four dimensions. The original scoring of some systems was sometimes amended to make some similar situations fit better into the same categorisation or to adapt to a different interpretation of the situation.

The data collection was organised following the original Scorecard methodology, based on questionnaires and interviews, as well as several rounds of validation with national rectors' conferences. In mid-2015 they received individual questionnaires, including the information they had fed in 2010, with interview memos included. They were invited to review each section and signal if changes were necessary, by selecting a different response option if appropriate, and comment accordingly. The only addition in the new questionnaire was the creation of a specific sheet which included more detailed questions on the composition of university governing bodies.

New questionnaires were also sent to national rectors' conferences that had not participated in the first Scorecard. Four new systems responded positively and joined the update: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

The returned questionnaires were subsequently collected and analysed by EUA. At this stage, after various exchange rounds, three countries that were previously included decided to opt out of the update (Cyprus, Greece and Turkey).

EUA organised validation interviews with all participating national rectors' conferences. No follow-up was possible with the Czech Republic which resulted in it not being included in the update.

The data validation phase spanned over a year, from late 2015 to late 2016, due to the need to validate not only responses to indicators, but also a broader narrative for each system.

The present update “University Autonomy in Europe III” based on data collected and validated during 2015 and 2016, is comprised of three main parts:

- Newly available ‘country profiles’, which set out in detail for each higher education system the situation prevailing with regard to the four dimensions of university autonomy, including contextual information and the views from the university sector on the matter
- A comparative report providing an updated overview of the state of university autonomy and the related challenges
- An updated online tool which continues to provide detailed information in a user-friendly way

2. Methodology

2.1 For the university community by the university community

An important facet of the methodology of the Scorecard is the involvement of the broader university community, through EUA’s collective members. The Polish, German and Danish Rectors’ Conferences, which represent diverse higher education systems, joined EUA in the consortium that carried out the original Autonomy Scorecard project. However, all of EUA’s collective members have been involved throughout. The secretaries general of the national rectors’ conferences and EUA Council members in particular have closely followed the development of the methodology, tracked progress in terms of data collection and analysis, and provided the sector’s views on the general direction of the work. They also participated in the elaboration of the weighting system, which evaluates the relative importance of the individual indicators. This system is based on the results of a survey conducted among EUA’s bodies (EUA Council, secretaries general of the national rectors’ conferences and General Assembly) in October 2010 at EUA’s annual statutory meetings.

The national rectors’ conferences provided the necessary data from their higher education systems, both for the original Scorecard in 2010 and for its update in 2015-2016, through questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

2.2 The scoring and weighting

The scoring system used by the University Autonomy Scorecard is based on deductions. Each restriction on university autonomy was assigned a deduction value based on how restrictive a particular rule or regulation was seen to be. A score of 100% indicates full institutional autonomy; a score of 0% means that an issue is entirely regulated by an external authority. In many cases, the law grants universities a limited amount of autonomy or prescribes negotiations between universities and the government. For instance, a system in which universities may determine tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority receives a score of 60% for that indicator.

The Autonomy Scorecard uses weighted scores². The weighting factors are based on a survey conducted among EUA's member national rectors' conferences and thus reflect the views of the university sector in Europe. The results of the survey were translated into a numerical system, which evaluates the relative importance of the indicators within each of the autonomy dimensions.

A detailed description of the methodology is available in Annex 1.

3. Scope and terminology

3.1 Scope

The Scorecard covers so-called public universities. Private universities are not addressed in the country profiles, regardless of their relative importance in the system. The score for a country always relates to the situation of public universities. Some countries have different legal settings for their universities or have granted part of their universities a 'foundation' status. These remain public universities and are considered, but the score seeks to reflect the situation applying to a majority of universities in the system. The country profile provides further information for special cases (e.g. the French-speaking community of Belgium or Estonia).

The geographical scope is detailed in the Table 1 of participating higher education systems. While four countries could not provide new data, and are therefore not considered in the update (namely Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece and Turkey), the Scorecard now includes four additional systems: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.

The data collected applied to 2016. Some exceptions exist as, in some systems, new provisions that are relevant to the analysis entered into force at the beginning of 2017.

² Non-weighted scores are featured on the online tool.

3.2 Terminology

The present Autonomy Scorecard update seeks to strike a balance between the necessity to explain the specificities of each system and the need to preserve a level of overall comparability allowing to benchmark the different systems considered. This implies that a degree of simplification cannot be avoided. The individual country profiles therefore feature both a standardised summary section, which does not address the complexities of each case, and a more in-depth section entitled “dimensions of autonomy” which includes more information on the relevant specificities. Nevertheless, whenever possible a standard terminology is used. The following is valid for both the report and the individual country profiles:

- The Scorecard refers to “higher education systems”, sometimes shortened as “systems”, rather than “countries”. This is related to the fact that five of the systems considered in the Scorecard are sub-national entities (Flanders and the French-speaking community of Belgium; Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany)³. The country code “UK” is used to refer to England only, unless otherwise stated. Spain and Switzerland are both treated as single systems. In these cases responses for each indicator reflect the average / most frequent case across the different sub-systems.
- The Scorecard methodology does not differentiate between a constraint which stems from a legal provision (“set in law”, “established by law”), which usually involves the country’s parliament, and constraints originating from decisions by the ministry or other types of public bodies (“by an external authority”). Decisions of the ministry are referred to as such and do not distinguish between direct interventions by the minister (in appointment validation for instance).
- Use of “all”, “freely” and “without restrictions”: the Scorecard methodology makes it necessary to simplify highly complex situations. Questionnaire response options primarily seek to differentiate between countries where universities can broadly decide on a certain topic, where they face some restrictions, or where an external authority decides on that topic. A certain baseline is defined for each indicator because it is clear that autonomy does not mean the absence of regulation.
 - o An example is student selection. The baseline is the requirement that students have completed secondary education to apply to university. Therefore, this is not counted as a restriction in the scoring for this indicator. Rather, the focus is placed on whether universities have any influence on the selection (is the system based on free admission, can universities regulate admission in cooperation with external authorities, can they decide on their own?)
 - o Another case is that of academic programme content design. In this area, National Qualification Frameworks and other Bologna Process related developments are not considered restrictions to the academic autonomy of universities.

³ For the sake of readability, the individual profiles are called “country profiles” rather than “higher education system profiles”.

- o When addressing staffing autonomy, the Scorecard methodology only refers to senior academic staff and senior administrative staff, as the employment modalities tend to be more varied at other levels, including also temporary staff. Therefore, when a country profile refers to “all staff has civil servant status”, or “universities can decide on promotions for all staff”, “all” refers to senior academic and administrative staff only.

4. Challenges and constraints

The development of the original Scorecard raised a number of challenges, both in the collection and validation of data and the establishment of a robust methodology to measure, score and weight the different elements of autonomy. In turn, the update of the Scorecard more than five years later generated some additional issues.

4.1 Data collection

Monitoring all changes in national and legal frameworks in a large number of higher education systems within a period of more than one year presented an enormous challenge due to ongoing reforms in some countries. Small changes in legislation can alter the picture markedly; conversely, large-scale reforms might not significantly affect the Scorecard indicators; therefore, continuous updating, even within the data collection period, was necessary.

Secondly, a reliable comparison of university autonomy across borders is highly challenging. Autonomy is a concept that is understood very differently across Europe; associated perceptions and terminology tend to vary quite significantly. This is due not only to differing legal frameworks but also to the historical and cultural settings that define institutional autonomy in each country. The establishment of a single set of restrictions for all indicators proved very difficult in some cases. In order to enable general comparisons, complex and diverse situations had to be simplified, which may have led to specific situations in some systems being reflected in somewhat less detail than would have been desirable.

Data collection for the 2015-2016 update led to specific challenges related to data consistency and interpretation over a significant period of time. Three particular aspects must be underlined in this regard:

- **Set of participating countries:** the original Scorecard included 28 higher education systems; in the 2015-2016 timeframe, four systems were not able to participate fully (either because they could not provide answers to the updated questionnaire or because they were not able to take part in validation interviews: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece and Turkey) and had therefore to be taken out of the updated analysis. Conversely, the update includes Flanders, which joined the Scorecard in 2011 after the release of the comparative report, and four additional systems: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. Table 1 provides an overview of participating higher education systems across the different steps of the Autonomy Scorecard. The update includes in total 29 different systems.

- **Treatment of 2010 data:** having been invited to consider the responses provided in 2010 to signal changes that had occurred since then, the national rectors' conferences sometimes indicated that they felt the need to adapt those retrospectively, as they felt that in some cases the situation prevailing then could be better reflected by selecting a different option in the questionnaire. Having been first confronted with this challenge when carrying out the special update for Ireland, it was decided that it was necessary to clearly differentiate between an adaptation of a 2010 score and a newly adapted score in the update, so that changes in interpretation and actual evolution of the regulatory framework within the period would not be confused. As a result, 2010 scores have sometimes been adapted and are indicated as such in the relevant country profiles. Follow-up interviews particularly sought to identify these different interpretations and distinguish them from actual changes in the regulatory frameworks and practices.

Table 1 Participating higher education systems

Code	Country/system	Note	Code	Country/system	Note
AT	Austria		IE	Ireland	
BE-FL	Flanders (Belgium)	Included in 2011	IS	Iceland	
BE-FR	French-speaking Community of Belgium	Newly included in the update	IT	Italie	
CH	Switzerland		LT	Lithuania	
CY	Cyprus	2010 only	LU	Luxembourg	
CZ	Czech Republic	2010 only	LV	Latvia	
BB (DE)	Brandenburg (Germany)		NL	The Netherlands	
HE (DE)	Hesse (Germany)		NO	Norway	
NRW (DE)	North Rhine - Westphalia		PL	Poland	
DK	Denmark		PT	Portugal	
EE	Estonia		RS	Serbia	Newly included in the update
ES	Spain		SE	Sweden	
FI	Finland		SI	Slovenia	Newly included in the update
FR	France		SK	Slovakia	
GR	Greece	2010 only	TR	Turkey	2010 only
HR	Croatia	Newly included in the update	UK	United Kingdom	(England only unless otherwise stated)
HU	Hungary				

4.2 Selecting, scoring and weighting indicators of autonomy

Institutional autonomy cannot be measured objectively, and it was clear from the beginning that the development of a scorecard for the four autonomy areas would be a complex and delicate task. A number of normative decisions were taken, especially in the selection of the indicators, the allocation of deduction values to individual restrictions and the design of a weighting system, which attributes different values of importance to the autonomy indicators.

The selection of indicators and restrictions reflects an institutional perspective. EUA's collective and individual members provided input which guided the choice of indicators and clarified which regulations are perceived as restrictions on institutional autonomy. Despite the diversity of higher education systems in Europe, there was a coherent view on which indicators should be included in the scorecard.

It should also be stressed that institutional autonomy does not mean the absence of regulations. All higher education systems need to set a regulatory framework in which their universities can act. For instance, systems need rules to ensure quality standards and determine the terms of public funding. In many of these areas, EUA has developed policy positions that reflect the view of the university sector. In the area of quality assurance, for example, EUA's positions provided a starting point in determining which quality assurance measures should be considered as appropriate; measures that are in line with these policy positions were not regarded as restrictive and hence not assigned a deduction. Similarly, in the area of staffing autonomy, a country's labour law regulations were seen as a basis for university staffing policies and only specific regulations for higher education institutions or civil servants were treated as restrictions.

4.3 Rating and ranking systems

When the data for all systems is fed into the scoring and weighting system the results appear in a ranking order. The importance of the specific position of a system within the ranking should not be overrated; rather, systems are grouped or rated into four groups on the basis of their scores in order to enable a more detailed comparison and analysis of the results, per autonomy dimension. With scores expressed in percentages, the clusters are as follows:

Score	Cluster
100% to 81%	High cluster
80% to 61%	Medium high cluster
60% to 41%	Medium low cluster
40% and under	Low cluster

4.4 Measuring accountability

The scorecard evaluates the relationship between the state and institutions and analyses how this relationship is shaped through specific rules and regulations. This also includes accountability measures, which are established in return for increased institutional autonomy. For instance, quality assurance processes are an important way of ensuring accountability. While there needs to be a framework for appropriate quality assurance processes, associated regulations can be burdensome and restrictive. By analysing whether universities can freely choose quality assurance mechanisms and providers, the Autonomy Scorecard aims to assess whether existing quality assurance systems can be considered as appropriate.

There are additional aspects of accountability which cannot be measured through the scoring methodology but which can nevertheless represent burdensome and inappropriate measures. The country profiles with their additional description and a section with the views of the sector aims at providing additional information complementing the scoring.

Despite these constraints and challenges, the scorecard provides detailed and comparable information on the status of institutional autonomy in 29 higher education systems.

5. How to read the country profiles

The country profiles contain information that allows, on the one hand, a comparison of the 29 higher education systems and, on the other hand, to provide more details on each of the systems. The main focus is nevertheless on providing a comparative view and the profiles are not meant to present a detailed in-depth country study. The clustering uses first a standardised summary to provide an at-a-glance overview. More details, although still using the streamlined terminology (for example for the governing bodies) can be found in the description of the four dimensions of autonomy. This is followed by contextual information and views from the sector.

5.1 Structure of the country profiles

1. A short note on system specificities that have an impact on the methodology
2. A standardised summary following the Scorecard indicators, accompanied by a visual representation of the score for each autonomy dimension (the number of coloured squares represents the cluster to which the system belongs)
3. A core section detailing each dimension of autonomy for the system
4. A summary of the scores, compared with 2010
5. A section providing contextual information and trends
6. The views from the sector (as reported by the national rectors' conferences)

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Universities can select and appoint their executive heads autonomously. The process for the dismissal of an executive head is stated in the law and the exact length of their term of office is also stated in the law. Universities must include external members in their board/council-type governing body and half of these external members are appointed by an external authority. Universities can decide on internal academic structures and create legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive a block grant as part of a three-year funding period. They control internal allocation, may keep surpluses and borrow money, as well as own buildings. Universities may not charge fees to national/EU students who complete their studies on time. An external authority sets the level of fees to non-EU students.

Staffing



Terms and conditions including salaries and dismissal procedures are regulated externally for those staff with civil servant status. Universities set salaries for private employees on the basis of collective agreements. All new recruitment is based on private employee contracts.

Academic



Student selection at Bachelor level is entirely regulated externally and based on free admission. At Master level admission criteria are co-regulated by universities and an external authority. There are some restrictions on student numbers in some subject areas which are agreed on between universities and an external authority. Universities must undergo mandatory institutional accreditation, for which they can choose the provider. Universities may design the content of their academic programmes freely and choose the language of instruction.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Extension of restrictions on student numbers to more subject areas
- Introduction of institutional accreditation arrangements from 2012
- New career paths for academic staff introduced from 2015
- Part of the public funding received by universities was simplified through the 2012 reform introducing the 'Higher Education Structural Funds'

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

University statutes in Austria are purely an internal matter and any changes only require the approval of the university senate.

The selection of executive heads of Austrian universities does not require validation by an external authority. Selection criteria are not per se stated in law, although mention is made of international experience and necessary abilities to manage a university.

The procedure for the dismissal of an executive head is stated in law, including the grounds for dismissal and the process that should be followed. The law also stipulates that the term of office of the executive head is four years, with the possibility of renewal.

In an international comparison, the governance model of Austrian universities may be considered as dual, with the law nevertheless defining the rectorate as a collegial governing body on an equal footing with the board/council- and senate-type bodies. The rectorate carries out executive and strategic tasks, which often are the responsibility of the executive head or leadership team in other systems. The council oversees budget and institutional strategic matters, while the senate focuses on academic issues and is responsible for academic recruitments.

The board/council ('university council') can have a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine members, all of whom must be external to the university. The senate nominates half of the university council members, the other half is nominated by the ministry. The nominated members select one additional member. External members are drawn from other universities, business and wider civil society. It is up to each university to decide whether foreigners can be members of the university council.

University senates in Austria have between 18 and 26 members including professors, assistant professors, students and other staff.

The law stipulates a minimum of 50% female participation in governing bodies from 2014 onwards. This includes the rectorate, university council and senate.

Universities in Austria can decide on their academic structures without constraints. Universities can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Austria receive most of their funding through a block grant for a period of three years, which is a unique feature in Europe.

Universities in Austria are free to keep any surpluses and borrow money. They can own their buildings but in practice most university buildings are owned by a company established by the Austrian State, and rented to universities. There has been no significant progress on the issue of university ownership of buildings since 2010.

Universities have no longer been able to charge tuition fees to national/EU students since September 2008. Universities can, however, charge fees to students who take longer than expected to complete their studies and in this case fees are set by an external authority¹.

Staffing autonomy

There are two types of contractual statuses for staff in Austrian universities, that is, civil servants and private employees. Terms and conditions are different for these two groups of staff. The number of staff with civil servant status is diminishing (currently at around one-third of total staff) and the number of private employee staff is increasing. Civil servant status will be phased out over the next 15 years as those with civil servant status retire. All new recruitment is based on private employee contracts.

Academic staff are recruited freely by universities but there are regulations outlining how the recruitment process should run. Administrative staff are recruited freely by universities. Terms and conditions for staff with civil servant status are decided by the law on public servants, with salaries set by an external authority. Dismissal procedures for these staff are also regulated by the law on public servants. Universities are able to freely promote staff with civil servant status.

The other staff in universities who are private employees have terms and conditions set by universities, with some involvement by trade unions. For these staff, both academic and administrative, there is collective bargaining on salaries. Collective bargaining is done at a sector level across all twenty-one universities and with trade unions in Austria which sets a framework for all universities. The negotiations are not influenced by the ministry/government and are not regulated by law. Minimum salaries are set via these collective bargaining arrangements but universities can offer salaries above those levels as they see appropriate.

¹ In 2013, the Government decided to double the level of tuition fees for non-EU students, bringing them up to 726,72 Euros per semester. This increase has not affected growth in international student numbers. Overall the income generated from tuition fees represents about 1% of the universities' total budgets.

For private employees, promotion issues are decided by universities. New career paths for scientific/artistic staff were introduced through an amendment of the University Act in 2015.

Academic autonomy

Student selection at Bachelor level in Austria is regulated entirely externally and based on free admission. There are, however, regulations that apply to admissions for some study programmes (in the arts and sports related disciplines). At Master level admission criteria are co-regulated by universities and an external authority.

The restrictions on student numbers that were in place in 2010 have been extended to more subject areas including business administration, pharmacology, computer sciences, biology and architecture.

Universities can open degree programmes at Bachelor, Master and doctoral level without prior accreditation but there are certain requirements if additional financial support is sought. The termination of degree programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority.

Mandatory institutional accreditation for Austrian universities was introduced through a new law in 2012, before when all accreditation was on a voluntary basis. Public institutions must now undergo an institutional audit every seven years and any EQAR-registered agency can be chosen to undertake this audit. Audits do not carry prescriptive outcomes but recommendations for actions. There has never been programme accreditation in Austrian universities. Since the introduction of the new system a number of institutional accreditations have been undertaken and most Austrian universities have used non-Austrian quality assurance agencies, including organisations from Switzerland, Germany and Finland.

Universities can design the content of their programmes freely.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field. The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	78%	78%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	59%	59%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	73%	73%	Medium high
Academic autonomy	72%	72%	Medium high

There have not been any changes to the various aspects of university autonomy since 2010 that required changes to the scoring.

University autonomy in context

Austrian universities receive their public funding largely (90%) through a block grant negotiated between each university and the ministry in the framework of a performance agreement. Until 2012 the other 10% were distributed through a formula-based model. This was then replaced by so-called 'Higher Education Structural Funds' (Hochschulraumstrukturmittel). This funding stream is determined on the basis of four sets of indicators (compared to the previously more complex formula), including the number of 'active' students, knowledge transfer activities, doctoral schools and cooperation criteria. The number of students is a particularly important indicator as the number of students in higher education in Austria has risen, but not equally across all universities. Some universities have had an increase in student numbers of 80% but this has not been reflected in total funding so these funds offer the opportunity of additional funding to assist with this increase in student numbers.

Restrictions on student numbers in certain disciplines at institutional level were set as part of an arrangement between universities and the Government. There is a lack of resources in the sector so both universities and the Government are trying to reduce student numbers to improve student/staff ratios. There are often high student numbers in very popular but costly subject areas; in addition, students may enrol for programmes which they then do not actually attend, which creates inefficiencies.

Views from the sector

Over the last five years the level of autonomy in the sector has remained stable but there has been an increased interest by the Government in university management and an increasing accountability burden placed on universities. There remains a perceived lack of autonomy around the admission of students.

The major challenges for Austrian universities are considered to be linked to:

- the lack of admission capacity; and
- the burden associated with extensive reporting requirements.

Universities consider that negotiations on the three-year agreements should focus on setting the overall direction for the higher education sector.

An example of this is the annual report on progress against relevant goals/targets which requires extensive reporting by universities across a range of activities. The process is highly resource-intensive for universities. Failure to deliver against the set goals/targets makes negotiations for the next three-year agreement potentially tougher and in theory results in universities having to return part of the funding. Universities are therefore placed under pressure because of resource-consuming extensive reporting requirements and a simultaneous push by the Government to enhance efficiency and encourage reductions in the academic/administrative staff ratios. Projects initiated by the sector in relation to efficiency also require considerable monitoring.

The issue of increasing university ownership of properties is not a priority for the sector as it is considered that the risks associated with building ownership outweigh the benefits.

Another perceived challenge is the lack of resources to adequately fulfil the requirements placed on universities by the Government, enhanced by the fact that increasing student numbers are not adequately reflected in the funding mechanisms. The restrictions on student numbers are not seen as a check on either university autonomy or free admission but are considered by public universities to be a necessary measure in managing student numbers. It should be noted that universities have the option as to whether they use/comply with these restrictions.



Belgium | Flanders

How to read this profile

Formal policy making in higher education in Belgium is in the hands of the three communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. Each Community organises and funds its education system autonomously.

The Autonomy Scorecard questionnaire response for Flanders was based on the position of the five universities registered as 'statutory'. These five universities are accredited for offering academic Bachelor, Master's and doctoral degrees. All institutions registered as 'statutory' are recognised by law, receive public funding, have a not-for-profit-status. Together, 'statutory' universities and university colleges cater for over 95% of higher education students.

Two of the five 'statutory' universities are labelled as 'free' universities: KU Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). With respect to autonomy, the free universities only differ from the other universities in that they have greater freedom to decide on the composition and size of their governing boards. The differences between the types of universities are mainly due to historical factors linked to their foundation and their stakeholders and these should not be overstated.

It should be noted that Flanders completed the Autonomy Scorecard survey and discussions in 2010/11 but information on the system was received after the Autonomy Scorecard publication had been completed.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Except for the two 'free' universities, selection criteria for the executive head are stated in the law. Universities decide on the term of office and dismissal procedure, and the appointment of the executive head does not require external validation. All universities have a government-appointed Commissioner in their governance structure. The government also proposes part of the external members in the university board/council-type body for all but the two 'free' universities. The subject fields within which universities can offer degree programmes are specified in law. Universities may decide on their academic structures and create legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive public funding via an annual block grant whose internal allocation they control. They can keep any surpluses generated but they have to justify the purpose for which the reserves will be used. Universities can sell their buildings with some restrictions. An external authority sets the level of tuition fees for national/EU students at all levels.

Staffing



Decisions on individual staff salaries are restricted by overall limits in payments to staff. The dismissal of staff is subject to regulations specific to the higher education sector.

Academic



Student selection at Bachelor level is regulated externally and based on free admission. Admission to Master's programmes is co-regulated by universities and an external authority. At both levels, all new degree programmes must be submitted for prior accreditation in order to be introduced. The system is evolving towards institutional accreditation. Universities cannot choose the quality assurance provider carrying out accreditation. There is a limit to the university curriculum that can be delivered in languages other than Dutch.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Due to budgetary restrictions, the current government has decided to put a temporary hold on the introduction of new degree programmes (2015-2017)
- From 2015 new approach to quality assurance involving institutional reviews

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016



Organisational autonomy

The selection of executive heads does not require validation by an external authority in Flanders.

The selection criteria for the rector are stated in the law. Candidates for the position of rector must hold a doctoral degree, must belong to the highest rank of professors and must come from within the university. This rule does not apply to the two 'free' universities (KU Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel - VUB).

Candidates for the executive head position are accepted by the board, and the electoral body makes its choice from the candidates. The electoral body consists of all members of academic staff, as well as representative members of other stakeholders on the board - assistant academic personnel, student and external representatives.

The procedure for the dismissal of executive head is not stated in the law. The term of office of the rector is stated in the law for the three universities of Ghent, Antwerp and Hasselt, while KU Leuven and VUB can decide on this matter independently. In most universities, the term is four years and can be renewed once.

Universities in Flanders have unitary governance structures. The board/council-type body ('university board') decides on both strategic and academic issues. Some institutions may have additional advisory bodies. University boards include academics, students, representatives of administrative staff and external members. The external members of university boards form around one-third of the total board membership and emanate from the social partners of the university (employer associations and trade unions) and public authorities' representatives.

In the case of the universities of Ghent, Antwerp and Hasselt, the government of Flanders makes proposals for the external members of the board and they are formally appointed by the university. The two 'free' universities in Flanders can decide on the composition and size of their governing bodies. They appoint directly external members of their boards, and choose them according to the strategic profile of the institution.

There is a government Commissioner on the boards of all universities. These Commissioners have no voting rights but perform an advisory role and check the decision-making of universities to ensure it is in line with government regulations and preserves the financial sustainability of the university.

Universities freely decide on their internal academic structures and the organisation of faculties and departments.

Universities in Flanders can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Flanders receive an annual block grant with no restrictions on the internal allocation of funding¹. They can keep any surpluses generated and build up financial reserves but they must justify the purpose for their allocation. Universities in Flanders can borrow money without restrictions.

Universities in Flanders can own their buildings and are allowed to sell their buildings with some restrictions. The ownership and legal status of some university buildings can be complex for historical reasons. An inventory of real estate was compiled in 2012-2013 to address building ownership issues. It is used by universities to set out the need for public funding related to maintenance, renovation and additional capacity. The inventory has clarified that most buildings are owned by the universities.

The ministry sets the level of tuition fees for national/EU students at all levels. The ministry consults stakeholders, including university leadership and student organisations, when setting or changing the level of tuition fees.

Universities are free to set the level of fees for so-called 'advanced Master's programmes' taking into account a maximum ceiling². Universities are able to set the level of tuition fees for non-EU students at all levels although in practice only a few universities charge higher fees for non-EU students.

1 The annual block grant primarily covers staff and operational costs. The grant is adapted annually, based on input and output parameters for education and research. Additional research funding is available on a competitive basis.

2 This ceiling is raised to 24.790€ per year when special conditions apply (e.g. highly specialised staff/facilities; international programmes or programmes developed in co-operation with industry). Fees from these programmes are not a major income generator for universities. Overall tuition fee income accounts for about 4% of the block grant allocated to universities.

Staffing autonomy

Flemish universities are free to decide on recruitment procedures, salary decisions, dismissals and promotions. There are no significant differences among employment conditions and salary scales as these conditions are derived from those that apply to civil servants in Flanders.

Universities are able to recruit both academic and administrative staff freely. Decisions on salaries for both academic and administrative staff are restricted due to overall limits for all staff payments. Promotion decisions and scales are related to the categories of administrative and academic staff (e.g. junior researcher vs. professor). Financial restrictions mentioned above leave little potential for additional compensation and benefits.

The dismissal of staff is subject to regulations specific to the higher education sector.

Academic autonomy

Student selection at Bachelor level in Flanders is entirely regulated externally and based on free admission. At Master level admission is co-regulated by an external authority and universities. Universities can select students for a limited number of programmes in fields such as art and medicine.

Universities are recognised for a certain range of academic disciplines and may only open programmes which pertain to their study fields. In addition, at Bachelor and Master levels all new degree programmes must be submitted for prior accreditation before being introduced, while this is not necessary at doctoral level. Due to budgetary restrictions, the current government decided to put a temporary hold on the introduction of new degree programmes (2015-2017). Universities can terminate degree programmes independently.

Until 2015 all programmes had to be accredited every eight years through an evaluation procedure. From 2016 onwards institutional reviews have been introduced as the main element of the future quality assurance system.

Both the accreditation process and the institutional reviews are being organised by NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders. Other foreign agencies may be involved but universities have to receive formal accreditation by NVAO. Universities cannot choose their accreditation body but can choose another body for evaluations.

Universities can design the content of their degree programmes without constraints.

At Bachelor and Master level universities can choose the language of instruction but the number of degree programmes that can be taught in a foreign language is limited by an external authority. The number of courses delivered in languages other than Dutch is limited by decree as a percentage of the total number of credits offered by the university¹.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field. In organisational autonomy, the score reflects the situation for the universities of Ghent, Antwerp and Hasselt.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	70% ²	70%	Medium high	
Financial autonomy	76% ³	76%	Medium high	
Staffing autonomy	76% ⁴	76%	Medium high	
Academic autonomy	38% ⁵	35%	Low	Ban on the introduction of new programmes

1 This percentage is higher at Master level than at Bachelor level. Academic staff have to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language.

2 This score was adapted from 76% to 70% due to a revision of the interpretation on the inclusion of selection criteria and term of office of the executive head in the law.

3 This score was adapted from 70% to 76% as tuition fees for national and EU students at all levels were technically set by a public authority exclusively, while universities were free to set the level of fees to international students.

4 This score was adapted from 59% to 76% as employment terms for senior staff, although derived from regulations applying to civil servants, cannot be considered equally restrictive.

5 This score was adapted from 40% to 38% to take into account that universities may only open programmes that pertain to their allocated study fields.

University autonomy in context

Evolutions in the Flemish higher education landscape since 2011 include the merger of the University of Leuven with the Katholieke Universiteit Brussel, bringing the number of universities in Flanders to five. There are no expectations of further changes in the organisation of Flemish universities in the next few years.

As regards the financial capacity of universities, it should be noted that borrowing has become more frequent as overall income has been declining. Universities have drawn on reserves to fund current expenditure. Borrowing has therefore become essential for investment. University borrowing is included in the calculations of Belgian state debt so there is some pressure to limit borrowing. One university raised funding on the capital market through bonds to invest in infrastructure.

Tuition fees were increased in 2014 (from 619€ to 890€ for regular students).

Flanders is a 'growing system under pressure', with a student population expanding at a much higher pace than public funding over the period 2008-2015 (near to 40% increase in students, with an overall funding increase of about 10%).

Views from the sector

The main issues at present in relation to autonomy for universities in Flanders are:

- the need to rationalise the academic offer;
- admission and orientation issues;
- quality assurance system changes including the move to institutional accreditation; and
- limitations on internationalisation policies due to regulations on the use of foreign languages in education.

The regulation of study fields that each university is allowed to offer is perceived by the sector as a restriction on university flexibility, innovation and the development of joint programmes. There are, however, no expectations that significant changes take place in the medium term on that matter.

The Flemish system is characterised by openness and flexibility. Concerns about this system, shared by the government and universities, include inefficiencies and a slowing down of student progression rates. However, developing a selective approach within the admissions process remains a divisive and politically sensitive issue. The pilots undertaken for the orientation test in 2015/16 may be helpful in assisting student decision-making (improving subject choice) but their results cannot be used in the admissions process.

The introduction of the new quality assurance system is considered a positive development. Initially the quality assurance system for 2015-2016 onwards would have involved institutional reviews as well as programme accreditation. Universities were, however, concerned about the impact of this double system, with additional institutional accreditation while continuing with the programme evaluation system that has been in place since 1991. The sector's view is that universities should be given greater freedom in this area. The government agreed to the principle of moving towards institutional accreditation with a shift away from programme accreditation except for new and international programmes.

Following an evaluation of the new approach to quality assurance in 2017, there will be a second round of institutional reviews in 2020-2021 when universities will be expected to act upon any issues raised in the first round of evaluation. The outlines and consequences of this second round still have to be developed but universities are pleading for a system of automatic programme accreditation if an institution can demonstrate satisfactory internal quality assurance processes.

The changes to the quality assurance system should lead to an increase in institutional autonomy in Flanders. Universities and VLIR, the Flemish Interuniversity Council, have been pushing for these changes. Their implementation is considered a positive development. Although the government may consider the changes as a way of reducing costs, they may not necessarily lead to lower costs but possibly greater efficiencies in the process and greater autonomy in deciding where to focus resources.

Language regulations in Flanders present a barrier to internationalisation as they place limitations on mobility into Flanders by international students and staff (a minimum level of proficiency in Dutch is required to attend/teach at Flemish universities). Another barrier to attracting highly qualified international staff relates to the limits on staff salaries, making it difficult for universities to overcome rigidities in the system and offer additional benefits.



Belgium | French-speaking community

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

The French-speaking community of Belgium exercises its competences in the Walloon provinces, with the exception of German-speaking communes, and in Brussels. The communities are based on the concept of «language» and have notably powers for culture and education, as well as in the field of scientific research.

There are six universities on the territory of the Belgian French-speaking community. The community government is the organising power of the universities of Liège and Mons. The four other universities – UNamur (Université de Namur), UCL (Université Catholique de Louvain), ULB (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and USL-B (Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles) are supervised by different organising authorities. Liège, ULB and UCL are comprehensive universities; the other three have developed a certain academic focus historically and offer a selection of disciplines.

The two universities depending on the community government comprise about one-third of the student population. The present analysis refers to all six universities; differences of legal status generate clear-cut differences in some dimensions of university autonomy.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational

Community-governed 

Other universities 

The community-governed universities are less autonomous than the rest of the system with respect to organisational matters. The law stipulates selection criteria and the term of office for the executive heads of these two universities. The rector's dismissal is always regulated in the university statutes. The inclusion of external members in the university governance structure is mandatory and controlled externally for the community-governed universities but is an internal matter for the others. Universities can decide on their academic structures and may create legal entities.

Financial

Universities have no decision-making capacity on tuition fees for domestic / EU students and limited options to reallocate funding internally. They can borrow money and may retain surpluses. Ownership of real estate is possible, with restrictions.

Staffing

Community-governed 

Other universities 

The community-governed universities are less autonomous than the rest of the system with respect to staffing matters. The community-governed universities must obtain external approval of their recruitment plan. Salaries, promotions and dismissals are strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of senior academic staff in all universities. Senior administrative staff may have civil servant status and, regardless of their status, their salaries are set externally.

Academic

Free and centralised admission both at Bachelor and Master levels, combined with tight regulations on the introduction of new programmes, creates a limiting environment for universities. The law limits the options for universities to develop programmes in other languages and evaluation by the national agency is mandatory.

Recent developments

- New law passed in 2013 (implementation in 2015) reshaping the system governance around academic poles

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

There are different models of university organisation in the community.

The universities of Liège and Mons both have rules outlined in law for the selection of the executive head. The rector is elected by the senate-type body ('academic council') and is then appointed by the government, although this is a formality. Candidates must be full professors with significant involvement in the university concerned. The other universities may develop different models and do not require formal external approval of the government for the appointment of their executive heads. These universities however tend to have similar selection criteria. The election modalities differ across institutions.

The dismissal procedure for executive heads is not specified in law and is a matter for each institution. In most institutions, rectors will also typically be in post for four to five years, often renewable. The term of office for executive heads is specified in the law for the universities whose organising authority is the community government and is four years, renewable once.

The law defines the governance structure of the community-governed universities, which can be qualified as unitary. The board/council is the main executive organ and includes representatives of the different staff categories, students, and external representatives. The law includes provisions on the number of representatives for each category, bringing to over 30 the total number of members. The external members are typically drawn from business and industry and may also be local/regional politicians. The government decides and appoints external members to the board/council. Additionally, universities have a so-called 'academic council', which is essentially competent in relation to elections.

The other universities have different governance models including different sets of bodies; nevertheless, by law they must all have a board-type governing body, which represents the university externally and which either concentrates the main competences or shares responsibilities with other bodies. They may decide on whether to include external members in their governance structure and both models (full internal or mixed) exist in the system.

Since 2003 the law specifies a 20% minimum proportion of student representation in all governing bodies in all universities in the system. The same law makes it mandatory for all universities to have a student council.

The Ministry of Higher Education and in some cases of the Ministry of Finance are represented on the boards of all universities in the system. The main role of the ministry delegates is to check the legal and financial compliance of decisions made by the boards.

Universities can autonomously decide on their academic structures. They are also authorised to create legal entities, and have generated a variety of spin-off companies.

Financial autonomy

Universities receive an annual block grant. Internal financial reallocation is limited by law, with constraints on the staffing budget and infrastructure budget. Universities may keep surpluses, the use of which may be earmarked by the external authority.

Universities are authorised to borrow, and in recent years have been borrowing more money, as government funding has been more limited.

Universities can own buildings. They may buy and sell properties, with restrictions. They may acquire real estate only from their own resources. The universities of Mons and Liège need to secure the approval of the government to sell buildings. The law also grants universities pre-emption rights on properties that may be of interest to the institutions.

Every year the ministry sets the level of tuition fees¹, which applies to all levels. Universities may set tuition fees for international students in cooperation with the public authorities, in the sense that the community government establishes a maximum ceiling.

Staffing autonomy

All universities must follow the same regulations regarding tenured academic staff, who have civil servant-type status. Senior administrative staff may be employed as public or private employees (only as private employees in the universities whose governing authorities are not the community).

A general restriction applies to all universities as staff costs may not make up for more than 80% of the budget received from public funding. In addition, other rules apply regarding maximum shares of certain academic staff categories. Universities may recruit non-teaching scientific staff and administrative staff from their own resources.

A specificity of the two community-governed universities is that they must obtain government approval on their annual recruitment plans.

Salaries are set externally by the ministry and there is little margin for manoeuvre for institutions to increase them.

Dismissals are strictly regulated for all staff who have civil servant-type status and may only result from cases of serious misconduct. The universities may, however, decide on the procedure.

¹ The tuition fees were 835€ (per annum) in 2016. Students coming from the Least Developed Countries as listed by the United Nations benefit from the same conditions as domestic students and may be eligible to special scholarships.

The capacity for universities to promote senior academic and administrative staff is limited by legislation applying to all six institutions. Promotion criteria are codified in the law and the process generally requires to open the post at higher level, but the decision on procedures is with the university. Promotions are also limited by the “envelope” set for promotions at the level of the institution, which, as with the annual recruitment plan, has to be validated externally in the case of the community-governed universities.

Academic autonomy

Universities do not have the capacity to decide on overall student numbers in the Belgian French-speaking community. They cannot decide on criteria for admission to university programmes at Bachelor level, as the system is based on free admission. Exceptions include medicine, subject to a *numerus clausus* at the end of the first year of studies, and entrance examinations to certain university programmes such as engineering². Universities cannot select students at Master level either. They nevertheless have the possibility to define additional admission criteria for so-called specialised and complementary Master’s programmes, which form a minority of second-cycle programmes.

In case a university wishes to open a new degree programme (not included in the list of approved programmes in appendix of the 2013 law) it must secure accreditation from the federation of all higher education institutions of the Belgian French-speaking community (ARES). However, this process is only possible for ‘joint programmes’ (whereby at least 15% of the credits are delivered by a second institution).

AEQES, created in 2002, is the agency responsible for the external evaluation of the quality of teaching in Bachelor and Master’s programmes. While it is possible for universities to select other EQAR-registered bodies, evaluation by AEQES remains mandatory.

Universities are free to design the content of their academic programmes. In practice, at Bachelor level, significant coordination takes place to ensure a minimum level of similarity among programmes in the same subject area. This coordination is managed via an agreement of the university deans’ conference and does not involve the ministry.

The language of instruction in universities in the French-speaking community is specified in the law as all programmes must be conducted in French. It is possible to conduct a programme in English but the same programme must also exist in French.

² It is expected that entrance examinations will also apply, in the near future, to medicine, with legal changes being proposed in that direction.

Autonomy scorecard summary

The table below summarises the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. This is the first time that the Autonomy Scorecard is applied to the French-speaking community of Belgium, therefore the scores only refer to the situation in 2016.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

The differences between community-governed universities and the other four universities do not always justify separate scorings. However, regarding organisational and staffing matters the community-governed institutions are substantially less autonomous than those in the rest of the system.

Community-governed universities	2016	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	53%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	47%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	28%	Low
Academic autonomy	32%	Low

Other universities	2016	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	90%	High
Financial autonomy	52%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	44%	Medium low
Academic autonomy	32%	Low

University autonomy in context

The Belgian francophone university sector is currently adapting to the effects of the 2013 law reforming the governance of the system (the implementation of which, in 2015, is quite recent). Universities are now part of a wider 'academy' (ARES) which includes other forms of post-secondary education. Universities have their own thematic 'chamber' in the academy and give opinions to the board of the academy, which itself includes university rectors as well as the executive heads of the other higher education institutions and student representatives.

Another effect of the 2013 law is that the higher education landscape in the community has been re-organised through five academic poles, which have a geographical basis. Each pole is an association of higher education institutions around at least one university. Academic poles promote institutional collaboration and ensure coherence in the academic offer on a given territory. They also provide a structure for asset-sharing, shared services and joint procurement, with the view of creating synergies and efficiencies.

The university system of the Belgian French-speaking community is characterised by comparatively low academic autonomy. Other higher education systems in Europe that practice free admission retain medium high levels of academic autonomy. In the present case, free admission and the absence of student selection are combined with strictly regulated programme accreditation. Universities are currently not authorised to initiate programmes that are not pre-attributed to them by law. Only jointly operated programmes may be newly opened. This is a manifestation of a strong impetus towards increased collaboration among institutions in the system.

Even in universities whose organising power is not the community, autonomy regarding staffing matters is limited. This is due to the combined effect of civil servant-type status for all senior academic staff, externally set salaries for all staff, and regulatory provisions restricting the shares of certain staff categories in the overall university staff.

In addition, university autonomy remains curtailed by the underfunding of the system. Public funding, albeit nominally increasing, has not followed the significant growth of the student population in recent years (over 20% since 2008). The fact that universities have no possibility to control either admission or tuition fees, in a context of underfunding, places them in a difficult situation with no option to develop strategies so as to address the issue.

Views from the sector

Universities are critical about the 'closed envelope' system whereby funding is directly linked to the number of students attracted by the institution, creating a competition among universities at constant (in absolute terms) levels of funding. The sector is therefore calling for a thorough revision of the funding system, also taking better account of the universities' research activities. The community government has committed to this type of review in its official steering strategy. Although a certain degree of "refinancing" is planned, there are concerns that the effort will not be sufficient to tackle the issue in an adequate way.

Strict control over salaries of staff is also deemed to harm the universities' attractiveness and, in particular, is found to hamper internationalisation efforts of universities that find it difficult to attract international staff.



How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

The Croatian university sector is characterised by the historically high independency of faculties. There are two kinds of institutions in this regard; on the one hand, four out of nine universities are institutions which result from the union of independent, legally established faculties. The five more recently established universities have, on the other hand, a more central management model.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law includes provisions regarding the selection criteria for the executive head and the duration of their term of office, while leaving the definition of the modalities of election and dismissal to the university statutes. The law also determines the basic governance structure of universities, and the institution may select only part of the external members that compose the university board. Universities may in principle decide on their academic structures, although faculties are legally recognised organisational units. Universities may found other legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive yearly block grants for salaries, with little option for internal reallocation across categories. Universities may keep surpluses, and borrow with approval; they own their buildings but require approval to sell them. In a mixed system where half of the students are enrolled on state-funded places, and the other half pay fees, universities may only set the level of fees for doctoral candidates and international students.

Staffing



Universities have limited capacity to decide on staffing matters as a large majority of university staff have civil servant status. The number of posts and salary levels are controlled externally, and both promotions and dismissals are subject to specific regulations linked to civil servant status.

Academic



Universities are able to decide on the number of fee-paying students and have limited capacity to select students by determining additional admission criteria. Programme accreditation is mandatory and must be carried out by the national agency. Study programmes delivered in languages other than Croatian do not receive financial support from the State.

Recent developments

Croatia is one of the systems newly included in the Autonomy Scorecard in 2016. The current framework is mainly based on the Science and Higher Education Act that came into force in 2003 (subsequently revised several times). The national accreditation body (the Agency for Science and Higher Education) was founded in 2005.

Organisational autonomy

Organisational autonomy is framed by the Science and Higher Education Act which came into force in 2003. University statutes are a purely internal matter voted on by university senates. The law prescribes that the executive head is elected, although the university decides on the composition of the electoral body, taking account of some provisions included in the law. In most universities the senate elects the rector but it may vary between universities. The law states that the rector must be a full professor. No external validation of the election is required. The rector serves a four-year term that can be renewed once. Rectors are generally experienced academics and university statutes usually restrict the appointment of rectors to candidates from within the university. The rector's dismissal is an internal matter to the university.

Croatian universities have, by law, a dual governance structure, composed of both board- and senate-types of bodies. The senate is the main governing body of the institution, responsible for academic affairs, staffing, institutional management, and development of the institutional strategy. The board discusses the university strategy and is the expression of the university's public accountability.

The composition of the board is regulated and consists of six or 12 members, all external to the university. Half of the members are appointed by the university senate (including at least one student) and half are appointed by external authorities. Universities tend to include representatives of local or regional authorities, entrepreneurs, representatives of chambers of commerce, who can contribute to the university's strategy.

The composition of the senate varies across universities but there are legal provisions ensuring a minimum representation of academic staff (60%) and students (15%) in this governing body.

There are differences in the extent to which Croatian universities are able to determine their own academic structures according to the origins of each university. All universities are legally allowed to create, change and abolish structures; however, in practice, it would be highly challenging for the four institutions that were created from the union of independent faculties to do so.

Croatian universities can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities. Profit generated by these entities and belonging to the university may be used exclusively for university activities.

Financial autonomy

Universities receive funding for salaries (more than 80% of public funding) on an annual basis. Smaller funding for research and teaching activities is provided through two separate three-year contracts¹. Internal reallocation of funds across these contracts is technically possible but difficult. In practice Croatian universities have limited autonomy to allocate strategically the public funds they receive.

Croatian universities can keep surplus on public funding, and may borrow money with the approval of the ministry. They own their buildings but need ministry approval to proceed to any sale.

Croatian universities enrol both state-funded and fee-paying students, who each make up for about half of the student population in the system. Universities can decide how many fee-paying students they will admit. The level of the tuition fees for national/EU students at Bachelor and Master level is set by the ministry in the three-year “funding agreements” it signs with each university. Universities can decide on the level of fees at doctoral level and for international students freely².

Staffing autonomy

Higher education staff are civil servants in Croatia and their status is regulated at national level by the law, including dismissals and promotions. The overall number of senior academic posts is regulated by the government. Croatian universities also hire a minority of private employees, whose positions are funded from the institutions’ own resources. The terms and conditions for these employees are nevertheless similar to those of staff with civil servant status.

Senior academic positions available at Croatian universities are advertised externally and universities set up selection committees, and carry out the selection process. The National Council of Education and Science is involved insofar as it confers scientific titles necessary for academics to take up a teaching position. The National Council must approve candidates for the available academic positions. New positions may be created by universities from their own resources. The National Council is not involved in the recruitment of senior administrative staff.

All senior staff recruitment must be confirmed by the ministry. Salaries are set externally for all staff. Dismissals are strictly regulated for both senior academic and administrative staff.

¹ These contracts are based on a series of indicators. For teaching, a previously large range of indicators was refocused on enrolment of students with disabilities and the broader university strategy. For research, output-related indicators include bibliometric data, research grants obtained and doctoral degrees’ completion rates.

² In 2016, fees for domestic students enrolled in fee-paying places varied between 600 and 1 200 Euros per year. Fees for non-EU international students were typically set at three times these amounts.

Promotions can be decided upon by universities within the framework of the law regulating civil servant status. A higher post must be available to promote senior academic staff. In the case of senior administrative staff, legal provisions about the process and selection committee apply.

Academic autonomy

Admission to the Croatian higher education system is centralised and co-regulated at Bachelor and Master levels, in the sense that universities have the capacity to develop admission criteria in addition to the student's results in the state examination. Students are allocated to the institutions on the basis of their preferences and their ranking (per study programme) in the state examination and taking account of the additional admission criteria. This system governs both the allocation of state-funded and fee-paying student places. Universities are able to decide on the number of fee-paying students they enrol.

By law, all new Bachelor's and Master's programmes must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded. Doctoral programmes must receive accreditation before introduction. The national accreditation body carries out the mandatory accreditation, while universities are free to approach other bodies for additional accreditation. Every programme must be re-accredited every five years. Termination of programmes can be done independently by universities.

There is no state funding for programmes delivered in other languages than Croatian.

Autonomy scorecard summary

The table below summarises the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. This is the first time that the Autonomy Scorecard is applied to Croatia, therefore the scores only refer to the situation in 2016.

Dimension of autonomy	2016	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	62%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	60%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	36%	Low
Academic autonomy	50%	Medium low

University autonomy in context

The basis for the regulatory framework currently governing university operations was adopted following intense discussions on autonomy in the 1990s. Regulations were adapted to enable universities to organise their own internal structures and thus address the issue of internal fragmentation. The new framework also changed the role of the rector from a previously mainly representative function to a more managerial position.

Croatian universities face tensions in their internal management on two levels. The transition away from a state governance system is not fully completed, while at the same time internal fragmentation continues to limit the scope for strategic university management. To a large extent, faculties remain a reference organisational unit in the higher education system, in particular in large institutions resulting from the union of legally established faculties.

Universities in Croatia have comparatively low autonomy to manage their staff. Strict ministerial control over civil servant staff means universities have no option to decide on salaries and careers, and little scope for strategic recruitment policies.

The Croatian higher education system is also under pressure as the student population has been increasing significantly in recent years, while the overall funding trajectory is negative. Public funding makes up for around three-quarters of universities' total budget in Croatia, with tuition fees from self-funded students providing between 10% and 15% of total funding. In this context, limitations in financial management as well as in staffing matters are all the more problematic.

Views from the sector

The above-mentioned issue of internal fragmentation is a subject of political and public discussion in Croatia, and a main challenge to the organisational autonomy and strategic profiling of Croatian universities.

With regard to academic autonomy, the sector pushes for institutional accreditation. Universities argue that in effect, the current accreditation work is essentially carried out within the institutions themselves, with the subsequent approval given by the national accreditation body after checking compliance with minimum standards. Universities therefore consider that there would be a case to develop institutional accreditation; the ministry's current position is however against the removal of programme accreditation.

Croatian universities consider that greater flexibility in the staff appointment process would be particularly important. The role of the National Council of Education and Science in the recruitment process is viewed as adding a layer of complexity.

Finally, the sector sees the current approach to the distribution of funding as inhibiting flexibility and autonomous financial management, in particular in a wider context of budget restrictions. In this light, the 'performance contracts' for teaching and for research activities would have to be re-developed so as to better fit the needs of institutions.



Denmark

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The selection criteria for executive heads are stated in law, which also regulates characteristics of university boards/councils (minimum and maximum size, inclusion of external members and their basic competences). The selection procedure, term of office and dismissal process for the executive head are the responsibility of universities. They also appoint their board members independently.

Financial



Universities receive an annual block grant of which they control the internal allocation. There are no restrictions on universities owning, buying and selling buildings. Universities may not charge tuition fees to Danish and EU nationals at any level. Universities may charge tuition fees to non-EU nationals at Bachelor and Master levels.

Staffing



The number of posts is regulated by an external authority for some administrative staff. Salaries for academic staff are negotiated with other parties. For administrative staff salary bands are prescribed by an external authority. For both academic and administrative staff promotions public sector regulations apply so posts cannot be filled until after a vacancy has been advertised and an application process has taken place.

Academic



There are restrictions on student numbers for some programmes set by an external authority. At Bachelor and Master levels admissions are co-regulated by universities and an external authority. All new programmes must meet a 'pre-qualification' requirement to ensure they are relevant to employers. Universities in Denmark cannot choose either external quality assurance mechanisms or providers.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Appointment process for external members of university boards/councils changed in 2012 to increase transparency around appointments
- Student numbers have been restricted for more academic programmes due to concerns about graduate employment
- From 2013 onwards there has been a change in the government's regulation of admissions criteria at Bachelor level, with a move from external regulation to greater co-regulation with universities
- From 2014 onwards the Danish quality assurance system has been in transition, evolving from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation
- In 2013 the government introduced a new 'pre-qualification' requirement to ensure all new programmes have relevance in the employment market

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

The selection procedure, term of office and dismissal process for the executive head are the responsibility of the boards of universities, although the selection criteria for executive heads are stated in law. Executive heads must be 'recognised scientists' and hold the position of full or associate professor. Executive heads generally serve for a term of four to five years with a possible extension.

Danish universities have a unitary governance structure, with a board/council-type body as main governing organ, responsible for decision-making on strategic and budgetary matters. Universities also have a senate-type body which must be consulted on internal academic matters. The law states that the board/council must have at least nine members with four drawn from within the university (one academic representative, one administrative representative and two students) and a maximum of 15 members. The board/council is therefore required to have a majority of external members but the exact composition is the responsibility of the universities. Universities select the external members without involvement of external authorities.

The representatives from within the university are selected by their own constituencies whereas external members are appointed. In 2012, changes were made in the law regarding the appointment process. The law now prescribes a two-committee process. The university appoints both committees, one for the identification and nomination of possible external members and one for the actual appointment of external members. The board/council manages the process, but must ensure that different people sit on each committee. The final decision on the appointment of external board members is a prerogative of the university.

The competences of external members are outlined in law. The law states that the balance of university board members should reflect the overall activities of the university and that board members should contribute to the achievement of university strategic objectives through educational and research knowledge as well as the dissemination of knowledge. Board members should also have experience of financial management. External board members should come from different sectors in society. Experience of foreign/international education and research should be represented on the board although it is not a legal requirement for there to be international representatives on governing bodies. External members of Danish university boards are often national figures from the cultural and business sectors.

University senates may comprise academic staff, non-academic staff and students, with academic staff making up the majority of members, and no formal requirement to include administrative staff. The senate must be consulted on academic issues and has no formal decision-making powers.

Danish universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints, and may create for-profit and non-profit legal entities under specific legal and financial regulations.

Financial autonomy

Danish universities receive their basic public funding through an annual block grant with no restrictions on the internal allocation of funding. The government sets a three-year funding horizon for publicly-funded basic research but these funding provisions can be changed in finance bills.

Danish universities can keep surpluses and borrow money without restrictions.

Danish universities are allowed to own their buildings and sell them without restrictions. In practice, however, only two universities own all or most of their buildings: the Copenhagen Business School and the Technical University of Denmark. The government reformed the legislation around property ownership in 2015. Some universities started to explore the possibility of buying buildings but so far no university has been able to purchase the buildings that they currently use.

There are no tuition fees for Danish and other EU students at any level. Non-EU students pay tuition fees which are set through co-operation between the university and an external authority, in that the ministry establishes the minimum fee that the universities can charge. There are no tuition fees for non-EU students studying at doctoral level.

Staffing autonomy

Senior academic staff can be recruited freely by universities. The number of posts is regulated by an external authority for some senior administrative staff.

Salaries for senior academic staff are negotiated with other parties, with margin for manoeuvre for universities to decide on higher wages with the ministry's approval. There is stronger external control in the case of senior administrative staff, whose salary bands are prescribed by the Ministry of Finance.

There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissals as national labour market regulations apply.

Public sector regulations apply for both senior academic and administrative staff promotions, meaning all posts cannot be filled until after a vacancy has been advertised and an application process has taken place.

Academic autonomy

Universities no longer fully decide on overall student numbers, insofar as the Danish government decided in 2014 to restrict access to programmes with poor employment rates for graduates. Limitations to student intake affect programmes with comparatively high graduate unemployment rates for seven out of ten years. The government's aim is to control student numbers on some programmes rather than overall student numbers. Previously student intake was controlled by the universities, with the exception of specific fields such as medicine.

At Bachelor and Master levels, admission to Danish universities is co-regulated by universities and an external authority. Since 2013 there has been a change in the government's regulation of admissions criteria at Bachelor level with a move from external regulation to greater co-regulation. One set of criteria is established in law (the government quota criteria) and one set of criteria is now fixed by the universities themselves. The proportion of the intake that is chosen according to the criteria set by universities ranges from 10% to 50% but in most cases remains on the lower end of the scale. This change has given universities more freedom to recruit students and to achieve a more diverse intake. Students are entitled to move from a successfully completed Bachelor's degree to related Master's programmes within the same university. Universities can also recruit students onto Master's programmes from other universities.

The Danish quality assurance system is in transition, evolving from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation. Currently half of the universities in the system have secured institutional accreditation and are able to introduce new programmes without prior accreditation. The first processes to introduce institutional accreditation began in 2014.

In 2013 the government introduced a new 'pre-qualification' requirement to ensure all new programmes are relevant to the employment market. This step is required for all new programmes even if the university has institutional accreditation. For existing programmes, re-accreditation is not required if the institution has institutional accreditation. A large number of applications for new programmes have been refused by the body that decides on this issue. It is an independent body composed of experts that considers employment data and other evidence at a national level. It is a separate body to the accreditation body but it was set up by the ministry.

Danish universities can open degree programmes at doctoral level without prior accreditation. Universities can terminate degree programmes independently.

Universities in Denmark cannot choose appropriate external quality assurance mechanisms – the system is currently evolving towards institutional accreditation, undertaken by the Danish Accreditation Institution.

Universities are able to choose the language of instruction at all degree levels; the language is specified in the application for accreditation.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	94%	94%	High	
Financial autonomy	69%	69%	Medium high	
Staffing autonomy	86%	86%	High	
Academic autonomy	56%	75%	From medium low to medium high	Student numbers are now negotiated (instead of decided by university; <i>negative impact</i>), while selection is now co-regulated instead of completely fixed by external authority; institutional accreditation is possible (<i>positive impact</i>)

The key changes to the autonomy of Danish universities have been in the area of academic autonomy where increased restrictions on student numbers have been outweighed by greater university involvement in student selection and the development of institutional accreditation arrangements.

University autonomy in context

The Danish university system is experiencing changes with both positive and negative impacts on academic autonomy, including restrictions on student intakes in some areas, pre-qualification of new programmes according to employment measures, the continuation of the study-progress reform, and a new approach to quality assurance. There is also a wider context of funding pressures.

Restrictions on student intake are linked to concerns about excessive graduate numbers and low graduate employment rates. They are being implemented over a six-year period from 2014 onwards and apply to a number of Bachelor and Master's programmes. Most of the programmes affected are in the humanities, as well as to a smaller extent in some social sciences and natural sciences. Universities have experienced the greatest impact although the restriction applies across the wider higher education sector. Depending on their subject provisions, universities have also been affected differently. By the time the restrictions are fully implemented in 2020, it is expected that there will be 3,500 fewer Bachelor students and 2,400 fewer students at Master level on the restricted programmes, compared to 2013. The numbers used to determine the inclusion of programmes in the restricted numbers category will be revisited each year and more restrictions may be applied. The operation of this policy will be evaluated in 2017.

Further reforms are likely over the next few years particularly in relation to funding. Danish universities are currently experiencing major cuts to public funding for both education and research. From 2016 to 2019 the funding for education is projected to be cut by 2% each year, with a total reduction of around 8% by 2019 compared to the funding position in 2015. From 2016 the funding for public research will be cut by 1.4 billion DKR (c.135 million euro) annually.

The government's view of the reform process is that it should improve the quality of higher education and lead to higher employment rates. The Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the Ministry of Finance are jointly working on this matter. There is considerable political interest in and concern about the development and offering of new programmes with questions as to whether there are too many new programmes, will students be attracted to these new programmes and are there enough jobs for graduates from these programmes. This is part of a broader reflection on the rationalisation of the academic offer at national level.

The 'study-progress reform' aims to encourage students to progress through their studies faster, with universities facing targeted cuts in the event students fail to progress at an appropriate rate. The reform aims to keep students on schedule for the completion of their studies through taking exams and/or gaining ECTS at regularly defined intervals. The aim is for students to achieve a combination of a Bachelor and a Master's degree in a total of five years. Concerns about the bureaucracy around this reform has led to some adjustments in the process. These have enabled universities to use a wider range of methods to try to ensure the faster progress of students but there are still financial consequences for universities if student progress targets are not met by 2020.

There are differences in graduation rates between universities so this reform will have a differential impact across the sector. There is already an institutional bonus system for 'on-time' graduation which is different to the 'study-progress reform'.

Views from the sector

When seeking to compare university autonomy in 2016 against 2010, the reality of a different political landscape in Denmark must be recognised. Politicians and the public are more interested in higher education which is a positive development but there is a danger of micromanagement and greater regulation. There is a productive dialogue between universities and the government about bureaucracy and efficiencies. Danish universities strongly wish for the longest possible funding horizon.

The central challenges are around the funding outlook and budget cuts as staff reductions are already being made by some universities. Further cuts to research budgets are possible as the government's commitment to spending on research is 1% of GDP. The 2016 budget reduced research spending from 1.1% of GDP in 2015 to 1.01% of GDP in 2016. The policy intention in regard to funding for both research and education was a surprise to universities. The annual student intake has stabilised but student numbers and employment outcomes are likely to continue to be political issues.

The introduction of the restrictions on student numbers on certain programmes due to lower graduate employment rates was a major change decided upon very quickly by the government arising from a political shift and it was not a decision considered by Parliament. However, it remains the case that many other programmes within other subject fields remain open to students so it is not yet clear how this policy change will affect overall student application trends and enrolment patterns.



Estonia

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

The Estonian university system is regulated by the Universities Act, passed in 1995 and last amended in 2014. It lays out the organisation of teaching and education in universities; the rights and obligations of students and regulates the establishing, managing, funding and supervision of universities.

There are two other specific laws that regulate specific institutions: the University of Tartu Act and the Tallinn University of Technology Act, which lay out the differences between each of these institutions and the other universities in the system. Two out of six 'public' universities have their own regulatory frameworks. Since 1995 the University of Tartu has been regulated differently, while the Tallinn University of Technology emancipated from the Universities Act in 2014.

The University of Tartu and the Tallinn University of Technology enrol nearly half of the students in the system.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law prescribes that rectors must be professors and serve for five years. Other aspects are regulated by the internal statutes. Universities have decision-making senates in which they can include external members. Changes to the governance model have been implemented in two large universities.

Financial



Estonian universities receive annual block grants for which they control the internal allocation. They can keep surpluses and borrow autonomously, and own their buildings. Universities have lost the capacity to set and charge fees to domestic and EU students since 2013 when these were abolished by the government.

Staffing



Universities are highly autonomous in the management of their human resources, whether in relation to recruitment, salaries, promotions or dismissals.

Academic



Universities essentially decide on student numbers and can design their own admission criteria. Accreditation is undertaken at institutional level by the agency chosen by the university. Autonomy is only restricted in this field insofar as universities are assigned individual academic profiles. Otherwise universities are free to design the content of their programmes and may introduce programmes in other languages.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Governance changes for two universities, introducing dual structures with the creation of a board/council
- Abolition in 2013 of tuition fees for students enrolled in full-time programmes taught in Estonian

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

Estonian universities are largely autonomous in deciding on their own governance structures and modalities. Universities continue to appoint their executive head without needing external approval. The Universities Act requires that the rector is a professor, with further criteria being developed by the universities themselves. The law also foresees a five-year term with no limits on renewal. Dismissal of the rector is an internal matter of the university.

Under the Universities Act, institutions have a unitary governance structure with decision-making powers concentrated with the senate-type body. The senate comprises the rector, vice-rectors, academic staff representatives, student representatives and other members as outlined in the statutes of the institutions. Universities have the possibility to include external members in their senates and can decide how to appoint them. The general Universities Act also includes in the university structures the 'Curatorium', an advisory/consultative body with external members appointed by the government on the proposal of the universities.

The University of Tartu is regulated by specific legislation which only applies to this institution. The university initiated a process to adapt the law with a view to develop new governance structures in the institution. The law was modified on this basis and changes took effect as of 2012. The changes involve primarily the introduction of a dual governance model through the creation of a board/council as the highest decision-making body, including external members in addition to the already existing senate.

In 2014, Tallinn University of Technology obtained authorisation to emancipate from the Universities Act and proposed changes to the government, which put forward the Tallinn University of Technology Act. This new part of the legislation was developed for the purposes of this institution only. This request by the university was also prompted by the desire to modify their governance structure. The university introduced the board as the highest decision-making body, including also external members (in addition to the senate), and put a limit to maximum two consecutive terms for the rector.

There are differences in the new provisions for the University of Tartu and the Tallinn University of Technology, notably in the distribution of responsibilities among governance bodies and in the election of the rector (different election bodies). The board/council-type body at both universities consists of 11 members, five of whom are appointed by the university senate, one by the Estonian Academy of Sciences (from outside of the university) and five by the Ministry of Education and Research, in a nomination process involving the wider public. The board/council must be composed in majority of external members. The government formally approves the composition of this body.

Estonian universities continue to be able to decide on their academic structures freely and create both non-for-profit and for-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Estonian universities receive annual block grants and are free to allocate the funding internally. Surpluses may be kept without restrictions. Universities can borrow money for major projects, for instance relating to infrastructure¹.

The Universities Act states that universities are free to own buildings and sell them without restriction.

Tuition fees were abolished for all full-time programmes taught in Estonian from 2013 onwards. However, Estonian universities may charge students who do not complete enough ECTS credits in order to partially compensate for the study costs². Each university can charge fees up to certain limits set by the government. Universities may decide not to charge fees within allowed credit margins.

Universities may set the level of fees charged to non-EU students, part-time students and for programmes delivered in languages other than Estonian.

Staffing autonomy

Estonian universities are highly autonomous in the management of their human resources, whether in relation to recruitment, salaries, promotions or dismissals. The Quality Agreement on staff recruitment states the minimum criteria for staff recruitment processes but universities also set their own criteria. The University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology have revised staff performance mechanisms but it is up to each university to decide on their approaches to performance management.

Academic autonomy

There has been some adjustment to the process for deciding on student numbers in Estonian higher education. Universities can essentially decide on student numbers. In certain fields, such as medicine, the ministry specifies minimum numbers, which are outlined in performance agreements between universities and the government. Minimum numbers are only specified for certain fields of study and so the impact on each university depends on their subject provision.

¹ Institutions may also resort to short-term borrowing to fund work on European projects as European funding is often only available once projects are underway.

² Fees can be charged from students who complete less than 30 ECTS per semester. Fees are calculated based on the number of missing credit points (the amount below 30 ECTS per semester) and range from 35-100 Euros per ECTS.

Universities decide on their own admissions criteria for students. Since 2010 there has been an evolution towards fewer national examinations, which can be used by universities in their admission policy. This has led to increased use of university entrance exams. With the reduction of the number of national secondary education graduation examinations (between 2012 and 2014), universities are increasingly in charge of developing their own admission criteria.

Universities are assigned an 'academic fields' profile by the government which enables universities to introduce programmes within these fields without requiring external approval. Every seven years, Estonian universities undergo institutional accreditation. There is no programme accreditation for Estonian universities. 'Study group' accreditation may be undertaken to look at a particular group of subjects – ICT has already been accredited in this way. There has been no systematic change to this system since 2010. Universities can select quality assurance agencies from other countries as long as they have received the approval of the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency.

Universities are free to design the content of their study programmes.

Universities can develop study programmes in languages other than Estonian. In practice, all Bachelor's programmes should be available in Estonian.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

The co-existence of the two governance models in the system does not affect the score in organisational autonomy.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	87%	87%	High	
Financial autonomy	94% ¹	77%	From high to medium high	Abolition of tuition fees
Staffing autonomy	100%	100%	High	
Academic autonomy	92%	98%	Remains in high	Overall student numbers decided upon by universities

University autonomy in context

The developments regarding governance models in two large universities in Estonia show that there is a reflection within the system on how to best adapt governance to new challenges and contexts. The new dual structure adopted by the University of Tartu and Tallinn University of Technology may inspire changes to the mainstream model in the future but there is currently no strong impetus in this direction.

The Estonian universities were among the most autonomous in all four dimensions considered in the Scorecard and in particular in financial terms in 2010. The abolition of tuition fees in 2013 has reduced the extent to which institutions are in control of their income. There is additional uncertainty with the ongoing review of the funding system, with changes expected in relation to the share of performance-based funding in the overall funding formula determining the block grant allocation, as well as changes to the indicators used in the formula. The outcomes of the review are expected in 2017.

The Estonian government is also planning to review the grants system and the connection between tuition fees and achieved ECTS. The system is complex to administer and to communicate to students and their families.

The current system is also increasing the relative share of public funding in the sector; there is a recognition that, despite this, more private funding would be needed in order to fund the system at an adequate level. Public funding to universities in Estonia has decreased significantly in the period 2008-2014, in a context of dwindling student numbers². When adjusted with inflation, public funding decreased by 26% in that period, faster than the decline in the student population (approximately 20%). In this context, it is difficult for universities to reap the benefits of high institutional autonomy, in particular with regard to financial and staffing matters.

¹ This score was adapted from 90% to 94% as the need for external approval to proceed to the sale of a university building had legally been removed before 2010.

² See EUA's Public Funding Observatory: www.eua.be/publicfundingobservatory

Views from the sector

University funding is a key topic of discussion with the abolition of tuition fees – with mixed views from the sector – and, related to that, the possible impact of the system whereby students are charged fees for failed credits. Universities expect that the issue of private contributions to teaching will re-open as part of a review of the public-private funding balance in the Estonian university system.

Of high concern to the sector is the growth of competitive, project-based funding for research, at the expense of core, institutional funding with longer timeframes. As the main funding modality for research activities, project-based funding makes it difficult for universities to design coherent research strategies at institutional level, particularly as the majority of research funding goes directly to research units and centres.



Finland

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

There are two types of universities in Finland, foundation universities and public universities. The two foundation universities are Aalto and Tampere University of Technology, out of a total of 15 universities in Finland. There are statutory differences between the public universities and foundation universities. This profile considers primarily the framework applying to public universities. Several university mergers have been implemented since 2010, leading to the creation of the University of Aalto, the University of Eastern Finland and the University of the Arts.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The selection of the executive head is an internal matter of the university, as is its dismissal. The law nevertheless prescribes that the candidate must hold a doctorate and that their term of office is five years at most. Universities must have external members on their board/council but they control their appointment.

Financial



Restrictions concern ownership of buildings, which is done through specific companies. Universities may borrow money and keep surpluses. They cannot charge tuition fees for national/EU students but are now free to set tuition fee levels for non-EU students enrolled in English-taught programmes above a minimum level set by the government.

Staffing



Universities can decide on recruitment, promotions and dismissals of senior academic and administrative staff. The only restriction concerns salaries, which are negotiated with other parties.

Academic



Student numbers are negotiated with an external authority. Universities may freely introduce programmes but only within the scope of their 'educational responsibilities', i.e. determined study fields. The termination of programmes must be agreed with an external authority. Universities may freely develop programmes in languages other than the national ones and are responsible for reviewing the quality of their activities.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- New timeframe for university funding projections and targets in line with Government planning period
- Introduction of tuition fees for international students on Bachelor's and Master's programmes taught in English from January 2016
- Changes to ownership of university buildings underway with a move to greater university control of their buildings
- Cuts in public funding and subsequent university job losses

Organisational autonomy

The selection of the university executive head does not require validation from an external authority but the selection criteria are stated in law: rectors/presidents must hold a doctoral degree¹ and possess proven leadership skills. Universities can decide on the dismissal procedure for their rector in their statutes. The maximum length of a term of office for the rector is five years by law, with no limit on renewals. The law prescribes that the board/council selects and appoints the rector.

Finnish universities have dual governance structures, including both senate- and board/council-type governing bodies. The board/council (referred to as 'board') is the central decision-making body of the university; the senate acts mainly as an appointing body for the board, adopts financial statements and annual reports, and provides a forum for discussing cross-cutting matters. The senate decides, within limits set in the law, on the number of members in the board². External members must comprise a minimum of 40% of the total membership. The senate is responsible for the appointment of the external members of the board. The senate may comprise a maximum of 50 members. Both the board and senate must include representatives from academic and non-academic staff as well as students, with rules regarding proportions set in law.

Finnish universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints. Finnish universities can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Finnish universities receive basic public funding through an annual block grant with no restrictions on the allocation of funds. Finnish universities have also had three-year funding projections with qualitative and quantitative targets since 2010. The timeframe for these targets was extended to four years from 2013, so there is now a broad four-year agreement with targets covering individual universities' aims and objectives including student numbers and graduation rates. This four-year period is now in line with government planning periods. The actual budget allocations are nevertheless made on an annual basis as they are agreed by Parliament.

¹ The requirement to hold a doctoral degree does not apply in the case of the rector of the University of the Arts Helsinki.

² In the case of foundation universities, the board must comprise seven members.

Universities may borrow money and keep surpluses without restrictions. They can also own and sell buildings subject to some restrictions. In practice, university buildings are owned by three separate companies which were previously owned together by universities and the State on a two-thirds/one-third basis. The State since then sold its share of two of these companies, which are now wholly owned by the universities as the tenants of the facilities. These two companies deal with university real estate in the greater Helsinki region. The State retains a one-third share in the company dealing with university real estate in other parts of Finland.

There are no tuition fees for national and EU students at any degree level. For non-EU students, new regulations were passed in Finland at the end of 2015. Whereas universities were not authorised to charge tuition fees to students enrolled in English-taught programmes, minimum fee levels were established by the Finnish government and are to be enforced at the latest for the academic year 2017/2018. Universities may freely set the level of fees beyond this threshold. This applies to Bachelor's and Master's programmes. There continues to be no tuition fees for non-EU students on doctoral programmes.

The Finnish Parliament passed new regulations in late 2015 to introduce tuition fees for non-EU students enrolled in Bachelor and Master's programmes taught in English. The new fee policy came into force on 1 January 2016 but will not be mandatory until 1 August 2017. Universities will have discretion in setting tuition fee levels but the government has set a minimum fee of 1 500 Euros per annum. Considerable work was undertaken by universities to prepare for this change with a trial period where universities could decide on fee levels for international students. However, the trial was not very extensive as some universities did not participate.

Staffing autonomy

Finnish universities can recruit senior academic and administrative staff freely. The existing rules relate to some aspects of the procedure, outlining that recruitments may be either based on publicly advertised vacancies or carried out by invitation.

Salary bands are negotiated with other parties.

There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissals and national labour market regulations apply. Nevertheless, the law specifies that the employment contract of an employee belonging to the research and teaching staff of a university may not be terminated on grounds aimed towards the infringement of freedom of research, art or education.

Universities can promote all staff freely.

Academic autonomy

Universities negotiate with an external authority to decide on overall student numbers. At Bachelor and Master levels universities select students independently and set the criteria for admissions, including entrance exams.

There are restrictions on the introduction and termination of degree programmes. Universities can introduce new programmes if the subject area is within their field of educational responsibilities as agreed by universities and an external authority, and also outlined in law. A government decree determines the 'educational responsibilities', of universities. Within their allocated studyfields, universities can introduce new degree programmes autonomously. Closing degree programmes when it changes the decree on educational responsibilities among the universities requires negotiations with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The termination of programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority. If a programme is to be closed universities must provide alternatives for students who have already started the programme, until their graduation.

Universities cannot select external quality assurance mechanisms but have institutional accreditation, for which they can select a quality assurance agency.

Universities have the obligation to offer teaching and examination in Finnish and/or Swedish (regulations differ across institutions). Nevertheless, they have the possibility to choose other languages in addition for teaching and examination, at Bachelor and Master levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	93%	93%	High	
Financial autonomy	56%	67%	From medium low to medium high	Ability for universities to charge fees to non-EU students at Bachelor & Master levels
Staffing autonomy	92%	92%	High	
Academic autonomy	90%	90%	High	

University autonomy in organisational, academic and staffing matters remains high in the Finnish higher education sector. The area of financial autonomy which was comparatively lower in 2010 has seen the most significant change. The introduction of tuition fees for students from outside the EU has led to a higher score for this aspect of autonomy in 2015 and a shift from the medium low cluster to the medium high cluster of countries for financial autonomy.

University autonomy in context

The signals from the new Finnish government are that universities need to diversify their range of activities and increase cooperation between each other. The government might intervene to direct activities if universities are not proactive in making changes. The financial context will drive many changes.

Finland has been reducing funding since 2014. In addition to the previously announced cuts, the current administration has moved to freeze the university index for its entire term, a mechanism that otherwise guarantees year-over-year growth in funding based on inflation. This effectively will reduce university funding in relation to inflationary increases in ongoing operating costs through to 2019. Further cuts to university funding were avoided during budget negotiations; however, universities are still trying to cope with the previously imposed austerity measures. As Finnish universities have a high percentage of public funding, the significant budget cuts have indeed had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on universities, including major job losses in the sector.

The introduction of tuition fees is unlikely to increase the total funding of universities in Finland. On the other hand, the cuts on core university funding as well as on public research funding that the government has already introduced will have an impact on the universities' capacity to compete for fee-paying international students on a global scale.

Several university mergers have been implemented since 2010, leading to the creation of the University of Aalto, the University of Eastern Finland and the University of the Arts. Further mergers are planned for the future and are under preparation. These mergers might lead to the establishment of a new foundation university in Tampere but a change in legislation is needed as, for the time being, universities and polytechnics cannot merge (and these different types of institutions are involved in this particular merger process). It is expected that the new foundation university will be created in 2018.

Views from the sector

The high dependence of Finnish universities on public funding limits their autonomy to a certain extent. Universities are interested in securing other funding sources but the public funding cuts are so significant that other income sources cannot compensate for the reduction in public funding. Research funding has also been cut, via reduced budgets for the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation and the Academy of Finland. The parameters of the funding system are likely to be stable for the next few years. The funding formula was reviewed recently by a working group. The amount of funding may vary but the formula used to allocate funding should not be significantly altered.

There is a strong focus on competing for European and international funding. While European funding is seen as very important there is considerable work associated with European funding applications and monitoring. Universities' capacity to compete effectively for European funding is also being hampered by the cuts in public funding, which have an impact on the professional and administrative staff who support academics in application processes.

Before the introduction of international student fees at the start of 2016, considerable preparation was carried out by universities but there were concerns that the introduction of tuition fees might reduce international student numbers, as was the case initially in Sweden. International student numbers increased again in Sweden following work by universities to develop scholarship and grant packages. Some wider concerns were also voiced as student unions are worried that this change could eventually lead to the introduction of tuition fees for all students, but universities did not consider this to be likely.

Finnish universities considered it therefore paramount to communicate on the quality of the Finnish university experience to prospective international students. It is likely that some universities will benefit from the introduction of tuition fees as the Finnish brand of education has a strong international reputation. Some Finnish universities also perceive an opportunity to diversify their income through tuition fees and perhaps broaden their international activities. It will be important for universities to set fees at an appropriate level and offer scholarships and grants. It is clear though that this income stream will not be significant in the first few years and international student fees will not be a replacement for public funding cuts.

The changes in the ownership arrangements of university buildings are expected to strengthen the financial position of universities in the long-term. They are likely to provide universities with less expensive facilities and help universities to use their facilities more efficiently as spare capacity can now be leased or sold on the open market.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Governance matters are significantly regulated by the state, including selection criteria, term of office and dismissal of the executive head. Governance structures include external members, partly appointed by the university. Institutions cannot fully decide on their academic structures but may create legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive an annual block grant, with limited possibility to move funds between pre-set categories. Universities can borrow money with the approval of an external authority. Some universities have been devolved of their real estate and may sell their buildings. The level of tuition fees for all types of students studying at all levels is set by the state.

Staffing



The number of senior academic posts is regulated by an external authority. Recruitment for some senior administrative positions is also carried out externally on the basis of national competitions. Salary bands for all staff are prescribed by an external authority. Dismissal procedures are strictly regulated due to civil servant status of most staff. There are restrictions on promotions for all staff.

Academic



Admission to Bachelor's programmes is entirely regulated by an external authority, while universities have gained the capacity to recruit students at Master level. All new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation to receive funding. Universities cannot choose either external quality assurance mechanisms or providers.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- New law passed in 2013 introducing changes in university governance, including a reshaping of governing bodies and their responsibilities
- Change in accreditation body and approach (validation of externally conducted evaluations)
- Ability of universities to recruit students at Master level as of 2017
- Re-configuration of the sector through concentration measures, including university communities and full-scale mergers

Organisational autonomy

The organisation of the university sector in France evolved significantly with the implementation of the 2007 law on enlarged competences and responsibilities. Since then, a new law on higher education and research was passed in 2013 and introduced some changes in the framework, particularly with regard to organisational autonomy.

A series of provisions nevertheless remains stable. This is the case of procedures related to the executive head. The selection of the university's executive head (president) does not require validation by an external authority. Selection criteria are stated in the law as executive heads must hold an academic position. Equally, the law prescribes the procedure for the executive head's dismissal, carried out by the ministry: resignation of two-thirds of the board members, leading to the dissolution of the board and the academic council and the automatic dismissal of the executive head. The minister then appoints a provisional administrator to deal with current affairs and organise new elections – this process has been used only once so far. However, it is also possible for the ministry to dismiss the president on disciplinary grounds – after having been condemned for wrongdoing through penal and/or disciplinary proceedings (also happened once). By law, executive heads serve for four years, renewable once.

It can now be considered that French universities have dual governance structures, with both a board/council and a senate-type body.

The university board/council is the main strategic decision-making body. It is complemented by a senate-type body ('academic council') which acquired, with the 2013 law, a series of competences including a focus on staffing matters. It takes individual decisions relative to the hiring, assignment or career of the academic staff.

By law, the board is composed of between 24 and 36 members. It is chaired by the executive head with at least one-third being academic staff representatives, at least one-sixth student representatives and at least one-sixth administrative staff. Another third is made up of external members. The type of external members (representatives of regional authorities, business representatives, etc.) are defined in the law. They are partly nominated by external organisations (maximum five) and partly by the board itself. The organisations involved in nominating external partners must be mentioned in the university statutes and typically include the regional public authorities, the regional chamber of commerce, etc.

The 2013 law increased the size of the board (previously composed of maximum 30 members), leading to an increase in the representation of all groups except external members, whose number remains at a similar level to 2007. Among changes brought by the law, all members of the board now take part in the election of the executive head, including external members.

The senate-type body is referred to as 'academic council'. The 2013 law introduced this new body which is composed of a research-focused committee and a teaching-focused committee. The academic council includes representatives of academic and administrative staff as well as students and a minority of external members. In total the 'academic council' comprises between 40 and 80 members.

In organisational terms, the 2013 law modified the distribution of competences among the governing bodies of the universities. Under the 2007 regulatory framework, the board combined strategic, management and HR competences. It was complemented by two bodies of a more consultative nature, the 'scientific council' and the 'council for academic and student matters'. The 2013 law implemented a change of competences by focusing the board's activities on strategic matters and transforming the two other bodies into two committees (one for research and one for teaching) that together form the 'academic council'. This senate-type body now has, beyond a consultative role, a series of competences as described above. However, based on the strategy it has defined, the board can veto the hiring decisions of the academic council. Importantly, the 'academic council' can only take decisions on staffing matters when meeting in special sessions open to academic staff representatives exclusively.

Universities cannot freely decide on their academic structures as guidelines exist in law on faculties and schools. However, they can establish both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

The 2013 law has not fundamentally modified the financial framework for universities. Universities in France receive core public funding on an annual block grant basis. The block grant is split into broad categories, differentiating between investments, salaries and operational costs, and there is limited possibility to move funds between the categories. A transfer between salaries and operational costs is possible but must be notified to an external authority. Transfers from the grant for investments are difficult as the grant includes some earmarked funds. Changes brought by the law relate to multi-annual contracts, addressed in the section "autonomy in context".

Any surpluses generated may be kept without restrictions. Universities can borrow money with the approval of an external authority.

Universities can own real estate and sell buildings without restrictions. The 2007 law included the possibility to transfer property ownership to universities. A pilot launched in 2011/2012 saw three universities¹ sign a contract with the ministry, whereby the latter committed to providing a certain level of funding for maintenance purposes. The majority of universities do not own their buildings.

The level of tuition fees is regulated externally, and set by public authorities, for all types of students studying for programmes that award national diplomas, at all levels².

Staffing autonomy

The large majority of senior university staff in France have civil servant status and as such a series of restrictions apply in this field.

The number of posts for senior academic staff is regulated by an external authority and there are also specific requirements for academic staff at different levels. Universities must recruit professors from a list established by a national body of peers. The appointment of professors is confirmed by an external authority. The number of posts has a fixed ceiling, and the university is free to define the number of posts for each category within this framework.

For senior administrative staff recruitment is carried out by an external authority for some staff, particularly those working in libraries and central services, on the basis of national competitions. Other staff can be recruited by universities. Universities can also hire some senior administrative staff on private contract terms, but these are a small minority.

Universities are limited in their recruitment by a set ceiling on state-funded posts and the available budget for staff costs.

Salary bands for basically all senior academic and administrative staff are prescribed by an external authority. Universities have the possibility to decide on additional remuneration above the salary bands but the room for manoeuvre is considered to be minimal. The 2007 law had transferred payroll management to the universities themselves.

Dismissal procedures are strictly regulated considering the civil servant status of the large majority of the senior staff

1 University of Poitiers, Toulouse 1 Capitole University, Clermont Auvergne University. Property is fully transferred in 2017 to two other institutions: University of Bordeaux and Aix Marseille University. The universities of Tours and Caen Normandy were expected to obtain gradual ownership during 2017.

2 For the academic year 2016/2017, the level of tuition fees was (per year): 184 Euros for Bachelor's degrees, 256 Euros for Master's degrees and 391 Euros for Doctoral degrees.

There are restrictions on promotions for all senior academic and administrative staff; for academics 50% of promotions are decided on by an external authority and 50% by universities. Promotions for administrative staff are decided on by professional committees and not by universities.

Academic autonomy

The model continues to be one of free admission to most university programmes, based solely on completion of secondary education (for first-cycle students in their first year of study). There are some limits on student numbers in specific subject areas at a national level³.

Admission to Bachelor's programmes is essentially regulated by an external authority, although there are numerous exceptions. Universities can set the criteria for admission to Master's programmes. Previously, the universities' capacity to recruit students at this level applied to admission in the second year of Master's programmes. A reform passed in 2016, and with effect from September 2017, enables universities to select students for Master's programmes at entry level⁴.

New Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes must be accredited to receive funding. In the case of doctoral programmes, the ministry requires an evaluation of the research capacity of the institution before the programme can be introduced. Universities cannot choose external quality assurance mechanisms (mandatory programme accreditation) and cannot choose a quality assurance agency insofar as the evaluations must be validated² by the high council for evaluation' (HCERES) which, since the end of 2014, has replaced the former national evaluation agency.

Universities may however introduce 'university diplomas' on a more autonomous basis – they receive no public funding for these but may charge fees instead. Universities can terminate programmes independently.

Universities can design the content of degree programmes without constraints.

There are tight regulations regarding the language of instruction in French universities. At Bachelor level the law states that universities can only offer degree programmes in French. At Master level universities can choose the language of instruction for certain programmes. However, there are a number of exceptions and an increasing number of programmes include courses taught in English.

³ The reform nevertheless confirms a student's right to undertake further studies after completing a Bachelor's degree. The law foresees procedures to guarantee this right.

⁴ The high council for evaluation is meant to validate evaluations led by third parties in most cases and in exceptional cases carry out direct evaluations.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	59%	59%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	45%	45%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	43%	43%	Medium low
Academic autonomy	37%	37%	Low

University autonomy in context

Changes in the French system since 2010 relate to further legal developments that have had an impact on the university governance model. This is set in a wider context of re-configuration of the sector through concentration and mergers; this process is ongoing and likely to continue for a number of years.

The higher education landscape in France has continued to evolve since 2010, notably with the transformation of the previous groupings called ‘PRES’ (poles of higher education and research) into ‘COMUE’ (communities of universities and institutions). Universities must either join a community, an association, or engage in full-scale mergers. This process of consolidation is still ongoing⁵. At the end of 2016, 20 COMUE and five associations were in existence, including six mergers. Among the recently officially completed mergers is that of the three universities of the Grenoble metropolitan area, forming the new ‘Université Grenoble Alpes’. In 2017 the formation of the merged ‘Université Clermont Auvergne’ should be completed, while other re-configurations are still under discussion or in preparation. Further evolutions regarding the legal status and competences of the COMUEs are expected in the medium term.

⁵ EUA’s pilot “University Merger Tool” tracks recent university mergers and hybrid cases such as the French ‘COMUE’ developments. The tool is available online: www.university-mergers.eu

Views from the sector

The National Rectors' Conference (CPU) was strongly involved in the negotiations leading to the design of the new law in 2013 and was in favour of maintaining the overall position of the 2007 framework. With the change of government in 2012 the debate was re-opened as certain stakeholders sought to amend the framework. The spirit of the 2013 law is therefore one of limited re-balancing without questioning the fundamental principles of the 2007 law.

The sector expects that mergers will continue to happen as the COMUE structure remains rather cumbersome and administratively too complex to effectively carry out ambitious strategic projects.

Universities can build up financial reserves but the sector feels that a very negative political signal was given when the government took these reserves into account to determine the 2015 budget, expecting universities to use this to compensate cuts. The sector perceived this decision as penalising prudent financial management. Universities now internally earmark reserves to investment projects. In 2016 funds were restored to those universities which had been targeted by such cuts.

The 2007 law included the possibility to transfer property ownership to universities. This process was completed with three universities which signed a contract with the ministry, whereby the latter committed to providing a certain level of funding for maintenance purposes, and up to four other institutions in 2017. The ministry is presently interested in continuing this transfer process, but without committing the associated resources for maintenance. The sector has therefore been reluctant to proceed further, as there is already a critical lack of funds to maintain university facilities. For universities, a related condition would be that the income generated by the sale of buildings would be fully allocated to the institution; at the moment, sales of buildings can only be carried out through a public body and the university receives only a small proportion of the revenue from property sales. The main interest for universities to become full owners of their facilities relates to real estate consolidation and energy efficiency operations. The transfer of property ownership also requires building up the adequate competences within university management, but little resources are available to support such developments.

Changes introduced by the 2013 law regarding the academic dimension of autonomy relate primarily to the transformation of the national evaluation agency (AERES) into a 'high council for evaluation' (HCERES). The fact that the high council is mostly intended to validate evaluations led by third parties may open up issues regarding the evaluation of laboratories operated jointly by universities and other research organisations (with the latter having often developed their own internal evaluation committees). A particular concern for universities may be to ensure that evaluation bodies operate independently and avoid conflicts of interest. The 2013 law also changed the focus of the accreditation system, but it remains closer to programme accreditation than institutional accreditation, while the sector favours the latter.

The other recent evolution in this field relates to the capacity of universities to recruit students at Master level, which the National Rectors' Conference has been arguing for. The sector is positive about this change as this will reduce legal insecurity for the institutions and creates more coherence with the three-cycle organisation of studies as promoted by the Bologna Process.

The sector considers that the lack of flexibility in HR management remains one of the most significant barriers to institutional autonomy. A large majority of staff have civil servant status and university HR management is constrained as the law regulates recruitment, salaries, dismissals and promotions.



Germany | Brandenburg

University autonomy in Brandenburg in 2016

Organisational



The appointment of executive heads requires approval from the ministry. Basic selection criteria for executive heads are stated in the law. The procedure for the dismissal is stated in the law and confirmation of dismissal by an external authority is required. The law also regulates the exact term of office.

Financial



Universities receive block grant funding on a two-year basis with no restrictions on the allocation of funding. The allocation of any surpluses is pre-determined by an external authority. Universities can borrow money but only up to a maximum percentage and only from a specific government-backed bank. Universities cannot own buildings. There are no tuition fees for studying at universities in Brandenburg.

Staffing



The recruitment of some senior academic staff at some universities is restricted. Decisions on individual staff salaries are restricted and salary bands for senior administrative staff are negotiated with an external authority. Dismissals for all staff are strictly regulated. Both academic and administrative staff can only be promoted if there is a post available at a higher level.

Academic



Universities in Brandenburg negotiate with an external authority on overall student numbers. At Bachelor level admission is co-regulated by universities and an external authority. At Bachelor and Master levels all new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation or are self-accredited by the university. The termination of degree programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Changes to procedure for election of executive head with the creation of specific 'finding committees' to run the process
- Shift to 'system accreditation' with institutions able to accredit their own study programmes if their institutional systems are assessed positively¹

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

There has been an adjustment in the procedure around the selection of the executive head of a university since 2010. Previously the candidate was proposed by the 'Landeshochschulrat' (a common council for all universities in Brandenburg) and elected by a university committee before the selection was validated by the ministry. Since 2015 it is no longer the 'Landeshochschulrat' that proposes the candidate for election, but a 'finding committee' is established that includes three members of the 'Landeshochschulrat', one ministry representative and one representative from the university concerned. The executive head is then elected by the senate and afterwards appointed by the ministry.

Basic selection criteria for executive heads are stated in the law. The candidate must hold a university degree and have several years of professional experience.

The procedure for the dismissal of an executive head is stated in the law and two-thirds of the senate must vote to dismiss the executive head. The law states that the dismissal must be confirmed by an external authority. The exact term of office is stated in the law as six years with a possibility for re-election.

Universities in Brandenburg have unitary governance structures and are free to decide on the size and composition of their senates. All universities in Brandenburg have different approaches. There are no external members. The group of professors has half of the voting rights on teaching matters and a majority of voting rights on research matters.

A special feature of the Brandenburg higher education system is the 'Landeshochschulrat', which is a body operating across the sector in Brandenburg that provides strategic guidance to institutions, in effect performing a board/council role. External members may sit on the 'Landeshochschulrat' and may include research directors, former university leaders and business representatives.

¹ This is referred to as 'institutional accreditation' in the EUA Scorecard but the terminology 'system accreditation' is maintained for the profiles of the German Länder considered in the analysis since 'institutional accreditation' is given a different meaning in the German context.

Universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints and are able to create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Brandenburg receive block grant funding on a two-year basis with no restrictions on the allocation of funding.

Universities can keep any surpluses from public funding but the allocation of any surpluses is pre-determined by an external authority. Universities can borrow money up to a maximum percentage point and from a specific government-backed bank.

Universities cannot own buildings.

There are no tuition fees at universities in Brandenburg, either for national/EU or international students.

Staffing autonomy

The recruitment of some senior academic staff at some universities in Brandenburg is restricted as a number of appointments require confirmation by the State. Decisions on individual staff salaries are restricted to an overall limit for all staff payments. Salaries for senior academics appointed before 2002 are fixed within salary bands prescribed externally. Dismissals are strictly regulated as all staff hold civil service status. Staff can be promoted if there is a post available at a higher level.

Senior administrative staff can be recruited freely by universities. Salary bands for senior administrative staff are negotiated with an external authority. Dismissals are strictly regulated as all staff hold civil service status. Staff can be promoted if there is a post available at a higher level.

Academic autonomy

Universities in Brandenburg negotiate with an external authority to decide on overall student numbers. At Bachelor level admission is co-regulated by universities and an external authority, while at Master level universities are able to set the admission criteria themselves.

At Bachelor and Master level all new programmes must be submitted to accreditation so as to be introduced, unless a university is allowed to self-accredit its programmes. Universities can open new doctoral programmes without prior accreditation. The termination of degree programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority.

The law now allows institutions to apply for system accreditation. Institutions are able to accredit their own study programmes, although they may also retain programme accreditation. Universities can therefore choose internal quality assurance mechanisms, which is an evolution compared to 2010, and can select a quality assurance agency.

Universities can design the content of their degree programmes without constraints.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	58% ¹	58%	Medium low	
Financial autonomy	44%	44%	Medium low	
Staffing autonomy	58% ²	58%	Medium low	
Academic autonomy	67%	87%	From medium high to high	Possibility of ‘system accreditation’

1 This score was adapted from 60% to 58% as selection criteria for the executive head were included in the law.

2 This score was adapted from 55% to 58% as it can be considered that dismissals were strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of some, rather than all, senior academic and administrative staff. In addition, salary bands externally fixed were taken into account for some senior academic staff.

There have been some changes related to university autonomy in Brandenburg with a new procedure for the appointment of an executive head.

The law now offers universities the possibility to choose between institutional and programme accreditation, which has a major impact on the scoring and a positive impact on the level of academic autonomy for universities in Brandenburg. Universities that have secured institutional accreditation may accredit their own study programmes. However, this opportunity has been seldom used to date.

University autonomy in context

Germany

There are no particular trends in relation to university autonomy in Germany at a national level.

There has been a change in constitutional law that enables federal/national funding for universities on a permanent basis. This provides the legal basis for the government to continue the Excellence initiative, a major scheme for which the second funding round will end in 2017. The main recurrent funding for universities in Germany continues to come from the level of the respective Land and it is also at that level that the main regulations on university governance and autonomy are established.

Brandenburg

In Brandenburg there is an interest in encouraging mergers between some universities for demographic and co-operative reasons. There are a small number of universities in the State and greater efficiencies in their strategy and operation may be possible. Some mergers involving scientific institutions have already taken place. Rulings in the Brandenburg constitutional court and the German constitutional court clarified that the State has the right to direct mergers on a strategic basis but decisions to merge institutions must consider university autonomy and scientific freedom.



Germany | Hesse

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The selection of the executive head is essentially a matter internal to the university, as is the dismissal process, although the procedure is set in law, as is the term of office. University boards consist of up to ten members, all of whom are external and appointed in part by an external authority.

Financial



Universities in Hesse cannot borrow money nor own buildings and are not allowed to charge tuition fees. They can, however, freely allocate funds internally and can keep surpluses.

Staffing



There are restrictions on the recruitment of senior academic staff as the selection procedure is specified in the law. Senior academic staff salaries are restricted due to an overall limit on all staff payments and senior administrative staff salary bands are negotiated with other parties. Dismissals for both academic and administrative staff are strictly regulated due to civil servant status for all staff and there are restrictions on promotions for both groups of staff based on age.

Academic



Overall student numbers are negotiated with an external authority and at Bachelor level admissions criteria are co-regulated between universities and an external authority. At Bachelor and Master levels all new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation or self-accredited by the university. Universities are free to decide on the language of instruction, design the content of their programmes as well as to choose from quality assurance agencies.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- University senates can include a number of additional members with consultative rights
- Shift to 'system accreditation' with institutions able to accredit their own study programmes if their institutional systems are assessed positively¹

¹ This is referred to as 'institutional accreditation' in the EUA Scorecard but the terminology 'system accreditation' is maintained for the profiles of the German Länder considered in the analysis as 'institutional accreditation' which is given a different meaning in the German context.

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

The selection of the executive head is made by the university senate. While no formal approval by the ministry is required, the executive heads are appointed as civil servants by the minister for their term of office.

Basic criteria for the selection of the rector are stated in the law. The candidate must have a university degree and leadership experience.

The dismissal procedure for executive heads is stated in the law. The university board/council or the senate can invoke the dismissal. The senate has to vote with a two-thirds majority in favour of the dismissal for it to be enforced.

Executive heads serve for a six-year term as stated in the law. Re-election is possible.

Universities in Hesse have dual governance structures, including both a senate and a board/council. The senate advises and decides on issues related to research, teaching and studies. The board/council approves the institutional development plan and must be involved in decisions on science, vocational education/training, arts or industry.

The board/council can have up to ten members as stated in the law, with the exact number outlined in university statutes. It comprises only external members. Half of them are appointed by universities and half by an external authority. A representative of the ministry attends meetings and has consultative rights.

University senates are composed of 17 members by law. The senate comprises nine professors, three students, three researchers and two administrative staff². Additional participants have a consultative role (including the members of the executive committee, the women's representative, the chairs of the staff council and of the representative body for disabled employees).

Universities in Hesse can decide on their academic structures and they can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

² The composition of senates differs between universities and universities of applied sciences.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Hesse receive funding through an annual block grant with no restrictions in the allocation of funding.

While any surpluses can be kept without restrictions, universities cannot borrow money nor can they own the buildings in which they operate.

Universities may not charge tuition fees to national, EU and non-EU students studying at any level.

Staffing autonomy

The recruitment of senior academic staff is an internal matter of the university but the law specifies the selection procedure, including the appointment of a special committee. Recruitment of senior administrative staff is decided upon by the university.

Decisions on senior academic staff salaries are restricted due to an overall limit on all staff payments. A part of this staff category retains civil servant status and a specific salary band is set externally for them. Salary bands for senior administrative staff are negotiated with other parties.

The dismissal of senior academic and administrative staff is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for some staff.

Promotions for staff who retain civil servant status are linked to age. As a general rule, promotions are based on the time spent by staff in their current position.

Academic autonomy

Universities negotiate overall student numbers with an external authority. At Bachelor level admission criteria are co-regulated between universities and an external authority (the universities can set up additional criteria), while at Master level admission criteria are set by universities.

On both levels new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to a prior accreditation before being introduced, unless a university is allowed to self-accredit its programmes. Universities can open doctoral programmes without prior accreditation. Universities can terminate programmes independently although as they are not allowed to reduce their allocated capacity in terms of study places, they must create new places in other study programmes to maintain their capacity at the same level.

The law now allows institutions to apply for system accreditation. Institutions are able to accredit their own study programmes, although they may also retain programme accreditation. Universities can therefore choose internal quality assurance mechanisms, which is an evolution compared to 2010, and can select a quality assurance agency.

Universities can design the content of their degree programmes without constraints.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	77% ¹	77%	Medium high	
Financial autonomy	35%	35%	Low	
Staffing autonomy	63% ²	63%	Medium high	
Academic autonomy	69%	88%	From medium high to high	Possibility of ‘system accreditation’

1 This score was adapted from 78% to 77% as selection criteria for the executive head were included in the law.

2 This score was adapted from 61% to 63% as it can be considered that dismissals were strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of some, rather than all, senior academic and administrative staff. In addition, salary bands externally fixed were taken into account for some senior academic staff.

Developments related to university autonomy in Hesse include a new higher education law passed in December 2015 and a gradual shift towards institutional accreditation (universities that have secured institutional accreditation may accredit their own study programmes) which have increased the level of academic autonomy from medium high to high.

University autonomy in context

Germany

There are no particular trends in relation to university autonomy in Germany at a national level.

There has been a change in constitutional law that enables federal/national funding for universities on a permanent basis. This provides the legal basis for the government to continue the Excellence initiative, a major scheme for which the second funding round will end in 2017. The main recurrent funding for universities in Germany continues to come from the level of the respective Land and it is also at that level that the main regulations on university governance and autonomy are established.

Hessen

The new higher education law passed in Hessen in December 2015 broadened the membership of university senates to include a number of additional members, although these additional members have consultative rights rather than full voting rights.

The law also offers universities the possibility to choose between system and programme accreditation, which has a positive impact on the level of academic autonomy for universities in Hesse. However, so far not many universities have made use of this opportunity.



Germany | North-Rhine-Westphalia

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The executive head is elected internally and appointed by the ministry; the minimum length of their terms of office is stated in the law together with the procedure for their dismissal. University boards/councils are either half or fully composed of external members who are approved both by the senate and the ministry.

Financial



Universities can borrow money up to a certain percentage and keep surpluses. They cannot own buildings and are no longer allowed to charge tuition fees as they were abolished in 2011.

Staffing



There are restrictions on the recruitment of senior academic staff as the selection procedure is specified in the law. Senior academic staff salaries are restricted due to an overall limit on all staff payments and senior administrative staff salary bands are negotiated with other parties. Dismissals for both academic and administrative staff are strictly regulated due to civil servant status for all staff and there are restrictions on promotions for both groups of staff based on age.

Academic



Universities negotiate with an external authority on overall student numbers. At Bachelor level admission criteria are co-regulated by universities and an external authority. At Bachelor and Master levels all new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation or self-accredited by the university. Universities can choose among quality assurance providers. They may design the content of their academic programmes without constraints and can choose the language of instruction.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Executive heads now appointed by ministry
- More detailed legal guidance on university senates
- Tuition fees were abolished in 2011 for all students at all levels
- Shift to 'system accreditation' with institutions able to accredit their own study programmes if their institutional systems are assessed positively¹

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

University executive heads are elected by the university governing bodies, who are brought together as the election body, among candidates put forward by a dedicated committee. The law now specifies that the candidate-elect is then appointed by the ministry. This represents a change as previously the executive head was only elected by the board/council without any involvement of the ministry.

The law includes basic criteria which a candidate for the rector's position has to fulfil. The person must hold a university degree and have leadership experience.

The procedure to dismiss the executive head is stated in the law. The dismissal of an executive head requires 5/8 of the votes of the university election body (comprising the senate and board/council together). Previously the board/council decided on the dismissal via a 2/3 majority vote after having consulted the senate. The senate is therefore now fully involved. As in 2010 the minimum length of the term of office of an executive head remains stated in the law, with a six-year minimum period with a re-election possibility for a further four years.

Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia have dual governance structures, including both a senate- and a board/council-type bodies. The senate is mainly responsible for teaching and research issues, and the board/council oversees institutional strategic matters.

The membership of the senate is now set out in the law, where previously universities could regulate more details in their own statutes. The senate comprises members drawn from four constituencies: professors, other academic staff, students and non-academic staff. The group of professors has half of the voting rights on teaching matters and a majority of voting rights on research matters. Although external members are not prohibited by law, it is not common practice to include them.

¹ This is referred to as 'institutional accreditation' in the EUA Scorecard but the terminology 'system accreditation' is maintained for the profiles of the German Länder considered in the analysis since 'institutional accreditation' is given a different meaning in the German context.

Either half the board/council must be composed of external members, or else fully. A minimum of 40% of boards/councils must be female. The size of boards/councils varies by university but is typically between six and 12 members. Representatives have to have a 'responsible position in society' and may come from business, other academic institutions, health care, the German academic exchange service (DAAD) or other relevant bodies. A selection committee proposes external members, who must secure the approval of both the university senate and the ministry. The law previously included a pre-set board/council composition including internal and external members, with places reserved for representatives of the federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Universities can decide on their own academic structures without constraints. They are allowed to create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities which are linked to their assignment of duties in the university law. For-profit legal entities can only be created if no private entity could fulfil the objectives of a venture.

Financial autonomy

Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia receive funding through an annual block grant with no restrictions on the allocation of funding. They can keep any surplus without restriction and borrow money up to a certain percentage. However, they are not allowed to own buildings.

In 2011 tuition fees were abolished in North Rhine-Westphalia at all study levels. Previously universities were able to set fees up to a ceiling set by an external authority for Bachelor and Master students. Universities now receive the same amount of funding from the State as they did from fees and the government has guaranteed this replacement income.

Staffing autonomy

The recruitment of senior academic staff is an internal matter of the university but the law specifies the selection procedure, including the appointment of a special committee. Recruitment of senior administrative staff is decided upon by the university.

Decisions on senior academic staff salaries are restricted due to an overall limit on all staff payments. A part of this staff category (appointed before the period considered) retains civil servant status and a specific salary band is set externally for them. Salary bands for senior administrative staff are negotiated with other parties.

The dismissal of senior academic and administrative staff is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for some staff. Promotions for staff who retain civil servant status are linked to age. As a general rule promotions are based on the time spent by staff in their current position.

Academic autonomy

Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia negotiate with an external authority on overall student numbers. At Bachelor level admission criteria are co-regulated by universities and an external authority, while they are exclusively set by the university at Master level.

On both levels, new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to a prior accreditation before being introduced, unless a university is allowed to self-accredit its programmes. Universities can open doctoral programmes without prior accreditation. Universities can terminate programmes independently although, since they are not allowed to reduce their allocated capacity in terms of study places, they must create new places in other study programmes to maintain their capacity at the same level.

The law now allows institutions to apply for 'system accreditation'. Institutions are able to accredit their own study programmes, although they may also retain programme accreditation. Universities can therefore choose internal quality assurance mechanisms, which is an advancement compared to 2010, and can select a quality assurance agency.

Universities can design the content of their programmes without constraints.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes at both Bachelor and Master levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	82% ¹	68%	From high to medium high	Executive head now appointed by minister
Financial autonomy	58%	43%	Remains in medium low	Abolition of tuition fees at all levels as of 2011
Staffing autonomy	63% ²	63%	Medium high	
Academic autonomy	69%	88%	High	Possibility of 'system accreditation'

Universities in North Rhine-Westphalia have experienced two developments that have had a negative impact on their autonomy: the new process for the appointment of an executive head and the abolition of tuition fees. The introduction of the possibility for universities to self-accredit their programmes is a positive development for academic autonomy.

University autonomy in context

The ministry, together with the Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, can also draw up development plans that provide a frame for the strategic development plans of universities.

The ministry will in future sign development contracts with the institutions that will contain strategic aims and objectives. They can also contain specific aims with specific funding to achieve these aims as well as procedures, in case the aims have not been reached.

Views from the sector

Germany

There are no particular trends in relation to university autonomy in Germany at a national level.

There has been a change in constitutional law that enables federal/national funding for universities on a permanent basis. This provides the legal basis for the government to continue the Excellence initiative, a major scheme of which the second funding round will end in 2017. The main recurrent funding for universities in Germany continues to come from the level of the respective Land and it is also at that level that the main regulations on university governance and autonomy are established.

¹ This score was adapted from 84% to 82% as selection criteria for the executive head were included in the law.

² This score was adapted from 61% to 63% as it can be considered that dismissals were strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of some, rather than all, senior academic and administrative staff. In addition, salary bands externally fixed were taken into account for some senior academic staff.

North Rhine-Westphalia

In 2010 the State of North Rhine-Westphalia had a change in government, from a conservative-liberal coalition to a social-democrat-green coalition. The approach of the new government towards university autonomy was perceived by the sector as more restrictive.

A number of new regulations were introduced and new bodies were created as a result of a renewed political interest in higher education. It was felt that the more detailed legal specification of university senates, as well as the ministerial approval of the rector's election, may restrict at least formal university autonomy.

The abolition of tuition fees in 2011 is not viewed as a decrease in university autonomy by the sector, insofar as universities receive the same amount of funding from the State as they did from fees. The government has guaranteed this replacement income.



Hungary

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The selection and dismissal of the executive head is confirmed by the President of the Republic. The law also prescribes selection criteria and the maximum term of office. External members forming the board-type of governing body are appointed externally. Hungarian universities are constrained in their capacity to organise themselves by the newly established position of chancellor, appointed by the Prime Minister, with extensive decision-making powers.

Financial



Universities cannot freely allocate public funding internally. They may not borrow funds and require the approval of external authorities to sell buildings. Universities may set the level of fees under a fixed ceiling, for those students who are not allocated a state-funded study place. Financial matters at the university are now fully overseen by the chancellor and the consistory.

Staffing



There has been little change since 2010 and the constraints associated with the civil servant status of the university staff remain. Salary levels are regulated via set minimum and maximum salaries. Final decision-making powers with regard to recruitment, salaries and promotions now rest with the chancellor appointed by the Prime Minister.

Academic



In academic terms, Hungarian universities have more autonomy than in 2010 thanks to the opening-up of programme accreditation to EQAR-registered foreign bodies. Admissions remain controlled externally at Bachelor level and programme accreditation is mandatory. Universities can design the content of their academic programmes and choose the language of instruction.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Creation of the position of chancellor in 2014 with large responsibilities including staffing and finances. Position directly appointed by the Prime Minister
- Since 2015 possibility for universities to undergo programme accreditation with any ENQA-member organisation (Bachelor and Master levels)
- Restricted capacity for universities to set the level of fees applying to national and EU students enrolled on a fee-paying basis

Organisational autonomy

The ministry publishes the call for applications for the position of executive head of the public universities. The university senate elects the rector, whose appointment must then be confirmed by the President of the Republic. Since 2012, further restrictions have been set up regarding selection criteria (language requirements and experience in management of higher education institutions, in addition to being a university professor), a newly established age limit, and the term of office (maximum five years renewable once since the end of 2016; previously, maximum three years renewable once). The President of the Republic must confirm the rector's dismissal.

The creation of the position of 'chancellor' in Hungarian universities since July 2014 fundamentally alters the capacity of institutions to organise themselves. The position includes responsibilities for financial and staffing matters, while the rector remains responsible for academic matters. The rector must seek the chancellor's approval for any decision on staff salaries. By law, the chancellor is directly appointed by the Prime Minister, on the proposal of the minister after the publication of an open call.

Hungarian universities have a dual governance structure, with a senate- and board/council-type bodies. The senate continues to be responsible for strategic issues and is composed of internally elected members. The board/council-type body, known as 'consistory', takes strategic decisions and controls university management.

The consistory is a recently established governing body, in place since September 2015. It replaces the former 'financial council' but has a wider scope. Both the chancellor and the rector are members of the consistory. The three other members are external and appointed by the Minister of Human Resources on the proposal of professional organisations relevant to the university, with a five-year mandate. A state declaration prescribes the criteria to select the members.

The senate includes a majority of representatives of the academic staff, and between 20% and 25% are student representatives. The law foresees that the senate should comprise a minimum of nine members.

Universities can decide on their academic structures and may create both for-profit and non-for-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Public funds are allocated yearly via a block grant divided into broad categories with no internal shifting possibilities. The fact that the chancellor, appointed by the Prime Minister, has to approve all decisions with financial implications leaves, in effect, no capacity for the university to decide on internal funding allocation. Borrowing remains prohibited. Universities may keep surpluses but their use is also subject to the authorisation of the chancellor.

Universities do not own their buildings but nevertheless have extensive rights over them. The decision to sell a university building continues to belong to the ministry.

Universities may set the level of fees for Hungarian/EU students who are not allocated state-funded places in Hungary's mixed model¹. However, the government recently enforced tighter restrictions in this field. Universities may not charge fees higher than the standard cost per student determined by the ministry per academic field. A minimum level also applies. This concerns fee-paying national and EU students. Universities may set the level of fees charged to non-EU students.

Hungary has developed a scholarship programme that is designed to attract non-EU students from developing countries to Hungarian universities, at Bachelor, Master or doctoral levels. Eligible students do not pay fees and receive a stipend.

It should be noted that the establishment of the chancellor function and the consistory in public universities affects financial autonomy, as together they oversee all decisions with financial implications.

Staffing autonomy

The chancellor, directly appointed by the Prime Minister, now has control over all staffing matters. Appointments of senior academic staff are validated by the ministry and confirmed by the President of the Republic. In principle, other recruitments (senior administrative staff) are freely carried out by universities, with the caveat as mentioned above.

University staff members are civil servants. There are constraints on salary setting; minimum salary levels are regulated externally, and maximum pay levels applying to all civil servants also apply in this case. Universities may increase salaries with the approval of the chancellor. Dismissals are strictly regulated and while there are no specific regulations regarding promotions, any promotion (and its corresponding financial consequences) must be approved by the chancellor.

¹ Fees typically vary between 500 Euros and 4 200 Euros per semester.

Academic autonomy

Universities propose overall student numbers to the ministry, based on capacity; the latter decides on the number of state-funded students, and the remaining places are allocated on a fee-paying basis². The chancellor plays a role in setting the overall number of both state-funded and fee-paying students in the university and can adjust student numbers.

There have been no significant changes to the admissions process since 2010. It remains fully controlled by the ministry at Bachelor level, while universities have the possibility to set additional requirements at Master level.

Hungarian universities need to obtain accreditation prior to the introduction of each programme, and institutions are therefore not free to select external quality assurance mechanisms. Since September 2015 the law permits universities to select accreditation bodies internationally for Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Courses can be accredited either by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee or by any organisation member of ENQA. Doctoral programmes must still be accredited by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee.

Universities can design the content of degree programmes (other than for regulated professions) without constraints.

Universities may choose the language of instruction for all Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

² In 2016/2017, 60% of study places were state-funded, while over 40% of students paid fees.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	59%	56%	Remains in medium low	More specifications regarding selection criteria for the rector included in the law.
Financial autonomy	71%	39%	From medium high to low	Impact of the role of the chancellor, appointed by the Prime Minister, whose authorisation is needed for internal funding allocation and therefore use of surpluses. Restricted capacity for universities to set the level of fees to national and EU students enrolled on a fee-paying basis (under a set ceiling).
Staffing autonomy	66%	50%	From medium high to medium low	Impact of the role of the chancellor whose authorisation is needed for recruitment, salaries and promotions.
Academic autonomy	47%	58%	Remains in medium low	Possibility to choose ENQA member organisations to run accreditation.

University autonomy in context

There have been developments in Hungary directly curtailing university autonomy, including the creation of the position of chancellor in all public universities since 2014. Directly appointed by the Prime Minister, the chancellor has extensive powers and responsibilities and oversees staffing and financial matters. In combination with the creation of the consistory, whose members are all directly appointed by an external authority (with the exception of the rector), this development significantly reduces university autonomy in Hungary. The Hungarian rectors also convened a working group in 2016 to carry out an early assessment of the effect of the newly established consistories in universities.

This is a development that the Autonomy Scorecard can only capture in part, with no major reduction in the organisational autonomy score. However financial and staffing autonomy scores partially reflect the greater external control on these matters, as well as the lesser capacity of universities to set the level of fees for those national and EU students enrolled on a fee-paying basis. It is therefore important to interpret the summary table below in the light of the caveats made here.

University autonomy in Hungary should also be considered in the context of other challenges: similarly to other countries such as Latvia and Lithuania, student numbers fell significantly over the period 2008-2015. In addition, in all three cases, the decline in public funding has been faster than that of the student population. Hungary is therefore categorised, in EUA's Public Funding Observatory for 2016, as a "declining system under pressure" with regard to higher education. Figures reported to the Observatory show a recent increase in public funding which remains insufficient to offset the lasting effects of the major cuts operated at the beginning of the period.

Underfunding creates obvious limitations to the universities' financial autonomy and also has knock-on effects on other dimensions such as staffing matters.

Real estate ownership and facility management has been the focus of a rectors' working group during the first half of 2016. The sector argues for full ownership in order to facilitate facility management, but highlights the need to develop an adequate financing system to support this transfer of ownership.



Iceland

How to read this profile

This profile exclusively refers to the four public universities in Iceland, which enrol close to 80% of higher education students.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law requires that the executive head's appointment and dismissal are formally validated by the ministry. The rector's term of office is stated in the law, as is the procedure for their dismissal. Universities can select part of the external members on their governing bodies, with the rest appointed by the ministry. Guidelines exist in the law for the academic structures of Icelandic universities. Universities are able to establish legal entities but they have to be established or be closed with permission of the ministry and their work has to relate to university missions.

Financial



Universities may freely allocate internally the public funding they receive. They may keep surpluses with the approval of the ministry. Public universities are not allowed to borrow money directly. With the exception of the University of Iceland, most university buildings are owned by the government and cannot be sold without its approval. Public universities may not charge tuition fees at any degree level for national and foreign students, but may collect registration fees under a ceiling set by the government.

Staffing



Universities are autonomous in the recruitment and promotion of senior academic and administrative staff. Salary bands are set through central negotiations between unions and the government. Dismissals are strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of staff.

Academic



Universities negotiate with the government on overall student numbers. Universities can only open programmes in the study fields for which they have been accredited. Institutional accreditation is mandatory and carried out by the national agency. At Bachelor level universities face restrictions regarding the language of instruction for certain programmes.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- New Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education established in 2010/11 and development of mandatory institutional accreditation on a five-year basis

Organisational autonomy

Changes made to university statutes do not require approval from the ministry.

The selection of an executive head requires validation by an external authority. While the law does not specify selection criteria, it is a general practice that candidate rectors hold an academic position. The law prescribes the five-year term of office with no limits on renewals. The rector may be dismissed according to a procedure set in the law and upon confirmation by the ministry.

Icelandic universities have unitary governance structures¹. The main decision-making organ is a board/council-type body ('University Council'). It is supported by a collegial body ('University Senate/Assembly'), which only has an electoral function and provides advice.

The council comprises 11 members². In addition to the rector, three representatives of the academic staff are appointed by the university senate. Two student representatives also sit on the council. The other five are external members, two of whom are appointed by the ministry and three who are appointed by the other members of the council. The ministry appoints members to the council from other public institutions or private bodies. The other three members appointed by existing members of the council are drawn from civil society, the private and public sector. The law states that they should have knowledge of university matters and operations.

The law stipulates that the rector, deans of schools, heads of faculties, as well as representatives of students and staff members should be members of the university senate, but the total number is not restricted. External members from affiliated research institutions and the university hospital may also attend senate meetings as observers, without voting rights.

Guidelines exist in the law for the academic (and administrative) structures of Icelandic universities, stating that universities may organise themselves into schools, faculties within those schools, and research institutes. Faculties may be subdivided into departments provided that the university is over a certain size.

¹ The governance structure was previously considered as dual because of the presence of a senate-type body, without decision-making attributions. Methodological adjustments in this update do not take account of mainly advisory or electoral bodies to qualify the governance structure.

² In universities that enrol over 5 000 students.

Universities may establish legal entities but they have to be established or be closed with the permission of the ministry and their work has to relate to university missions.

Financial autonomy

Icelandic universities receive an annual block grant which is divided into teaching and research categories, with a possibility for the universities to freely re-allocate funds across these categories.

Public universities may keep any surplus generated with the approval of the ministry.

Universities cannot borrow money but their independent legal entities can, generally for infrastructure purposes. However, this remains an exception, as for instance with the University of Iceland Lottery, which was established to raise funding for the buildings of the University of Iceland. Other public universities receive funding for buildings directly from the government.

Universities have different rights in the area of property ownership. The Icelandic state owns all public buildings, including most public university buildings, which are generally managed by the government property agency. The University of Iceland, however, is the only public university that owns, manages and maintains its own buildings. The University of Iceland may sell buildings with the permission of the ministry. The profit of the sale may be subject to negotiation with the ministry. The smaller, public universities rent their buildings from the State.

Public universities may not charge tuition fees for students at any degree level, with limited exceptions for MBA programmes and continuing education. A registration fee is, however, collected but this may not exceed the administrative costs incurred by the university per student³. The government puts forward the ceiling for the registration fee in its proposal to the Parliament for the state budget of the following year. Parliamentary approval for the ceiling is necessary.

Staffing autonomy

All public university staff are public servants and governed by civil service regulations.

The recruitment of senior academic and administrative staff is carried out freely by universities. Salary bands are set through central negotiations between unions and the government; in addition, individual negotiations take place within universities. Universities have some flexibility in salary structures through the use of performance measures. Costs generated by internal salary increases must be financed from the universities' core budgets, whereas cost increases due to central negotiations are financed by the government.

³ The registration fee was set at 75 000 ISK in 2016-2017, which corresponds to about 660 Euros.

Dismissals are strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of staff. Universities are autonomous in promoting senior academic and administrative staff, although at their own expense.

Academic autonomy

Student numbers are set by the government every year, on the basis of the universities' forecast. The numbers are linked to available funding.

Universities set admissions criteria for entry to Bachelor's and Master's programmes such as completion of a certain study level for some subjects.

Each university is only accredited for certain fields of study. Within these fields of study universities are free to introduce new degree programmes. Funding of new programmes must be covered by the university budget. Universities can terminate programmes independently. Universities are subject to mandatory institutional accreditation, which must be carried out by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.

The Quality Board was established in 2010-2011 and is responsible for institutional evaluation/accreditation. All universities have been evaluated as part of the five-year cycle. Universities are responsible for their own programme evaluation/accreditation but are held accountable by the Quality Board.

Universities can design the content of their programmes without constraints.

At Bachelor level, universities can choose the language of instruction for certain programmes only, while there are no restrictions regarding language at Master level. There is an increasing number of programmes taught in English at Master and doctoral levels.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	49%	49%	Medium low	
Financial autonomy	60% ¹	60%	Medium low	
Staffing autonomy	68%	68%	Medium high	
Academic autonomy	89%	78%	From high to medium high	Establishment of Quality Board (previously possibility to select quality assurance provider) ²

University autonomy in context

EUA's Public Funding Observatory reveals that due to the high inflation rate in Iceland, a nominal rise of over 30% of funding for universities over the period 2008-2015 corresponds in fact to an inflation-adjusted decrease of almost 10%. The country has been showing some signs of recovery since 2013 and further consolidated its positive trajectory with a 10% funding increase in 2015. The budgetary allocations to education, science and innovation have increased as the country put forward a balanced budget for 2016 for the third consecutive year. There has been a focus on using funding to improve salaries.

Views from the sector

Civil service status for university staff is under discussion at a national level and was an issue of considerable focus during the economic crisis, as under the current arrangements it is very difficult to reduce staff numbers. The discussion is part of a wider debate about closing the gap between private and public sector workers in Iceland, for instance, with regard to pension systems.

The restrictions on the establishment of legal entities by universities are also a subject of discussion as they cause issues for universities wishing to work with smaller businesses. The process whereby universities must gain permission from the ministry to establish legal entities is considered excessively burdensome and slow.

Iceland developed a more structured approach to quality assurance in higher education with the establishment of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education. Universities find it particularly important that the Board focuses on quality enhancement.

¹ This score was adapted from 43% to 60% as there were no restrictions to the internal allocation of public funds across categories (conversely, keeping surpluses was only possible with external authorisation) and account was taken of the registration fees applicable to all students.

² The introduction of mandatory institutional accreditation/audits does not result in a lower score.



How to read this profile

Following several developments in the field of governance of higher education, in 2014 the Irish Universities Association (IUA) requested EUA to complete a new collection round of Irish data with a view to releasing an updated version of the Autonomy Scorecard for Ireland. The ensuing report outlined the evolution reported by IUA for the period 2010-2014 as well as general trends in the field of governance and autonomy in Ireland. The present report offers a further update of the situation in Ireland, valid for 2016.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Irish universities select, appoint and dismiss executive heads autonomously, and do not need the validation from an external authority. The term of office is set in the law. The composition of the main decision-making body is strictly regulated, with mandatory inclusion of external members whose appointment involves an external authority. Universities are restricted in their capacity to decide on academic structures and create legal entities.

Financial



Increasing restrictions apply to the internal allocation of funds received from the annual block grant. Universities may not keep surpluses and are limited in their capacity to borrow money. Universities may own real estate and minor restrictions apply to selling buildings. Universities cannot set the level of fees for national and EU students at Bachelor level, but are free to do so in the other cases.

Staffing



While universities are theoretically free to hire and promote senior academic and administrative staff, the moratorium set as part of the Employment Control Framework continues to apply. Universities have reduced capacity to decide on salaries and dismissals since the government and trade unions established collective agreements.

Academic



Universities decide on the overall student numbers and may select students both at Bachelor and Master levels. Universities can essentially introduce new programmes without prior accreditation. They undergo mandatory institutional accreditation by the national quality agency. They design the content of programmes without constraints and decide on the language of instruction.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Entrenchment of restrictions imposed by the Employment Control Framework
- Post-2014 developments
 - o The “student contribution” charged to national and EU students was increased by the government to 3 000 Euros per annum since the 2015-16 academic year;
 - o The new national agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland, has since been established and is now operational. Irish universities are obliged to use this agency for their external institutional reviews.

Organisational autonomy

Irish universities select, appoint and dismiss executive heads autonomously, and do not need the validation of an external authority. The law nevertheless specifies the exact length of the executive head's term of office, which is fixed at ten years.

Irish universities have unitary governance structures, where the main executive organ is a senate-type body. The exact composition of the senate is laid down in the law, which provides the breakdown among academic and non-academic staff, student representatives and doctoral candidates, as well as external members: local public authorities, representatives of employers, trade unions and other partner organisations. The composition and selection processes may differ between universities but they are always subject to external regulation and involvement by public authorities. The senate ('governing authority') comprises between 20 and 40 members.

Universities are in principle able to decide on their academic structures; however, stricter state control over university staff remuneration creates restrictions in this area. Universities may not be able to hire senior staff for units such as "schools", because this is not integrated into the remuneration regulatory framework. While this was set as a temporary measure during the economic crisis, restrictions remain.

Universities can create legal entities, both for-profit and non-profit. There are nevertheless restrictions related to barriers to employment of university staff by university subsidiaries.

Financial autonomy

Irish universities receive public funding through an annual block grant, the internal allocation of which they essentially control. However, part of the grant may be earmarked for the completion of specific objectives. In addition, the practice of "top-slicing" by the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Skills has increased since 2010. Previously, the State removed a percentage from the higher education budget and subsequently allocated these funds through targeted funding schemes for particular purposes, such as widening access for disadvantaged socio-economic groups. This portion of the budget has continually grown to reach over 10% of the block grant and is redistributed through a larger array of specific measures, including competitive processes¹.

Universities may not keep surpluses generated from public funding, and may borrow only up to a maximum percentage. A "borrowing framework" is agreed between universities and an external authority. Universities may own real estate and sell buildings, with the obligation to inform the Higher Education Authority.

¹ An example is the recent national IT action plan, which allocates funds (and therefore student places) to universities through a call for proposals.

While Irish universities cannot charge tuition fees for national and EU students at Bachelor level, a 'student contribution' applies, the level of which is set by the government². Universities may freely set the level of tuition fees for national and EU students at Master and doctoral levels, and at all levels for international students.

Staffing autonomy

Irish universities are in principle free to hire senior academic and administrative staff. However, restrictions introduced in the context of the economic crisis in the form of the Employment Control Framework continue to apply. Temporary measures were then prolonged and reinforced, creating a de facto regulatory framework for university staffing policies.

Restrictions include a moratorium on recruitment for permanent positions, which leaves no room for manoeuvre for universities as far as publicly-funded staff are concerned. Universities only retain autonomy with regard to staff who are entirely funded from other sources (such as international student fees or philanthropic income) which make up a relatively small proportion of total staff at institutions.

In addition to the recruitment freeze, universities have to meet annual targets for headcount reduction (a further 1% reduction was required in 2014).

Irish universities may set the salaries of senior academic and administrative staff within salary bands prescribed at national level per broad staff category. However, additional restrictions have effectively reduced the autonomy of universities in this area. Agreements concluded between the government and the trade unions include the use of a reduced pay scale for new entrants, who can be appointed at entry-level grade only, as well as a revised career-average pension scheme. Existing staff have also undergone significant pay cuts, which have been decided at state level.

The capacity of universities to decide on dismissals is also limited by regulations applying to staff with civil servant status. In addition, since 2010 collective agreements have been concluded between the State Department of Public Expenditure and the trade unions, making it mandatory for universities to provide upon dismissal (in the case of voluntary redundancy or expiration of a fixed term contract) payments of between two and three weeks' salary per year of employment.

Universities may freely decide on promotions for senior academic and administrative staff but the moratorium on recruitment and promotions still applies, therefore effectively preventing universities from promoting staff.

² The student contribution was set at 2 000 Euros for the academic year 2011/2012 and 3 000 Euros from 2015/2016.

Academic autonomy

Universities decide on the overall student numbers and may select students both at Bachelor and Master levels. Admission to Bachelor programmes is based on a national points system, with universities setting the level required for admission, reflecting supply and demand. Universities set admission requirements to their Master's programmes independently.

Universities can essentially introduce new programmes without prior accreditation. They are required to draw on "Quality and Qualifications Ireland", a body created in 2012 out of the merger of the previously existing quality bodies, to review and validate their processes through institutional audits.

Irish universities may design the content of academic programmes without constraints. They decide on the language of instruction for all programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	81%	73%	From high to medium high	Impact of Employment Control Framework on the capacity to decide on academic structures and on the creation of legal entities.
Financial autonomy	66%	63%	Remains in medium high	Impact of expanded practice of top-slicing from the block grant on the capacity to internally allocate funds.
Staffing autonomy	72% ¹	43%	From medium high to medium low	Impact of Employment Control Framework and moratorium on recruitments and promotions; Impact of collective agreements on salaries and dismissal modalities.
Academic autonomy	89% ²	89%	High	

¹ This score was corrected from 82% to 72% as it was clarified that civil servant regulations for dismissals applied to some academic staff.

² This score was corrected from 100% to 89% due to a change of methodology regarding the choice of quality assurance providers.

University autonomy in context

The update underlines the specificity of the situation in the Irish higher education sector since the country was hit by the economic crisis. Indeed, since 2009-2010 there has been a clear gap between the regular legal framework in which universities operate and the setting-up of apparently temporary economy measures resulting in curbing university autonomy. In 2016 it appears that these constraints have not disappeared and have effectively set the frame for a large part of universities' activities over a longer period. Therefore the 2010 data has been updated to take better account of those constraints which already existed at that time but have either been reinforced or have to be considered in a different light because of their long-term effect.

The Irish situation is characterized by a particularly steep decline of university autonomy with regard to staffing matters. It appears clearly that there is an entrenchment phenomenon, with governmental control over human resources and finances consolidating over the period considered. The measures that the government took at the beginning of the economic crisis have neither been halted nor reversed.

Irish universities enter into performance agreements with the ministry ('performance compacts'). Targeted funding schemes also grow in proportion to the block grant.

EUA's Public Funding Observatory³ reveals that public funding delivered to Irish higher education institutions has been cut by over 35% between 2008 and 2016 (taking into account inflation over that period), despite a progressive increase in student numbers of about 15%. The cumulative reduction in recurrent grant funding per student since 2008 has been 70%. Student staff ratios have been deteriorating as a result of required staffing reductions and increasing student numbers. These reductions have also impacted the ability of universities to maintain a broad range of tutorials, practical exercises and other teaching support.

Views from the sector

The sector is concerned about plans which remain on the official legislative programme, possibly giving further control to the ministry over staff numbers in universities.

The composition of university governing bodies has been a bone of contention in the sense that the sector has expressed the wish to move away from traditionally large, group representation-based bodies. This would enable universities to select the right expertise at strategic level. The sector therefore advocates for steps in that direction, similar to the changes implemented in the regulatory framework for the Irish Institutes of Technology.

³ EUA's Public Funding Observatory: <http://www.eua.be/eua-work-and-policy-area/governance-autonomy-and-funding/public-funding-observatory-tool.aspx>

The main concern of the sector as regards academic autonomy relates to the expansion of the 'top-slicing' practice. As funds are removed from the block grants and re-injected into the sector via (competitive) targeted schemes, so are student places. National action plans focusing on some disciplines (for instance IT training) redistribute student places to universities via the competitive reallocation of funds. While aware of the limited significance of the phenomenon when considering the overall student population, Irish universities are concerned about a further extension of the top-slicing practice from the general budget.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law prescribes both the selection criteria for the executive head and the confirmation of their appointment by the ministry. It also outlines their term of office and the procedure to be followed for their dismissal. Universities now must include, and can select, external members in their governance structures. Guidelines on academic structures are outlined in law.

Financial



Universities are not restricted in the internal allocation of the public funding they receive. They may keep surpluses and can borrow money up to a maximum percentage defined by law. They can own and sell their buildings without restrictions. Universities can set the level of tuition fees for all students at all levels, respecting a global ceiling set by an external authority on the overall amount generated from the fees.

Staffing



There are restrictions specified in law as to how senior academic staff can be recruited. The number of posts is regulated. Salaries for senior academic and administrative staff are set by an external authority as staff have civil servant status (all senior academic staff and a majority of senior administrative staff) and dismissals are strictly regulated according to civil servant status. Universities cannot decide on promotion procedures for academic staff as the academic promotion system is regulated by law and operated through public competition. Promotions for administrative staff are also regulated by law and subject to public competition.

Academic



Universities decide on overall student numbers and control student selection. All new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation by the national agency before being introduced, which now includes doctoral programmes. Universities therefore cannot select either external quality assurance mechanisms or providers. Universities face some constraints in the design of the content of their academic programmes as the authorities specify educational activities and objectives.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- University governance partly reformed through the 2010 law, including changes on/inclusion of:
 - o executive head: selection criteria, dismissal procedure, fixed and non-renewable term of office
 - o composition and size of university governing bodies, with mandatory inclusion of external members in board/council
 - o revised academic structures
- A new national accreditation agency for teaching and research was established in 2011, the approval of which is required for all degree programmes before introduction, now also including doctoral programmes
- Developments in public funding modalities to universities, with the introduction of a performance-based and 'standard cost' component, which shares in the overall funding model, are rising annually

Organisational autonomy

The law specifies the selection procedure for the executive head, who is elected by the full professors of the university. The law states that the candidates hold an academic position, as they must be full professors. Since 2010, candidates are not required to be employed by the university announcing the vacancy for rector. In practice, however, executive heads continue to be elected from within the same university. A ministerial decree confirms the appointment of the rector.

The law now fixes the rector's term of office to six years, without renewal possibilities. The term of office was not previously stated in the law. This provision for a single mandate of six years is one of the significant changes implemented since 2010.

The 2010 law also outlines the procedure to be followed by the university senate for the dismissal of the rector. Dismissal is still an internal matter for universities and with no external involvement. The provision was added to demonstrate greater accountability of the rector. Terms of office for executive heads have been extended so this additional provision provides a check on their position.

Italian universities have dual governance structures, with both board/council- and senate-types of bodies. Both governing bodies have been reduced in size and there have been changes in their roles and functions with the 2010 law. The board/council oversees the institutional strategy while the senate focuses on academic matters.

The board/council is composed of a maximum of 11 members, compared to 20 on average in the past. It must include the rector and student representatives, and universities decide on representation and proportions of academic and administrative staff. The law foresees that three members should be external (two if the council is composed of less than 11 members). There has therefore been a shift towards the compulsory inclusion of external members on the board/council. It was not previously compulsory for boards to have external members, although some did. Previously, external members were appointed by local authorities, whereas now universities may select external members autonomously. The profile of external members has also evolved, with universities required to appoint people with specific expertise such as business and financial experience. The general competences of members of governing bodies are stated in the law, and they should have professional standing. Other types of external members include academics from other universities, representatives from public authorities and from arts and culture.

The university senate cannot exceed 35 members, all of whom are internal, and includes a minimum of two-thirds academic staff members, together with non-academic staff representatives as well as student representatives (15% of members).

The 2010 law also outlined a new role of 'General Director' in universities; this new title is a re-designation of the previous position of Administration Director. The role aims to increase the professionalisation of administration in universities. The General Director attends council meetings as an observer.

This law also reformed university academic structures. There are now only departments in Italian universities and there are rules on the minimum number of academic staff required for each department.

Universities may establish both for-profit and non-for-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Italian universities receive funding through an annual block grant with no restrictions on the allocation of funding¹.

Surpluses can be kept without restrictions. Universities can borrow money up to a maximum percentage of the annual public funding received, defined in law and depending on the financial situation of individual universities.

Universities can own and sell their buildings without restrictions.

Universities can set the level of tuition fees at all levels. The overall amount collected from regular national and EU students may not however exceed 20% of the public funds received. Since 2016 universities have been authorised to distinguish between national/EU students and international students.

¹ The composition of the block grant has been evolving, with the introduction of performance-based and 'standard cost per student' elements in addition to a main budget based on historical patterns.

Staffing autonomy

All academic staff in Italian universities have civil servant status. Universities must recruit senior academic staff from an approved list, through a competitive process. The law introduced in 2010 included details on how the recruitment process for academic staff should operate. The overall number of newly available positions of academic and administrative staff is regulated externally.

Salaries for senior academic staff are set by an external authority since they have civil servant status. Dismissals are therefore strictly regulated as well. Universities cannot decide on promotion procedures for academic staff as the academic promotion system is regulated by law and operated through public competition only.

A majority of senior administrative staff in Italian universities have civil servant status; there are some administrative staff hired on private contracts but their number is decreasing. The major exception is the position of General Director, the re-designated title for Administrative Director, who is recruited on a private contract as specified in law. Senior administrative staff who are not hired as civil servants can be recruited freely by universities on private contracts.

Salaries for senior administrative staff are nevertheless set by an external authority as the majority of administrative staff have civil servant status. Administrative staff salaries are regulated by a provision known as the 'collective contract for workers', which is different to the law that regulates academic staff salaries.

The procedures for promotions (by public competition) and dismissals are strictly regulated by civil service rules.

Academic autonomy

Universities decide on overall student numbers and set admission criteria for students at Bachelor and Master levels.

All new degree programmes must be submitted to a prior accreditation before being introduced. Universities are also required to submit new doctoral programmes to prior accreditation before they can be introduced, while this requirement used to apply only to obtaining funding. Universities can terminate programmes independently.

In 2011 the national accreditation agency – ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes) – replaced the former National University Evaluation Council. ANVUR was established with responsibilities covering both research and teaching, including responsibility for programme accreditation and oversight of research activities. The previous system handled teaching and research reviews separately.

Universities cannot design the content of their academic programmes without constraints as the authorities specify some content of academic programmes.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all degree programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	56%	65%	From medium low to medium high	<i>Positive impact:</i> no prescription for elected rector to be an employee of the university; appointment of external members in board by the university. <i>Negative impact:</i> term of office and dismissal procedure now stated in law
Financial autonomy	70%	70%	Medium high	
Staffing autonomy	44% ¹	44%	Remains in medium low	
Academic autonomy	57%	56%	Remains in medium low	Introduction of doctoral degree programmes accreditation

¹ This score was adapted from 49% to 44% as it was clarified that salaries were set externally for some senior administrative staff. Other adaptations had a neutral effect on the scoring.

University autonomy in context

The higher education law introduced in 2010 implemented a number of changes to the organisation and operation of Italian universities.

The ability of universities to now appoint external members to council and the removal of the requirement for the executive head to come from the same university are steps towards more efficient decision-making processes and greater autonomy. However, the inclusion of the procedure for the dismissal and the exact length of term of office of executive head in the law limit progress in scoring.

The introduction of a requirement for Doctoral degrees to have prior accreditation before they are introduced is a new development that diminishes university autonomy in academic matters, although prior accreditation was already required for Bachelor's and Master's programmes previously.

There have also been a number of other evolutions including changes to public funding arrangements.

The government is moving towards greater performance-based funding for universities, replacing the previous basic funding model. Performance is primarily measured through the assessment of research activities, with consideration given in addition to teaching activities and recruitment policies. Historical allocation patterns still make up the largest part of the public funding, complemented by an amount based on the standard cost per student. The performance-based component represents slightly over 20% of the overall public funding received by universities, with the perspective of reaching up to 30% by 2025.

Figures for Italy reported by EUA's Public Funding Observatory still exposed a significant decline in public funding (over 17%) where cuts concerned all areas of university activities. The proportion of university expenditures in GDP slightly decreased in the context of funding cuts and the flat economic growth over the period 2008-2015. The student numbers also declined by almost 9%, at a slower pace than the funding cuts.

Tensions on financial resources and the evolution of public funding modalities towards increased steering from external authorities are two important caveats when considering the autonomy of universities in Italy.

Views from the sector

The overall assessment of Italian university autonomy by the sector is that there are shortcomings in autonomy arising from staff management issues and internal management capacity, which are often generated by pressures on resources. There is a perception that the 2010 law supported improvements in the quality of management, with a more professional, strategy-oriented university board/council, although it maintains an elective model for the selection of the executive head. The clarification of the respective functions of the board/council and senate has reduced duplication.

However, the reforms to governance introduced in 2010 did not increase autonomy significantly. The change in academic structures was motivated by efficiency concerns but internal organisation is now more tightly regulated with the number and size of departments and their structure subject to greater regulation.

The sector considers that the 2010 reforms were a missed opportunity to design a new vision for Italian higher education. While additional investment has been made in research funding by the government, this investment has been focused outside of university research, which has been suffering from a lack of investment in the higher education system. In the view of the sector, the Italian government has not made higher education a priority issue in recent years and has not succeeded in strengthening mutual trust between the sector and policy-makers.

Universities are particularly concerned about government control over staffing as the government decides on the number of people who can be hired each year by universities. Each university can hire staff depending on certain formula and a certain turnover of staff. The ministry calculates how many staff can be recruited each year and each type of staff has different weightings. This system applies to all staff with civil servant status. The procedures for the recruitment of academic staff and the competition process are problematic for the recruitment of international staff as it is difficult for non-Italians to apply.

Comparatively few staff in universities are employees recruited with private contracts and the number of employees has declined by almost 15% since 2008 due to restrictions in turnover. There is more freedom in theory for universities in relation to employees compared to those with civil servant status but dismissal policies are still subject to wider labour market rules protecting workers. Promotions for senior administrative staff on private contracts can be decided by universities but financial pressures limit the scope of universities to offer promotions.



University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Universities must follow a series of regulations regarding their governance – an external authority confirms both the appointment and dismissal of the executive head, whose selection criteria are set in law. A maximum term of office is also prescribed. Universities are not permitted to include external members in their governing bodies. They can decide on their academic structures and create legal entities.

Financial



Internal allocation of funds received from the annual block grant is now up to the universities, and there is greater freedom to borrow funds and keep surpluses. Public universities may also own real estate, and now sell previously state-owned buildings with permission. Universities are able to decide on tuition fees for those students who do not have state-funded study places.

Staffing



Universities can recruit and set salaries for their senior academic and administrative staff; however, minimum salaries are set by the state for academic staff and restrictions have been implemented nationally for administrative staff. Dismissals are subject to regular labour law and universities can promote senior administrative staff freely. Promotions for academic staff are constrained by the mandatory periodical re-opening of academic positions.

Academic



Universities decide on fee-paying student numbers. They co-regulate admission criteria at Bachelor level and are in control of admissions at Master level. There are multiple levels of accreditation, limitations on language of instruction, and constraints on the development of the content of the academic programmes.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Change of legal status of universities, leading to lifting of restrictions concerning surpluses and borrowing
- Establishment of a new national quality assurance agency in July 2015 and development of study field accreditation
- Restrictions set up by the State on salaries of administrative staff

Organisational autonomy

Universities in Latvia elect their executive head (rector) according to a procedure set in the law, via their constitutional assembly, which serves as an electoral body composed of both staff and students. The Cabinet of Ministers must formally approve the result of the election. The law includes provisions on the selection criteria for university rectors, making it mandatory for the candidates to hold the title of professor. The rector may be dismissed only by the Cabinet of Ministers on the proposal of either the university senate or the ministry. The rector's term of office is also regulated by law with a maximum period of five years renewable once (although re-election is possible if not consecutive).

Latvian universities have unitary governance structures, in which the senate is the main decision-making body. Universities also have other consultative bodies and a constitutional assembly. The law prescribes the shares of the different staff categories in the senate, as well as the share of student representatives (at least a fifth of the members).

Latvian law prohibits universities from including external members in their governing bodies. However, universities introduce external members at a lower level and as part of advisory bodies which include alumni, business representatives and employers. Universities select these external members on the basis of their relevant experience and potential contribution to the university's strategic vision.

Latvian universities may decide on their academic structures freely and may also create legal entities, whether for-profit or not, on the basis of the legal framework for public institutions. Universities are therefore more constrained than in 2010 in this regard, as the previous law governed only state and municipal companies with limited liability. The new law, which came into force in 2015 explicitly covers not only state and municipal, but all companies with limited liability established by any public institution, including public higher education institutions.

Financial autonomy

Following the 2009 – 2011 crisis, and in an attempt to balance governmental budget expenses and avoid extreme budget fluctuations, in 2013 Latvia introduced a mid-term three-year overall budget framework, which the Parliament adopts every year. Changes in the annual budget are however still possible and therefore universities continue to operate primarily on the basis of an annual budget.

In 2011/12 there were changes to the block grant as universities became 'derived public persons' which made it possible to relax restrictions on the funding system. A law on budgetary organisation was implemented that shifted universities from public institutions with very specific allocated funding to the position of budgetary institutions which are authorised to freely allocate funding internally across different areas.

Universities now have full capacity to retain any surpluses. Previously this required a formal approval process. This modification was also part of the wider changes made in 2011 to the status of Latvian universities. In the same vein, universities also no longer need permission to borrow money. However, in practice, Latvian universities are not in a financial position that would allow large surpluses to be generated or to borrow funds extensively.

Latvian universities may own and sell properties. However, a large part of the university real estate is owned by the state. The law was amended in 2011, allowing public universities to own previously state-owned buildings, with the caveat that these buildings may be used for certain functions only, and cannot be sold by the university. In June 2016, the situation further evolved as universities are now able to sell previously state-owned buildings provided that their real estate development plan receives the approval of the government.

Latvian universities may not charge fees for Latvian and EU students for state-funded places (just over 40% of all students) in programmes delivered in the Latvian language at any level. The Ministry of Education and Science sets the number of state-funded student places per given area. Beyond state-funded places, fee-paying places may be offered by the university. Universities are allowed to charge and set the fees for these students. The decline in the student population means that the share of students occupying state-funded study places is now significantly higher than in 2010 (from approximately 30% to 40%), although in 2016 the absolute number of state-funded places was slightly reduced.

Universities do not receive public funding for programmes delivered in languages other than Latvian and can charge fees freely for these.

Staffing autonomy

Universities continue to be able to recruit senior academic and administrative staff independently, although on the basis of procedures set by law in the case of academic staff. Academic staff must also be proficient in the Latvian language.

Restrictions on administrative staff salaries were introduced in 2010 as part of wider austerity measures. University administrators have public employee status and were included in public sector restrictions, which consisted in setting maximum salaries. Academic staff, heads of departments, vice-deans, deans, vice-rectors and rectors were not included in the restrictions on salaries (and decision on their salaries continues to be the prerogative of the universities) but limitations in the overall funding available effectively continues to prevent salary rises.

Staff dismissals remain an internal university decision, in accordance with general labour regulations. Promotion procedures for senior academic staff are limited in the sense that academic positions must be re-opened every six years¹, while there are no regulatory restrictions regarding the promotion of senior administrative staff.

¹ Academic staff are employed on the basis of six-year contracts and must seek re-appointment after this period.

Academic autonomy

The capacity to decide on overall student numbers remains shared between universities (for fee-paying places, currently slightly below 60% of students) and the ministry (for state-funded places).

The student selection process has remained the same since 2010. At Bachelor level, admission is co-regulated by universities and the public authorities. Universities must select a number of mandatory discipline-focused centralised exams for secondary school graduates as admission requirements and may determine additional criteria in coordination with the Council of Higher Education of Latvia. Universities determine admission criteria freely at Master level.

A licensing commission² grants universities with the licence necessary to introduce new programmes. In 2013, study field accreditation replaced programme accreditation but did not remove licensing requirements for new programmes. During the accreditation process, external experts usually look at overall study areas and do not concentrate on contents of specific programmes. In practice, introducing a new programme belonging to a study field for which a university is not previously accredited is difficult. In this case, the authorisation of the government to “open” the study field at the institution is necessary, followed by licensing of the new programme, with a subsequent study field accreditation within two years of the introduction of the programme. Universities may terminate programmes independently, with the obligation to ensure that the students affected by the closure complete their studies.

Institutional accreditation also exists in Latvia and is undertaken by the Higher Education Council appointed by Parliament. The Higher Education Council can withdraw the accreditation of an institution although this has happened only very rarely.

The autonomy of Latvian universities in conferring doctoral degrees remains limited. There is direct involvement of the Latvian Council of Science and of the State Scientific Qualification Commission in the process.

A series of developments has occurred since 2010 regarding quality assurance mechanisms and structures. Internal quality assurance mechanisms are described by law since 2011. The government established a new national quality assurance agency in July 2015. Universities may only obtain accreditation from the national agency³.

² Previously appointed by the ministry, since 2015 appointed by the council of the national Quality Assurance agency.

³ At the beginning of 2017 the ministry initiated a process to amend the law to allow universities to choose any EQAR-registered quality assurance agency for peer-review expertise as of 2018, while formal final decision.

The capacity to design the content of degree programmes remains limited in Latvia. Updated higher education standards were introduced in 2014, although with similar restrictions as before. They include a prescribed minimum duration for apprenticeship periods and compulsory study modules, for instance, entrepreneurial skills, environmental and civil defence modules, all of which must be embedded in study programmes.

The law prescribes that the language of instruction in public universities is Latvian. Institutions receive public funding only for these programmes, with some exceptions set in law. The use of other EU official languages is limited to a certain percentage and may not apply to examinations (with the exception of doctoral theses).

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	61%	57%	From medium high to medium low	Impact of specified constraints on the creation of legal entities.
Financial autonomy	80%	90%	From medium high to high	Lifting of restrictions on internal funding allocation, on retaining surpluses, and on borrowing.
Staffing autonomy	89% ¹	89%	High	
Academic autonomy	45% ²	45%	Medium low	

1 This score was adapted from 92% to 89% after it was clarified that restrictions applied to senior administrative staff salaries (maximum salaries were imposed by the government as of 2010), and account taken of language requirements for the recruitment of senior academic staff.

2 This score was adapted from 55% to 45% after it was clarified that in 2010 overall student numbers were partly determined by universities (for fee-paying students) and partly by external authorities (for state-funded students), and that universities could not receive funding for programmes delivered in languages other than Latvian.

University autonomy in context

Latvian universities operate in a legal framework that gives them significant autonomy in financial and staffing matters. However, there are considerable limitations in practice to these two dimensions, in particular due to the acute challenge posed by the limited funding available in the system. The freedom for universities to, in principle, allocate funds internally or independently recruit and set salaries for (some) staff remains essentially theoretical if the institutions do not have financial room for manoeuvre. The state regulates minimum salaries for academic staff per category; they were significantly lowered in the wake of the economic crisis and have now been slightly increased, with a perspective over further increases in 2017-2019 which need to be translated into budget allocations for the sector. As recorded by EUA's Public Funding Observatory, between 2008 and 2015 public funding to the sector has fallen by over 35%, with the student body shrinking significantly over the same period. The funding model for public universities in Latvia has been under scrutiny and new models have been proposed; an element of performance-based funding has also been introduced. Research activity in Latvian universities continues to depend heavily on EU structural funds.

The organisational autonomy of Latvian universities is limited by the number of procedures included in the law regarding the governance of the institutions, and in particular by the ban on external members in governing bodies, although this has been considered by the sector as a barrier to undesirable political influence in the universities' internal operations.

Finally, out of the four autonomy dimensions, Latvian universities score the lowest in terms of academic autonomy, with heavy accreditation procedures, limited student selection possibilities, and the constraints of a mixed system for state-funded / fee-paying study places.

Views from the sector

Latvian universities are aware that the challenging context in which they operate effectively curtails their autonomy. While EU structural funds are crucial to maintaining research activities, they also pose a particular issue in relation to financial sustainability as significant co-funding is required from the university to secure these funds, sometimes making it necessary to take loans. The sector is also concerned by the rising costs of the evolving quality assurance and accreditation models. There is also the perception by the sector that the formal high level of financial autonomy works against universities when discussing public funding allocations with the government. The university system in Latvia remains under great financial pressure.

Although highly autonomous in relation to staffing matters, the Latvian university sector is also concerned by a specific problem related to their ability to recruit international staff. Strict official language requirements imposed by the law create significant barriers in this regard; indeed, all categories of permanent staff in public higher education institutions are expected to have C1 level knowledge of Latvian, with limited exceptions.



Lithuania

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Lithuanian universities select, appoint and dismiss their rector independently. The law includes basic selection criteria and specifies the term of office. Universities have recently acquired the capacity to select external members in governing bodies independently.

Financial



Lithuanian universities receive annual block grants with limited internal allocation possibilities. They cannot keep surpluses but may resort to borrowing more easily than in the past. The State continues to own university buildings. The externally set ceilings on tuition fees charged to self-funded students were lifted and universities can now set the level of fees for these students autonomously.

Staffing



Lithuanian universities recruit their senior academic staff relatively autonomously on the basis of minimum regulations and salary bands set in law. Recruitment and salaries of senior administrative staff are an internal university matter. There are no specific regulations regarding dismissals and promotions are possible in case of vacancy.

Academic



Universities can decide on the number of fee-paying students but can only select students at Master level. Programme evaluation is mandatory every six years. There are limitations on the use of foreign languages in academic programmes. Some of the content of academic programmes is determined by an external authority.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

New law passed in July 2016 addressing organisational and financial autonomy, including:

- Selection of external members in governing bodies by the universities themselves
- Dismissal of the rector no longer subject to ministry approval
- Removal of ceiling in setting tuition fees
- Less restrictions on borrowing and option to sell buildings under specific conditions

Organisational autonomy

Universities are free to decide on their statutes but any changes must be adopted by Parliament.

The university elects, appoints and dismisses the executive head autonomously. Basic academic and managerial selection criteria continue to be outlined in the law passed in 2016. The term of office is still prescribed in the law (maximum two consecutive five-year terms, with the possibility of renewal after a five-year period).

In 2010 the procedure for the dismissal of the rector changed, removing the needs for ministry approval and leaving the matter to the university.

Lithuanian universities have a dual governance structure including a senate- and board/council-type body, the respective functions of which were clarified in the 2016 law. The board/council is the main decision-making body, also responsible for the institutional strategy. The senate primarily focuses on academic matters and must be consulted by the board/council.

Lithuanian universities include external members in both their senate and board/council. Universities may decide to include external members in the senate, which is a new development as previously university senates were composed of internal members exclusively. The 2016 law states that the external members of the senate are selected by the universities themselves but may come exclusively from research and higher education institutions.

University boards/councils by law are composed of 9 or 11 members. The law prescribes that internal representatives form a majority, including one student representative. The external members (four out of nine or five out of 11) are selected by the university academic community and one is selected by the student body. The university is responsible for their appointment. This is an evolution from the previous situation whereby the external members were recommended by the Lithuanian Higher Education Council and then appointed by the ministry.

Universities may decide on their academic structure without constraints and can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities continue to receive the bulk of their public funding through an annual block grant split into broad categories, with no possibility to move funds from one to another.

The 2016 law relaxes restrictions on borrowing by Lithuanian universities, but limits are set by the ministry. Keeping surpluses remains forbidden. The rule remains that universities cannot sell buildings. In specific cases, universities may ask for government authorisation to transfer property. In this case, the income generated through the sale must be invested into core activities of the university.

Lithuanian universities may set the level and charge fees to students who are enrolled on a self-paying basis at Bachelor and Master levels (beyond state-funded study places, around 50% of the student population in the country). Previously fees could not be set higher than the cost determined by the ministry for each study field. Universities may also set the level of fees charged to students enrolled in doctoral programmes and to international students at all levels.

Staffing autonomy

Lithuanian universities recruit their senior academic staff relatively autonomously, on the basis of minimum regulations regarding qualifications, publicity of the vacancy, and the set-up of internal committees. Salary bands are set in law. Salaries of senior academic staff may be increased on the basis of personal performance.

The university committee that decides on the hiring of senior academic staff also conducts staff performance evaluations every five years, the result of which determines the renewal of their contracts.

Universities may decide fully on senior administrative staff recruitments and salaries. Dismissals of senior academic and administrative staff are not subject to sector-specific regulations. For both types of staff, promotions are possible only if a post becomes vacant.

Academic autonomy

No limit is applied to universities on the number of fee-paying students that can be accepted but the ministry decides on the number of state-funded students. The number of state-funded students is decreasing, but the proportions of state-funded and fee-paying students vary between universities.

The Lithuanian higher education sector has a centralised admission system with no capacity for universities to select students at Bachelor level. However, universities can select Master students autonomously.

Compulsory accreditation is run by the Lithuanian national agency: universities cannot select either external quality assurance mechanisms or providers.

The capacity of Lithuanian universities to design the content of degree programmes remains limited, with content prescribed externally. However, the new law has introduced the possibility of developing transdisciplinary programmes at all levels.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for the programmes they run to a certain extent. Universities must provide justifications to the opening of programmes taught in foreign languages, such as attracting international students or offering a joint degree.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	75%	87%	From medium high to high	Dismissal of rectors no longer needs approval; selection of external members in governing bodies by the university
Financial autonomy	51%	61%	From low to medium high	No restrictions in setting the fees for self-funded study places (no more ceilings)
Staffing autonomy	83%	83%	High	
Academic autonomy	42%	42%	Medium low	

University autonomy in context

The July 2016 law on 'research and studies' modified modalities that had been set up relatively recently as the previous law was implemented in 2010. The 2016 law introduces more freedom regarding university governance with, in particular, the ability to select external members independently. Universities continue, however, to face excessive regulations in academic matters.

The autonomy of universities in Lithuania should be seen in the context of a significant underfunding of the system and diminishing student numbers. EUA's Public Funding Observatory reveals that public funding for universities decreased by over 30% in the period 2008-2015. Simultaneously, the dependence on EU structural funds grew spectacularly, with their share in the total public funding to universities reaching over 40% in 2015. It is a clear case of how public authorities use European funds to compensate for cuts at national level, potentially undermining the overall sustainability of universities if no sufficient national funding is put into the system to fund university operations.

The inclusion of an element of performance funding under the 2016 law through the three-year contracts is an attempt to make the funding model evolve but remains limited in scope (possibility to obtain an additional 5% on the block grant on the basis of successful completion of certain objectives). The contracts are signed between each university and the ministry and identify priority areas in the university activities. Indicators to measure performance include "accessibility and usefulness of studies", "quality of research and art", internationalisation, and "integrity of research and studies". Although these contracts are foreseen in the law, the related implementation acts have yet to be issued.

In this context, it is difficult for universities to reap the benefits of institutional autonomy, in particular regarding staffing matters.

Views from the sector

Lithuanian universities have welcomed the new possibilities opened up by the provisions of the law regarding governance and funding. These include, in particular, the removal of ceilings on tuition fees and the development of performance contracts generating additional income. However, there is a general concern in the sector about under-funding of the system and a call for more stability in public funding allocations.

Infrastructure funding is a question of particular importance in the system and is an area where EU structural funds have a fundamental impact. In relation to this, universities call for full ownership of the properties. Reduced student numbers, and therefore low occupancy rates of buildings, require a greater flexibility in real estate management for universities.

While the 2016 law partially relaxes restrictions regarding financial matters and introduces performance contracts, the sector's view is that it has not been accompanied with a full reflection on the funding model. Universities would also like to see the duties of the ministry better enshrined in legislation, in particular funding commitments.

Finally, the involvement of the ministry in academic matters remains a concern, despite the newly introduced possibility of organising transdisciplinary studies at all levels.



How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

The Luxembourgish higher education system is centred on the University of Luxembourg, which is the only higher education institution with university status in Luxembourg.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law prescribes the selection criteria for the executive head and their term of office. It also specifies the procedure for their dismissal. Both the appointment and dismissal of the executive head require the confirmation of an external authority. All the members of the main decision-making body are external to the university and they are all appointed by an external authority. Academic structures are outlined in law.

Financial



The university freely allocates funding internally on the basis of a four-year financial agreement. It requires the approval of an external authority to keep surpluses, borrow money and sell buildings. It freely decides on the level of tuition fees at all levels.

Staffing



The university freely recruits senior academic and administrative staff. Phasing-out of the civil servant status means that the university can set salaries with increasing autonomy. There are no specific regulations for dismissals. Promotions for academic staff are only possible if there is a post available at a higher level.

Academic



The university decides on overall student numbers and on student admission at all levels, as well as on the language of instruction. It can introduce new programmes autonomously and undergoes institutional accreditation.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- There has been a continued decrease in the number of staff with civil servant status who now comprise less than 10% of staff

Organisational autonomy

The selection procedure and criteria for the executive head of the University of Luxembourg are outlined in law. A prospective rector must hold an academic position (professor) but the detail and operation of the recruitment process is the responsibility of the university. The procedure for the dismissal of an executive head is outlined in law. Confirmation of both appointment and dismissal by an external authority is necessary.

The exact length of the term of office of the executive head is stated in the law, the term of office is five years and can be renewed. There has only been one renewal of a rector's term so far as the university was only founded in 2003. If the term of a rector was not renewed there would be an open call for a new rector.

The University of Luxembourg has a dual governance structure, including both board/council- and senate-types of bodies. The senate-type body ('University Council') has an advisory role and is consulted on decisions by the board ('Board of Governors'). It also has some limited decision-making powers on specific issues. The Board of Governors is the decision-making body, with responsibilities including strategy, recruitment of full professors, budget, salaries, contractual arrangements and the organisation of university entities.

The senate-type body is composed of members drawn from within the university representing academic staff, administrative staff and students.

The board consists entirely of external members, appointed by the government. There are seven full members of the board who can vote and four observers without voting rights (comprising three internal members: the rector, a student representative, an academic staff representative; and the government commissioner as an external member) and a senior university official acting as the secretary general to the board. The current external members include four academics (holding or having held positions in academia) and three non-academics. The academics are from outside Luxembourg and the three non-academics are from business, industry and civil society in Luxembourg.

The Board of Governors also includes one government commissioner as a non-voting member, therefore the government is indirectly involved in the governance of the university.

The overall structure of the university, including faculties, is described in the law. The internal organisation of the University of Luxembourg is largely governed by by-laws that must be approved by the ministry.

The university can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Funding is received by the university through a block grant, with no restriction on the internal allocation of the funds. The overall financial framework is negotiated every four years in a contract with the government, and may include earmarked funding. The university can carry over surpluses within the four-year contract, while at the end of the period the government may decide on whether to leave the surplus with the university. The university may borrow money, with the approval of the ministry.

The law allows the university to own buildings and sell them with the authorisation of the ministry. However, the university uses buildings that are either government property or are rented from other organisations. The discussion started in 2010 to change real estate ownership did not lead to any concrete outcomes.

The university can set the level of fees¹ for all students at all levels. There is no distinction between EU and non-EU students.

Staffing autonomy

Only part of those staff who previously worked at the institutions that merged to form the University of Luxembourg have civil servant status, and they now represent less than 10% of the total academic staff. The very large majority of staff is hired on private contracts. The recruitment of senior academic and administrative staff is freely done by the university.

The university can decide freely on the salaries of senior academic staff – while the salary bands of academic staff are still linked to comparable civil servant pay bands through a salary grid, the university is free to negotiate additional salary components such as bonuses outside the bands with new staff. There is scope under the current arrangements for some exceptions to the grid for academic staff. Combined with the phasing-out of the civil servant status, this is a development explaining the greater autonomy of the university in this matter.

There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissals for senior academic or administrative staff and national labour regulations apply.

Promotions for senior academic staff are possible if there is a post available at a higher level and under specific circumstances. The university is free to promote senior administrative staff.

¹ In 2016, the tuition fees for the first year of a Bachelor's programme amounted to 800 Euros (200 Euros per semester) while fees for Master's programmes varied.

Academic autonomy

The university can decide on the overall number of students and sets the criteria for admission at both Bachelor and Master levels.

The university can open new degree programmes at all levels without prior accreditation as it only needs its board (Board of Governors) to approve the introduction of the new programmes. The university can also terminate degree programmes independently.

The university is evaluated externally every four years in a process commissioned by the ministry and set out in law. A research evaluation is also undertaken. Both processes are defined by the ministry, which chooses and remunerates the agency for these processes.

The university can design the content of its degree programmes without constraints. It can choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	34% ¹	34%	Low	
Financial autonomy	91%	91%	High	
Staffing autonomy	87%	94%	Remains in high cluster	Phasing out of civil servant status and capacity to set salaries above the set salary bands.
Academic autonomy	89% ²	89%	High	

University autonomy in context

The University of Luxembourg, which is the only university in Luxembourg, has operated in a stable higher education framework since 2010. Luxembourg remains a specific case, being a system centred on a sole university. This explains the comparatively high degree of involvement of the government in governance and organisational matters, while the university benefits from high autonomy in all other dimensions considered in the Scorecard.

There have been both changes and remaining challenges in the area of staffing. The higher education law is likely to be revised in 2018, potentially leading to changes affecting autonomy.

EUA's Public Funding Observatory reveals that public investment in the University of Luxembourg increased by more than 50% in real terms in the period 2009-2015. This increase was supported by relatively high economic growth and the growing share of university funding in GDP. The expanding public investment also reflects a large increase in the student body (by almost 40%) over the same period of time, as student numbers have been growing since the establishment of the University of Luxembourg in 2003.

Views from the sector

The university is the only university in Luxembourg so it is the only partner for government on many issues. The institution therefore benefits from an access to the government; however, as a consequence, the research and higher education political agenda necessarily focuses on the university. The government supports the university setting its own agenda, applying for EU programmes and having its own four-year plan. The university is nevertheless expected to link selected activities with government priority programmes for the country.

¹ This score was adapted from 31% to 34% as the selection criteria for the executive head can be encapsulated by the restriction "the executive head must hold an academic position".

² This score was adapted from 74% to 89% as it can be considered that for 2010 Luxembourg falls within the category of "mandatory institutional accreditation", which does not generate deductions in the autonomy score.

Around 80% of university funding is received from the government. one of the university's aims is to have gradual growth in external funding towards 25% of total funding by the mid-2020s, without reduction in public funding. Compared to considerable initial funding received when the University was created, in recent years the university has received lower increases in funding but the trajectory remains positive. The Government has made large investments in a new University campus.

There are wider discussions around the need to amend the constitution of Luxembourg and the inclusion of academic freedom into the constitution. The current constitution of Luxembourg stipulates that all teaching issues must be regulated by law. Also, while the university is free to set its own regulations, these must be issued as a formal government regulation.

Negotiations between the university and the staff body aim to revise the complete salary grid (originally modelled on that of secondary school teachers) in order to simplify it and improve flexibility. The issue of promotions remains unsolved. It will be a major challenge and a priority for the next revision of the university law to develop a procedure with tenure tracks and more flexible pathways to promotion. Academics are not satisfied with the current situation and it is on the agenda of the university's Board of Governors.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The appointment of the members of the university executive board must be confirmed by the ministry. Universities decide on selection criteria, terms of office and dismissal. The members of the university supervisory board are all external and are appointed by the ministry. Universities can decide on their internal academic structures and may create legal entities.

Financial



Universities operate on a yearly budget and can freely allocate funds internally. They may keep surpluses and borrow money as well as own and sell buildings. Restrictions to financial autonomy apply to tuition fees for national and EU students for Bachelor and Master programmes, which are set externally. Universities may set fees for doctoral programmes and to international students.

Staffing



Universities freely organise the recruitment and promotion of senior academic and administrative staff. Salary bands are negotiated with other parties and strict regulations apply for dismissal.

Academic



In a system of free admission, Dutch universities cooperate with the ministry to regulate student selection. Prior accreditation of programmes at Bachelor and Master levels is required and universities cannot choose the quality assurance provider. Universities are free to terminate programmes, choose the language of instruction and design the content of academic programmes.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Law on 'Enhanced Governance Powers' passed in 2016 with increased student involvement in university governance
- New student funding system introduced in 2015
- Lighter' programme accreditation introduced after 2015
- Law regulating public sector salaries introduced in 2013

Organisational autonomy

The appointment of executive heads of Dutch universities must be confirmed by the Minister of Science and Education. In practice, the members of the 'executive board', i.e. the president, vice-president and rector of the university, are selected by the 'supervisory board' and then confirmed by the ministry.

Selection criteria, duration of the term of office, and dismissal procedure are all internal matters of the university.

Dutch universities have dual governance structures, which offer atypical characteristics. The executive board is the main decision-making body, with responsibilities for strategic decisions, finances, staffing and academic affairs. The supervisory body, which is responsible for selecting the executive board, usually comprises three to five members, whose appointment is controlled by the ministry.

The "Enhanced Governance Powers (Higher Education) Act" was passed in 2016 and came into effect in 2017. It makes it mandatory to disclose the profiles of candidates to the executive board, and requires the supervisory board to consult an advisory committee on the appointment of the members of the executive board. The law includes provisions to stimulate the dialogue between the supervisory board and the representative advisory board (including students and personnel), by making an annual meeting between these bodies mandatory. Furthermore, the role of the education committees, responsible for overseeing the quality of education, is strengthened.

Universities may freely decide on their internal academic structures and may create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities without restrictions.

Financial autonomy

Dutch universities have an annual public funding cycle via a block grant which they can freely allocate internally. They can keep surplus, borrow money as well as own and sell buildings without restrictions.

Universities cannot set the level of tuition fees charged to national and EU students enrolled in Bachelor and Master programmes. The fees are set by the ministry. Universities may nevertheless decide on the fees for students enrolled in doctoral programmes as well as for international students at all degree levels.

Universities can set the fees for other types of programmes, for instance bridging programmes that prepare students coming from vocational education to enter academic Master's programmes. However, this capacity has been curtailed as the ministry recently extended the scope of fixed tuition fees to those programmes.

A new system of student aid was introduced in September 2015. It converted grants into loans for students starting a Bachelor or a Master's programme (except for low income students). The existing system continues for those already at university. The new system is expected to be applicable to all students by 2018. This results in the transfer of about one billion Euros from the grants system into the national budget for higher education.

Staffing autonomy

Dutch universities are free to recruit and promote senior academic and administrative staff. Typically, university statutes contain guidelines on academic recruitment.

Collective labour agreements including staff salary bands are negotiated between the national rectors' conference (VSNU) and the relevant trade unions. In addition, a new law (the Act on the Standardization of the Remuneration of Senior Executives in the Public and Semi-Public Sector), was passed in 2013 and introduced new regulations for public sector salaries, which includes higher education staff in the Netherlands. It outlines both minimum and maximum salaries across the public sector. Maximum salaries and limits on bonuses and benefits are being applied although different maximum salaries will operate in different parts of the education sector.

Dismissals for all staff are strictly regulated by the Dutch civil service rules as well as by a collective labour agreement that specifies additional rules for the sector.

Academic autonomy

The model in the Netherlands continues to be one of free admission to most university programmes, based solely on completion of secondary education.

Student selection at Bachelor level is co-regulated by the public authorities together with the university sector, in order to define requirements for specific programmes. These requirements relate to completed coursework in secondary education. Universities may not decide on additional admission criteria themselves. At Master level universities have more scope to develop additional criteria for student admission, which remains co-regulated with the ministry.

As in other countries, there exists a numerus clausus system for certain medical fields, with admission based on a lottery system organised by the government. As of 2017/2018 however, universities will gain the capacity to select students themselves for these programmes, and the lottery admission system will be discontinued. This decentralised selection, combined with a student-matching process, will be run for all subjects with fixed numbers such as medicine and health-related subjects. University faculties will have to decide on whether to set fixed numbers or not. This new framework gives universities significant room for manoeuvre but also increases the administrative burden.

New Bachelor's and Master's programmes must undergo a feasibility and relevance check by the National Advisory Council prior to introduction and obtain accreditation to be funded. Universities are free to introduce doctoral programmes.

In 2011 a change to the quality assurance system was proposed and a new law passed to move from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation. The change to institutional accreditation was however not implemented and a subsequent attempt in 2015 to pilot accreditation at institutional level failed. Eventually a different approach was proposed, consisting of accreditation at programme level in a lighter form. Instead of looking at four standards, the accreditation organisation will look at only two standards (proposed learning outcomes and actual learning outcomes).

Universities therefore cannot choose either external quality assurance mechanisms (mandatory programme accreditation) or providers (the accreditation is carried out by NVAO, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders).

Universities may terminate programmes independently. They can freely choose the language of instruction at all levels and may design the content of degree programmes and courses without constraints.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	69%	69%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	77%	77%	Medium high
Staffing autonomy	73%	73%	Medium high
Academic autonomy	48%	48%	Medium low

While changes were reported for the Netherlands in all dimensions of autonomy, they do not affect the scoring as previously existing limitations were, where relevant, already taken into consideration in the 2010 assessment.

University autonomy in context

As regards university organisational matters, the representation of students on university governing bodies is likely to change in the future with the new law on “Enhanced Governance Powers (Higher Education) Act” passed in 2016 and coming into force in 2017. This legislation is expected to increase the participation of students in university governance but mainly in departmental/faculty governance bodies. University statutes may also need to change to accommodate student representation.

Free admission is evolving in the Netherlands with the newly acquired capacity for universities to set quotas and select students for specific fields. However, no additional resources were made available to universities to run this decentralised admission process.

Financial pressure has increased in recent years on Dutch universities. There has been a decrease in the number of students to whom universities can charge fees that cover full costs. Some programmes have been brought within the scope of fixed fees, even though students enrolled in these programmes are not taken into account in the allocation of funding to universities.

The relatively weak growth of university funding in the Netherlands (slightly under 5%) reflects the country’s overall economic slowdown between 2008 and 2015. While the overall funding trajectory remained stable, so-called efficiency cuts aimed at reducing the academic offer and the coverage of indirect costs in research continued in 2016. In parallel, the student body has expanded by more than 15% since 2008.

Views from the sector

Universities in the Netherlands must meet rising accountability standards as higher education receives sustained political attention. Universities seek to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust between the sector and the public authorities. They are nevertheless concerned by the persistence of regulation at operational level. The university sees the role of the government as one of strategic, long-term steering focused on the goals of enhanced quality and improved teaching.

In this light, universities have been in favour of a shift of approach in terms of quality assurance, moving towards institutional accreditation. Continued programme accreditation, albeit made lighter, is therefore a disappointment to the sector and a missed opportunity to build trust and increase university autonomy.

Additional proposals for expanding the 2013 Act on the Standardization of the Remuneration of Senior Executives in the Public and Semi-Public Sector to all staff in the public and semi-public sector were being considered at the time of writing. The sector is concerned that such developments may inhibit the ability for universities to recruit international top scientists. Exceptions would be possible and universities have been asking to exclude top scientists from the scope of the regulation.

Overall, the regulatory framework might not have changed substantially since 2010 but the sector perceives that there is greater involvement by the government in operational and management issues.

How to read this profile

Universities and university colleges are regulated by the same law in Norway, although with regard to academic autonomy some specificities apply to university colleges. The present profile focuses on Norwegian universities.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The appointment of the executive head does not require external confirmation. Selection criteria are not stated in law. The procedure for the dismissal of the executive head, as well as the length of their term of office, are stated in law. The external members of the university governing body are appointed by an external authority. Universities can decide on internal academic structures and can create legal entities.

Financial



Norwegian universities receive public funding on a yearly basis. They can keep any surplus generated up to a maximum percentage and are not allowed to borrow money. Some universities own their buildings, but the approval of an external authority is necessary to sell any historical buildings. Public universities may not charge tuition fees for students, whether from Norway or from abroad.

Staffing



Universities recruit senior academic and administrative staff autonomously. Salary bands for senior academic staff are negotiated with other parties, while universities can decide on salaries for senior administrative staff. Dismissals of staff are strictly regulated due to civil service status. In relation to promotions for senior academic staff, the law states who must be included in the selection committee, while universities can decide upon promotion procedures for administrative staff.

Academic



Universities decide on the overall student intake and on admission criteria. Universities may freely open and terminate programmes and must undergo institutional accreditation via the national agency for quality assurance. Universities decide on the language of instruction and may freely design the content of their academic programmes.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Change in law to favour appointment rather than election of executive head
- Ongoing system reconfiguration through major merger processes

Organisational autonomy

The appointment of the university executive head (rector) does not require validation from an external authority. Universities in Norway freely decide on the process for the selection of their executive head. There is currently a mixed approach as about half of the universities appoint their rector through the university board/council, while the other half elect their rector through a process involving the university staff and students. The law does not prescribe mandatory qualifications or selection criteria for the rector.

The law changed in April 2016, making the appointment of the rector by the university board the main model to be used by universities rather than an election model. Despite this change, universities are able to deviate from the main model by board decision.

The process for the dismissal of the rector is stated in law insofar as he or she is a civil servant, who can only be dismissed in the event of gross misconduct. The law states that the term of office of the rector is four years and can be renewed once.

By law, Norwegian universities have unitary governance structures. The board is the main decision-making body and comprises eleven members, of whom four are external. The other members are internal, with four academics, one non-academic representative and two student representatives. When the rector is elected by the university staff and students, he or she is considered as one of the four academic representatives on the board and acts as the chair. In universities where the rector is appointed by the board, he or she is not a member of the board, but acts as its secretary, and reports to this body.

The university board may also decide, by a majority vote, to adapt its composition, and may increase the number of external members with the support of two-thirds of the board members.

External members of the board are proposed by universities but are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Research. They may come from business, other academic institutions and national and local public bodies.

Norwegian universities decide on their academic structures and can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

The Norwegian higher education budget is allocated to universities on an annual basis with no particular restrictions on the internal allocation of funding between different activities.

From 2014 onwards the Ministry of Education and Research outlined a long-term plan for research and higher education (2015-2024), which defines priority areas over the period, but funding remains to be distributed annually.

Norwegian universities can keep any surplus up to a maximum percentage but may not borrow money.

Universities can own their buildings but require the approval of an external authority to sell any historical buildings.

Public universities may not charge tuition fees to students from Norway, the European Union or international students studying at Norwegian universities. There are a small number of special programmes for which universities are authorised to charge fees.

Staffing autonomy

University staff in Norway have civil servant status, but there is flexibility in some areas for universities to manage their human resources.

Universities freely recruit both senior academic and senior administrative staff. Salaries of academic and administrative staff are negotiated annually between trade unions and the State. The outcome frames negotiations at local level. Dismissals are strictly regulated due to civil service status for all. In relation to promotions for senior academic staff the law states who must be included in the selection committee. Universities are nevertheless able to decide upon promotion processes for senior administrative staff.

Academic autonomy

Universities decide on the number of students they can accept, with the caveat that funding allocation is dependent on student numbers and student performance¹.

Student admission at Bachelor level is essentially regulated externally by the ministry, although universities may also suggest changes in the criteria. At Master level universities drive the selection process.

¹ Universities receive 60% of funding upfront for incoming students and 40% at a later point depending on student performance. ECTS points gained by students are the current output measure used to decide on funding.

Universities can introduce new programmes at all levels without prior accreditation and can terminate programmes independently. Norway practices institutional accreditation, which universities must undergo within a period of eight years. Universities must use the Norwegian Agency for Accreditation (although they can choose other bodies to assist in the development of quality assurance processes).

Norwegian universities are able to design the content of their programmes without constraints.

Norwegian is the main language of higher education in Norway, but universities may offer courses and programmes in English or other languages; students must be informed in advance about the language of instruction.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	78%	78%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	42% ¹	42%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	63% ²	63%	Medium high
Academic autonomy	83% ³	83%	High

1 This score was adapted from 48% to 42% after it was clarified that universities receive their overall funding on a yearly basis despite an element of multiannual programming.

2 This score was adapted from 67% to 63% after it was clarified that negotiated salary bands also apply to senior administrative staff.

3 This score was adapted from 97% to 83% following a change of methodology regarding the choice of quality assurance providers and because student admission at Bachelor level may be considered as “co-regulated” rather than being the sole competence of the universities.

University autonomy in context

The Norwegian system is currently experiencing some re-configuration with considerable merger activity, both completed and ongoing.

Mergers completed by the start of 2016 included:

- **Nord University:** merger of *Nordland University, Nord-Trøndelag University College* and *Nesna University College*
- **Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)** merged with the *University Colleges of Ålesund, Gjøvik* and *Sør-Trøndelag*
- **University of Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway** merged with the *University Colleges at Harstad* and *Narvik*
- **University College of Southeast Norway:** merger of *Buskerud and Vestfold University College* with *Telemark University College*
- **VID Specialized University:** merger of private institutions - *Diakonhjemmet University College, Haraldsplass Deaconess University College, Betanien University College* and *School of Mission and Theology*

Re-configurations linked to mergers will be completed in the course of 2017.

Further ongoing or forthcoming changes may have an impact on the autonomy of Norwegian universities. This includes adjustments of the performance-based component of the public funding received by Norwegian higher education institutions (approximately 30% against 70% core grant) in the budget for 2017. The existing indicators are being adjusted and two new indicators are included, i.e. the number of degrees awarded and contractual research activity.

Further changes in the funding model for universities are expected in 2017. Performance agreements tested in 2016 will be expanded to a further ten institutions in 2017. The performance agreements are specific to each institution but do not involve additional funding. The ministry's plan is to expand the pilot to include more institutions in 2018 and all public universities and university colleges by 2019.

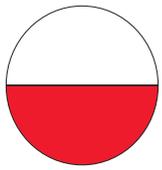
Views from the sector

There is a common understanding in Norway that higher education institutions should benefit from a high degree of autonomy. The sector nevertheless remains vigilant and views with caution the broad range of responsibilities of the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT).

Changes to the funding model and reporting systems are being made within the context of a positive dialogue between the government and universities. The sector and the public authorities have developed a shared focus on reducing bureaucracy combined with a good level of strategic leadership by the higher educational institutions.

The large-scale merger activity in the country contributes to these priorities and while it is generally acknowledged as a positive evolution, the process also inevitably meets resistance in the sector.

Finally, Norwegian universities remain overwhelmingly in favour of the principle of free education. There have been attempts to introduce tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students, which the Parliament has so far rejected.



Poland

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Universities appoint their executive heads independently; however, selection criteria, term of office and dismissal procedure are all stated in law. The university senate may not include external members. Universities may determine their internal academic structures. The activities of any legal entities established by universities must be linked to the mission of the university.

Financial



Although universities are free to allocate internally the funds received through the annual block grant, they do not control research funding distribution as it is directly allocated to faculties. The use of any surplus generated is subject to constraints imposed by an external authority. Borrowing is possible with some restrictions. Property transactions require external authorisation depending on the origins of the buildings involved. Universities may not charge tuition fees to full-time national/EU students. Fees for non-EU students are set through co-operation between universities and an external authority.

Staffing



There are some restrictions regarding the ability of universities to recruit senior academic staff but universities recruit senior administrative freely. Minimum salary levels are set by an external authority. Dismissals for senior academic staff are subject to regulations specific to the sector, while this is not the case for senior administrative staff. Senior academic staff have a special status in law with rights that provide a high level of protection against dismissal.

Academic



Universities decide on student numbers and set admission criteria at all levels. Universities may introduce new Bachelor's and Master's programmes freely, with exceptions. There are some restrictions on the ability of universities to introduce new doctoral degree programmes. Polish universities cannot choose either quality assurance mechanisms (mandatory programme or faculty-level accreditation) or providers.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Introduction of the National Qualification Framework
- Possibility to undergo faculty-level accreditation instead of programme accreditation
- Lifting of restrictions on degree programme provision
- Abolition of salary bands and removal of upper limit on salaries

Organisational autonomy

Universities may select their executive head without their appointment having to be validated by an external authority. Selection criteria are nevertheless stated in law, and candidates must hold an academic position and have a doctoral degree. Only candidates who are primarily employed at the university where the position is available can apply. The procedure for the dismissal of an executive head is stated in law and can be decided by the university or, in cases of serious misconduct, by the ministry, after consulting the national rectors' conference and the Council for Higher Education. By law, executive heads can serve for four years and their term can be renewed once.

Polish universities have unitary governance structures with a senate-type governing body, possibly supported by advisory bodies. Advisory bodies may be consulted about changes to university statutes and strategic issues. The university's strategic plan is generally considered by the advisory body.

The law provides guidance on the composition of university senates. Professors must comprise at least 50% of members up to a maximum of 60%. Students must comprise at least 20% of members. The remaining members are drawn from teaching, research and other staff. The exact numbers are outlined in individual university statutes. Universities cannot decide to include external members in the senate.

Universities have the ability to establish and decide upon the membership of external 'advisory bodies', although these advisory bodies have no decision-making powers. According to higher education law, these bodies can be given some decision-making powers through regulations in the university statute. The composition of these bodies is up to universities and those involved may include business representatives, representatives of local governments, and civil society partners.

Polish universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints.

Universities are able to create non-profit and for-profit legal entities but the scope of the activity of these entities must comply with the mission of the university (technology transfer etc.)

Financial autonomy

Polish universities receive funding through a block grant on an annual basis. There are no restrictions on the allocation of funding received through the block grant but this funding essentially covers teaching activities. The majority of research funding is allocated directly to individual university faculties rather than to universities on an institutional basis.

Surpluses can be kept but their allocation is predetermined by an external authority as any surplus can only be used for investment purposes.

Polish universities are able to borrow money. Universities can borrow money on the financial markets (e.g. for investment, or to match EU funding when that is required). The State may guarantee the loan. If the loan is to be guaranteed by university assets received from the State or local government, the application for the loan must be approved by an external authority.

Polish universities can own their buildings and may sell real estate subject to certain restrictions. Most buildings owned by the universities were provided by the State or local government. The university can also buy or construct buildings from its own resources. The university senate can decide to sell university assets including buildings. If a building chosen for sale was provided by the State or local government, an external authority must approve the sale.

Universities may not charge tuition fees to full-time national or EU students at any level. However, universities can charge for 'special educational services' and part-time students are included in this provision. Part-time students make up a significant part of the student population in Poland. The fees must however not exceed real costs, and this rule also applies to the fees charged to international students.

There has been a decrease in student numbers due to demographic trends. As the number of publicly-funded places (number of full-time students) essentially does not change, there are fewer candidates who are unable to access these places and have to pay fees¹.

Staffing autonomy

Universities are essentially free to recruit senior academic and administrative staff, although with some restrictions applying to academic appointments. Full professor posts must be confirmed by the ministry and certain qualifications are required by law for some academic positions.

¹ Fee-paying students made up for about 25% of the student body of public universities in 2013.

Universities can decide upon salaries for senior academic and administrative staff, with the only restriction being that minimum salary levels are set by the ministry. There have been two major changes in this area since 2010 as salary bands have been abolished and the upper limit on salaries has been removed, giving universities greater autonomy in this area.

Dismissals of senior academic staff are subject to regulations specific to the sector. While they are not civil servants, most academic staff have a special status in law with rights that provide a high level of protection against dismissal. For senior administrative staff, there are no sector-specific regulations, and national labour market regulations apply.

Universities are free to decide on promotion procedures for senior academic and administrative staff.

Academic autonomy

Polish universities decide on the overall number of students. A new regulation was introduced in 2011 that does not allow universities to increase the overall number of full-time by more than 2%, compared to the previous academic year. The approval of an external authority is needed if this limit is to be exceeded. This regulation is designed to try and control funding fluctuations among universities, as the Polish system allocates a certain amount of funding to universities based on enrolments. The 2% limit applies to the total number of students, rather than to particular fields of study. There are no limits on the number of part-time fee-paying students who can be admitted.

Universities decide on the admissions numbers for most areas of study. As in other systems, there exist quotas (or a numerus clausus) set by the ministry for certain fields such as medicine.

Universities set the admissions criteria for Bachelor's and Master's programmes. At Bachelor level this entails deciding on the weight given to scores obtained by students in selected subjects of the national matriculation exam.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) introduced in 2011 has had its greatest impact on the ability of universities to introduce degree programmes. Previously there had been a set list of study fields and any degree programme proposed with a subject not included in the list of study fields required a considerable bureaucratic process. Since 2011 many Polish universities have been free to offer any degree programmes they so wish (both at Bachelor and Master levels) without requiring prior accreditation.

Polish universities can terminate degree programmes independently.

Large universities, which account for the vast majority of students, are free to introduce degree programmes at all levels. For doctoral programmes, new rules that were introduced in 2011 at the same time as the NQF was introduced, in practice create restrictions mainly for smaller regional universities. Accreditation is at the faculty level and if a faculty wishes to introduce a new programme but does not satisfy certain requirements stated in the law², the faculty must secure permission from an external authority.

Polish universities can terminate degree programmes independently.

Institutional accreditation has come to replace programme accreditation in certain circumstances. Due to the relative independence of faculties in Polish universities, institutional accreditation is in fact 'faculty level accreditation' in the Polish system.

Universities cannot choose quality assurance mechanisms (mandatory programme or institutional/faculty-level accreditation) and cannot choose a quality assurance agency. The Polish Accreditation Committee carries out accreditation. While the Committee is now required to take into account certificates and accreditations issued by foreign/international quality assurance agencies, it remains the sole agency responsible for mandatory accreditation.

Polish universities can design the content of degree programmes without particular constraints. The NQF has given universities greater freedom to design the content of programmes. Previously there were ministerial regulations for programme content but now there are very general requirements on learning outcomes (except for some regulated fields of study, such as medicine) but content can differ which contributes to increasing diversity in the system.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

² Number of full-time academic staff holding the professor title or the higher doctoral degree (dr hab).

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	67%	67%	Medium high	
Financial autonomy	54%	54%	Medium low	
Staffing autonomy	78% ¹	84%	From medium high to high	Abolition of salary bands.
Academic autonomy	63%	68%	Medium high	<i>Positive impact:</i> possibility to introduce new programmes without prior accreditation for faculties that undergo institutional accreditation; freedom to design content of academic programmes. <i>Negative impact:</i> limits to increase in student enrolment.

The major changes in the Polish higher education system that have had an impact on autonomy are in academic and staffing matters. The changes to accreditation and the lifting of restrictions on course provision have had a positive impact on the level of academic autonomy in Poland.

The abolition of salary bands for all staff provides Polish universities with more staffing autonomy. The only remaining restriction is the minimum salary. This development means that Poland moves from the medium-high cluster to the cluster of systems with a high level of staffing autonomy.

¹ This score was adapted from 80% to 78% as appointments of some academic staff (full professors) must be confirmed by the ministry.

University autonomy in context

Two key changes have increased university autonomy in Poland since 2010. The first change was the creation of the National Qualification Framework (with positive consequences on degree programme provision) and the possibility to move away from programme accreditation. This was a major change and has led to considerable developments in the system and an increasingly diverse range of programmes being offered. Some universities developed new areas of study that they wished to offer and others have been trying new marketing approaches for programmes.

The second change was a change in the law on public procurement which has removed some restrictions on universities as the thresholds have been raised significantly. Previously the low procurement limits caused problems for universities.

Poland increased its public funding to universities between 2008 and 2015 by almost 20%, with a noticeable growth achieved over the last two years. As student numbers are decreasing (by slightly over 12%), this raise in funding propelled by the country's strong GDP growth is definitely a positive sign. However, when it comes to the comparative outlook, it should be noted that the university sector in Poland had suffered from underinvestment in the years prior to 2008 when substantial funding was necessary to improve the overall resource capacity of Polish universities. In this light, the comparatively lower level of financial autonomy of Polish universities remains an issue.

Views from the sector

The Polish university sector welcomes progress achieved in academic and financial matters, where universities have gained more autonomy. However, it regrets that two amendments to the university law in 2011 and 2014 have led to increased, and excessive, regulation. In addition, there is a perception that coherent implementation of these regulations remains problematic. Increased reporting and accountability requirements consume precious resources at the university. Although the new accreditation system and associated changes are a positive development, there remain concerns about the bureaucratic burden associated with the accreditation process. The reasons for this increasing regulatory environment may lie in a lack of trust in the system by the government.

With regard to financial matters, universities are concerned with the decrease of the overall contribution of fee income to university income, due to overall student numbers decreasing. In some fields, the income from fees can be an essential part of the income structure, reaching up to 30% of the core budget for teaching activities.



Portugal

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The law states selection criteria for executive heads, dismissal procedure (with external confirmation necessary), and exact term of office. Universities must include and freely appoint external members in their board/council. Portuguese universities decide on their academic structures. They may create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities with restrictions.

Financial



Universities may not reallocate block grant funds across set categories. Universities can keep surpluses with the approval of an external authority. There are differences in access to borrowing as only foundation status universities are able to contract loans. Universities may own and sell buildings with notification to the ministry. At Bachelor level tuition fees for national/EU students have to be set below a ceiling stipulated by an external authority, while universities may freely set fees for other levels and for international students.

Staffing



The recruitment of senior academic staff is regulated by law, while an external confirmation is only required for senior administrative staff with civil servant status. The state controls the overall expenses in salaries, which are externally set for staff with civil servant status. Dismissals are strictly regulated for these staff. The law regulates the composition of promotion committees for senior academic staff.

Academic



Universities negotiate overall student numbers with the ministry. At Bachelor level admission criteria are co-regulated between universities and the ministry. All new degree programmes at Bachelor, Master and doctoral levels must be submitted for prior accreditation so as to be introduced. Universities cannot choose either quality assurance mechanisms or providers.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Five universities now have foundation status which gives greater autonomy in some aspects of their activities
- Financial pressures continue to cause problems for Portuguese universities as austerity measures remain in place across the public sector

Organisational autonomy

There are currently five universities with foundation status with a greater autonomy out of a total of 14 public universities. Foundation status universities have more power to make changes to their statutes.

No external validation for the selection of the executive head is required but the selection criteria are stated in the law and candidates must hold an academic position. Universities decide on the procedure to dismiss their executive head but the law requires the confirmation of an external authority. The exact term of office, a four-year term renewable once, is stated in the law.

Portuguese universities have unitary governance structures, with a board/council-type of decision-making body (the 'General Council'). Universities must include external members, whom they freely select. There is a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 35 members. At least 30% are external, at least 15% are students and the rest are academic staff. Universities may also decide in their statutes to include non-academic staff in the General Council. The internal members of the General Council select the external members. The law states that external members should be individuals of recognised merit without interests in the university and with specific knowledge and relevant experience. Many are drawn from alumni, business and industry and academia. All external members have voting rights.

A number of Portuguese universities also have a senate, with advisory capacity.

Universities can decide on their academic structures.

Portuguese universities can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities, on the basis of their own income and in support of the universities' missions.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Portugal receive funding on an annual block grant basis. The block grant is split into broad categories, with no option for universities to move funds between allocations for salaries and for running costs.

Universities can keep surpluses with the approval of an external authority, in the sense that any surplus from the previous year must be submitted with the new annual budget, therefore maintaining external involvement in this process. Borrowing remains prohibited for universities, except for those with foundation status, under certain conditions.

Portuguese universities can own, buy and sell buildings. Public universities must notify the ministry, which maintains a register, if they buy or sell buildings. However, this requirement does not apply to foundation status universities.

For national/EU students studying at Bachelor level, universities may set the level of tuition fees under a ceiling¹ fixed by the government. At Master and doctoral levels, universities are free to set the level of tuition fees. For non-EU students, universities are free to set the level of tuition fees at all levels.

Staffing autonomy

A large part of the senior academic and administrative staff in Portuguese universities have civil servant status, although foundation status universities can contract their staff out of the civil servant system and employ them under general labour law rules. As the number of foundation status universities is expected to grow, the number of staff in Portuguese higher education employed under general labour law rules will grow as well.

The recruitment of senior academic staff by Portuguese universities is regulated by law which states necessary qualifications and the recruitment procedure for senior academic staff. The recruitment of senior administrative staff with civil servant status requires confirmation by an external authority, while it is possible for universities to also hire senior administrative staff on regular private contracts.

The state controls overall expenses for salaries. In addition, salaries are set externally for the large part of the senior academic and administrative staff, who have civil servant status. This status also means that dismissals are strictly regulated for those staff.

Restrictions regarding universities' capacity to promote senior academic staff include provisions in the law describing the composition of promotion committees. Promotions of senior academic are organised as an open competition. In practice, the state control over salary expenses and, between 2011 and 2015, the requirement that these expenses do not exceed those of the previous year meant that no appointments or promotions could occur, except in the event of staff retirement. More recently the universities were allowed to select the most favourable of the past three years as a control mark in this field.

¹ For the year 2016/2017 the ceiling for national and EU students is 1 068 Euros per academic year.

Academic autonomy

Portuguese universities ‘negotiate’ overall student numbers with the ministry, in the sense that the sector is involved in the allocation of study places. At Bachelor level admission criteria are co-regulated by the universities and an external authority (the National Commission for Access to Higher Education), which prescribes rules for entrance exams. At Master level admission criteria are set by universities.

All new degree programmes (Bachelor, Master and doctoral levels) must be submitted for prior accreditation so as to be introduced. This is carried out by the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation. Programme evaluation is mandatory every five years. Universities can terminate degree programmes independently.

Universities cannot choose either external quality assurance mechanisms (mandatory programme accreditation) or providers (national agency).

Universities can decide on the content of their degree programmes without constraints.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	80%	80%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	70%	70%	Medium high
Staffing autonomy	62%	62%	Medium high
Academic autonomy	54%	54%	Medium low

The scoring has been established taking into account restrictions that apply to public universities which do not have foundation status. There have been no significant changes to university autonomy in Portugal since 2010 that would result in different scores for any of the autonomy dimensions.

University autonomy in context

The reforms implemented in 2007/08 introduced a new model of governance for universities – the foundation status model. As of January 2017, there were five universities operating under this model. It is possible that other universities could become foundation status universities over time. This status was developed to give universities greater autonomy and to make it easier to govern themselves. Foundation status is only possible for those institutions with at least 50% of private funding which limits the number of eligible universities.

The current higher education law is due to be reviewed. The ministry is considering an outside evaluation of the Portuguese higher education system in 2017.

All Portuguese public institutions are currently subject to austerity rules which also has an impact on universities and their autonomy. The annual budget law with its detailed restrictions on all areas of public administration places universities under quite tight controls in terms of their ability to develop their financial strategies and contracts with external partners.

Discussions to move towards a system of institutional accreditation have resulted in the launch, in 2017, of an institutional evaluation process led by the National Accreditation Agency.

Views from the sector

The university sector hopes that the revision of the higher education law will give further autonomy to universities in areas such as fundraising, contracts with external partners and project participation.

There are discussions about trying to exclude universities from the detailed provisions in the annual budget law. One issue that might be addressed is that universities should be able to keep surpluses without the Finance Ministry being able to ask for it to be returned.

While the financial position of Portuguese universities started to improve in 2015, it still does not compare to the situation of the sector around 2007/08. It is hoped that the increases of salaries will lead to regaining this level. Many universities focused on increasing their sources of private funding but face limitations in this regard. Portuguese universities are keen to attract more international students for whom universities can set their own fees. Fees for international students may vary between 3 000 and 7 000 Euros per year. Brazil is a key target market and China is gaining importance.

Most staff in Portuguese universities are still civil servants and their terms and conditions limit universities' flexibility in human resource management. Universities can only appoint new staff if others leave as there are general restrictions on public sector employment.

The Portuguese university sector is nevertheless confident about further improvement of their overall autonomy over the coming years.



Serbia

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The appointment of the university's executive head does not require external validation. The law specifies selection criteria as well as the term of office of the rector. The university decides on the dismissal procedure. Universities must include external members in their board/council, but they are selected and appointed by the ministry. Changes to internal academic structures require ministerial approval. Universities can create legal entities via their faculties.

Financial



Universities have no control over the internal allocation of funds, which are distributed by the government as line-item budgets. Universities cannot borrow nor keep surpluses and cannot own buildings. In a mixed model where the majority of students are enrolled in state-funded places, universities may set the level of fees for self-paying students and international students.

Staffing



Universities decide on the recruitment procedures of senior academic staff, but are currently not able to hire administrative staff as part of a national ban on recruitment of public employees in Serbia. Salary bands are set by the ministry. The near-civil servant status of senior academic staff makes dismissals strictly regulated. The law includes provisions for selection committees for the promotion of senior academic staff. For both senior academic and administrative staff, promotions are only possible if a post is available.

Academic



Universities do not control student numbers, whether enrolled in state-funded or self-paying places. Admission to Bachelor and Master programmes is co-regulated. Both institutional and programme accreditation are mandatory. Universities do not receive funding for programmes delivered in foreign languages. They can design the content of their academic programmes.

Recent developments

- Ban on recruitment of public employees in Serbia, affecting university administrative staff

Organisational autonomy

Serbian universities do not require approval from the ministry to design or amend their statutes. Executive heads are chosen through an election process whereby all faculties can propose candidates. The law specifies that the rector must be a full professor holding an academic position within the university. Candidates are considered by the senate which then proposes one or two candidates to the board/council for final decision and appointment, which does not require external validation.

The term of office is fixed (three years, renewable once). The law states that the universities are responsible for setting and carrying out the procedure for the dismissal of the executive head.

Serbian universities have a dual governance structure, including both senate- and board/council-types of bodies. The board/council is responsible for funding, buildings and relations with the government, while the senate is responsible for academic matters. Academic staff and students are represented in both bodies. Non-academic staff are represented on faculty councils but are not represented in central governing bodies.

The board/council comprises one-third of external members, who are selected and appointed by the ministry. These external members, whose competences are broadly described in the law, may include government representatives, business representatives, academics from other universities, representatives from scientific institutions and sometimes political figures.

Universities can propose organisational changes to their academic structures but require the authorisation of the government for significant modifications. Guidelines exist in the law. Universities can create legal entities via their faculties.

Financial autonomy

Serbian universities receive funding based on an annual line-item budget, a now rare feature across Europe. Universities cannot borrow money nor keep any surplus from funding received from the government as any unspent money must be returned to the ministry.

Universities do not own their buildings, which are state property, but do not pay rent for their use. The government currently maintains buildings and provides funding for infrastructure development.

As in some Eastern European countries, Serbia has a mixed model whereby students may apply for state-funded places. Each faculty has a quota for state-funded students. Students accepted beyond the quota have to pay fees. About 40% of Serbian students are enrolled in self-funded, fee-paying places¹.

¹ The proportions converge towards roughly equal shares of state-funded and fee-paying students by the end of a degree programme, as continued state funding depends on the student's progress as measured by obtained credits.

Universities may set the level of fees paid by self-funded students as well as for international students (in some cases the faculties, where they have their own legal status, may set the fees themselves).

While international student fees are not a major source of income for Serbian universities, fees paid by national students represent an important share of the universities' income structure.

Staffing autonomy

Senior academic and administrative staff of Serbian universities have a status similar to that of civil servants or public employees.

Universities can decide on recruitment procedures for senior academic staff. Only full professors are permanently employed by universities. Other academic positions are re-opened after five years.

There have been particular legal restrictions for the recruitment of senior administrative staff since 2014, which are due to be applied until the end of 2017. Serbia is reducing the staff numbers in public services, including university administrative staff. As a consequence, Serbian universities currently cannot hire administrative staff.

Salary bands exist for both senior academic and administrative staff.

Dismissals of senior academic staff are strictly regulated for professors, due to their near-civil servant status. Other academic staff can be dismissed at the end of their contract (maximum five years). There are however no specific regulations regarding dismissals of senior administrative staff.

Promotion procedures of senior academic staff require selection committees composed of five people at the same or higher level than the promotion being considered. At least one person must be from another university as an external member is required. A post at higher level must be available. This provision also applies to senior administrative staff. However, the current limitations affecting administrative staff reduce the universities' capacity to promote staff.

Academic autonomy

The overall number of students who can be enrolled in Serbian universities is decided by the national accreditation commission, on the basis of the universities' capacity and the number of staff. Each faculty is accredited for a certain number of students. The State decides on the number of state-funded places and the remainder of places are available for self-funded students.

Admission to Bachelor's programmes is co-regulated, with students being ranked according to secondary education grades and performance in the entrance examinations, organised by the faculties. At Master level, universities may decide whether to organise entrance examinations. Students may also be ranked on their performance at Bachelor level.

Both institutional accreditation and accreditation of programmes are in place in Serbian universities. All new programmes must be accredited prior to their introduction. Universities cannot decide on the agency that undertakes quality assurance, since it must be carried out by the national accreditation commission. The commission is composed of academics elected every four years. Recent changes in the law proposed to include a foreign academic in the accreditation process. Termination of programmes is an internal matter.

Serbian universities can design the content of their degree programmes autonomously.

Universities can freely choose the language of instruction but will not receive public funding for programmes taught in foreign languages.

Autonomy scorecard summary

The table below summarises the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. This is the first time that the Autonomy Scorecard is applied to Serbia, therefore the scores only refer to the situation in 2016.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

Dimension of autonomy	2016	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	51%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	46%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	58%	Medium low
Academic autonomy	46%	Medium low

University autonomy in context

The current higher education law was passed about 10 years ago; work on new legislation was ongoing at the time of writing.

Serbian universities operate with comparatively low autonomy and are heavily regulated in all four dimensions analysed here.

In terms of governance, the profile of executive heads is strictly defined by law, and universities are unable to select external members in the governing bodies in a strategic way. Non-academic staff may also not be represented in central governing bodies, a feature that has become unusual in Europe. Finally, faculties of Serbian universities are strong sub-institutional structures, sometimes as legal entities, which may for instance decide on tuition fees. Strategic management at the central level in universities is therefore constrained both from the comparatively heavy state regulation and involvement and because of internal fragmentation linked to strong faculties.

There is significant scope for progress in relation to financial autonomy, with the government strictly controlling funding allocation within universities. Line-item budgeting has long been abandoned in most parts of Europe. Serbian universities have in practice no capacity to use financial instruments or assets strategically, in addition to being severely constrained by the critical lack of funding available in the system.

Between 2008 and 2015, Serbia cut its university funding by more than a quarter². Serbia experienced a large drop in university public investment, as the 2015 budget was reduced by 14% compared to 2014. In the same period, student numbers grew by approximately 2%, although the growth was projected to flatten and even become negative in 2016.

The current ban on recruitment of administrative staff, as part of a wider measure to reduce publicly-employed staff, adds further pressure on Serbian universities and on their ability to drive any type of recruitment strategy.

Finally, multiple layers of accreditation place significant burdens on the institutions. Limitations on the development of programmes delivered in other languages than Serbian also curbs internationalisation efforts.

² EUA's Public Funding Observatory for 2016 reveals that the nominal increase of 15.72% from 2008 to 2015 was completely absorbed by the high inflation rate, which resulted in a cut of 25.5% in real terms.

Views from the sector

Serbian universities are particularly concerned with difficulties and inconsistencies in interpretation and implementation of the regulatory framework they have to operate in. Control by the Ministry of Finance over the use of funds by universities is a recurrent problem and the sector is arguing for funding allocation in the form of a block grant. Universities would like the government to comply with the legal provisions specifying that there should be an agreement between universities and the government on the annual funding allocation. Serbian universities are also advocating for the possibility to borrow, mainly for investment purposes, in the absence of available public funding. Ownership of buildings is also a bone of contention – historically, university real estate ownership was transferred to the government. High maintenance costs of historical buildings are a deterrent for universities to advocate for full ownership in a context of underfunding. Nevertheless, universities operating in recent buildings would see benefit in becoming owners.

There are also issues between the sector and the Ministry for Labour regarding the use of contracts limited to five years for academic staff other than professors. Finally, the prospect of public sector-wide salary bands for all staff are a concern to universities, as it would further restrict their ability to recruit and reward staff and negate specificities of academic work in universities. The rationale for this approach by the government relates to the wish to drive down public sector pay. The sector considers that the ban on recruitment of administrative staff affects some universities disproportionately as faculties that operated with already limited administrative staff experience additional pressure despite having achieved efficiencies.

With regard to academic matters, the sector considers that there is scope to enhance the independence of the national accreditation commission from the government. Indeed, the commission was previously funded by the fees paid by universities for accreditation services. However, currently the fees are collected by the ministry which itself supports the commission financially. The sector has been advocating to convert the commission into a fully independent agency.



Slovakia

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

There are three types of higher education institutions in Slovakia: they are either public or private, or “state higher education institutions”. The country profile focuses on the position of public universities.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The selection and dismissal of the executive heads of universities in Slovakia must be validated by an external authority. The dismissal procedure and exact length of the term of office are stated in the law. Universities propose part of the external members who compose the university board, and are consulted on the rest, but they are appointed by an external authority. Academic structures of universities are established by law. Slovak universities may freely create non-profit legal entities but face restrictions with regard to the creation of for-profit legal entities.

Financial



There is limited possibility of moving funds between block grant categories, which universities receive on an annual basis. Universities can keep surpluses without restrictions and borrow money up to a limited percentage as well as other conditions. Universities may not charge tuition fees to national and EU full-time students at any level, but may decide on the fees for international students.

Staffing



Universities are free to recruit senior academic and administrative staff. Salaries are set by an external authority for all staff. Dismissals are subject to regulations specific to the sector while promotions are an internal matter.

Academic



The overall student numbers are decided upon in consultation with universities. Universities set admission criteria at all levels. All new degree programmes must be submitted to prior accreditation before they can be introduced, and universities cannot choose the quality assurance agency. Universities can terminate study programmes independently. Universities can design the content of academic programmes and choose the language of instruction.

Recent developments

- Decreasing number of part-time fee-paying students in the system
- Adjustments to public funding allocation mechanisms
- Phasing out of civil servant status for university staff towards public sector employee status.

Organisational autonomy

Changes to university statutes must be registered by the ministry. The ministry may reject the changes only if they are in contradiction with existing laws.

The appointment of the executive heads of universities in Slovakia has to be validated by an external authority. Executive heads are elected by the university senate. The President of the Slovak Republic officially appoints the executive head as part of an official act, on the basis of the proposal of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports¹. There is no legal guidance dealing with the matter of a delay or rejection of a candidate as the Constitution and higher education law do not foresee such a possibility.

The law does not set out selection criteria for executive heads but states that only members of the academic community have the right to propose candidates. Traditionally executive heads are members of the academic staff of the respective university.

The dismissal procedure and reasons for a dismissal for an executive head are stated in law and confirmation of dismissal by an external authority is required. An executive head can be dismissed following a proposal by the university senate to the minister, who presents the decision to the President of the Slovak Republic to undertake the formal act of dismissal.

By law, an executive head may serve for four years, renewable once.

Slovak universities have dual governance structures, including senate- and board/council-types of bodies. Universities have in addition other central bodies such as scientific and artistic boards.

The senate involves university staff and students only. It must be composed of minimum 15 members, with student representatives forming at least one-third of the total. All faculties must be represented.

The board/council ('governing board') is composed exclusively of external members. There are 14 external members who are all officially appointed by an external authority on the proposal of or in consultation with the university rector and senate. External members are drawn from a variety of backgrounds; they may be representatives from civil society, business, local government and national bodies with responsibility for education, finance, economic and social issues. Individuals from the local community are usually involved. Competences sought from external members include financial and higher education experience. External members also need to have the capacity to undertake the role to ensure that the board functions effectively.

¹ Or on the basis of the proposal of the relevant ministry in the case of state universities.

Universities organised in faculties have their academic structures established in the law. Faculties are established, merged, divided or abolished by the executive head with the consent of the university senate after a statement by the Accreditation Committee².

Slovak universities are authorised to create both non-profit and for-profit legal entities, although in the latter case legal restrictions apply.

Financial autonomy

Slovak universities receive funding through a block grant on an annual basis. The block grant is split into broad categories and there is limited possibility of moving funds between these categories.

Any surplus generated can be kept without restrictions. Slovak universities can borrow up to a limited percentage, stated in law, and related to their income in previous years. Slovak universities own their buildings and can sell their buildings without restrictions.

Slovak public universities may not charge tuition fees to national and EU full-time students at any level. Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees for international, non-EU students at all levels. Administrative fees are paid by every student. The exact fee is decided by each university within a framework defined by law³.

Full-time students who study longer than the standard length of study pay tuition fees for each additional year of study, except for cases foreseen in the law. Full-time students also pay tuition fees for programmes conducted in a foreign language if a similar study programme is available in Slovakian.

In 2016, part-time students represented around 15% of the total student population in public higher education institutions. Universities can charge fees to part-time students and set their level under a ceiling set by the State. There are typically more part-time programmes in healthcare, humanities, law and social sciences. The number of part-time students is decreasing as overall student numbers decline. There is greater capacity in the system for full-time students.

By law, at least 20% of the total amount of tuition fee income must be allocated to the scholarship fund of the university. The rest of the income from fees can be used only in support of the main missions of the institution.

² Only some of the smaller Slovak universities do not have faculty-based structures. The merger, establishment or abolition of a public university must be approved by the Parliament through law.

³ Administrative fees were set beneath 100 Euros per academic year in 2015/2016. Universities can charge fees under a set ceiling to full-time students exceeding the regular duration of study.

Staffing autonomy

Staff at public universities in Slovakia are part of the public sector and considered to be public sector employees in certain aspects of their terms and conditions, such as salaries, but do not have civil servant status. The staff who work at the state universities, which are smaller and more specialist institutions focusing on the military, police and medical fields, have full civil servant status.

Recruitment of senior academic and administrative staff is carried out freely by universities. Faculty deans have the right to conclude, change and abolish labour contracts within the limits of available financial sources and approved labour structure of the faculty, as described in the university's statutes.

Salaries are set by an external authority for all staff. Salaries are set by the law applying to public employees in education and healthcare. The law sets out a table of salaries according to staff grade, qualifications etc. Universities can decide if they wish to augment this basic salary through additional benefits using criteria such as performance or additional responsibilities. The government and trade unions negotiate salary increases.

Dismissals follow national labour regulations as well as the higher education law and public service law. Universities can decide on promotions for senior academic and administrative staff freely.

Academic autonomy

Overall student numbers are fixed in agreement between universities and public authorities, as far as the ministry may decide to limit the year-on-year increase in the number of full-time students (but by no less than 5%). Each university's statutes set out the framework for enrolment including the total number of enrolled students (both full-time and part-time). The university sets out the number of enrolled students in its study programmes on the basis of proposals by deans of faculties which are then approved by the university senate. The numbers set out by the university must take into consideration the institutional long-term strategy, development programmes and personnel and material resources.

Universities may set admissions criteria at Bachelor and Master levels.

All new degree programmes, at all levels, must be submitted to a prior accreditation before they can be introduced. Universities can terminate study programmes independently, but must ensure that students are given the possibility to continue to study in a similar programme within the institution.

Programme accreditation is mandatory and carried out by the national accreditation commission. In addition to programme accreditation there is an institutional accreditation cycle (“comprehensive accreditation”) every six years for every higher education institution. During the comprehensive accreditation, study programmes, academic habilitation procedures and the internal quality assurance processes of universities are assessed.

If a university has failed to fulfil the criteria to be a university it may be re-designated as a higher education institution or a professional higher education institution. Universities have one year to improve if they are found to be failing. If the national accreditation commission considers that no significant improvement has been made, it can propose a change to the status of the institution. If this concerns a public institution, the procedure requires a change in the law.

Universities can design the content of degree programmes and are free to choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	42% ¹	42%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	70%	70%	Medium high
Staffing autonomy	61% ²	61%	Medium high
Academic autonomy	56%	56%	Medium low

University autonomy in context

There have been no major changes to the Slovak higher education system since 2010.

Slovakia is categorised as a “declining system under pressure” in EUA’s 2016 Public Funding Observatory. Public funding to universities has been shrinking since 2011 (with an overall

1 This score was adapted from 45% to 42% as the procedure to dismiss the executive head was stated in law and universities were authorised to create for-profit legal entities, albeit with restrictions.

2 This score was adapted from 54% to 61% as appointment of senior academic staff did not require confirmation by an external authority, and dismissals are subject to sector-specific regulations.

decrease of over 7% in the period 2008-2015). Slovakia demonstrated a small increase in public funding both in real terms in 2015, thus overriding the negative trend of the two preceding years. The country started to experience a loss of students in 2013-2014, but funding has been decreasing faster than the student numbers in 2008-2015.

Views from the sector

The Slovak Rectors' Conference is in favour of a reform of the existing higher education law, combined with the development of a longer-term strategy for higher education in Slovakia. The sector considers it a priority to develop a new law with greater scope for institutional autonomy. Until now the ministry has worked on the basis of an amendment approach, with multiple modifications brought to the existing law. This has increased the complexity of the framework regulation, causing recurrent issues for universities.

The sector advocates for the development of a long-term strategy for higher education with more stable financing for higher education and research. The system particularly suffers from a lack of financial support for research and lack of support for the development of university infrastructure as the State budget does not adequately cover the maintenance costs of universities.

There have been some changes to the funding model methodology for Slovak universities and these changes are of concern to the sector. The ministry has to present the proposed funding methodology changes to relevant higher education representative bodies every year – the Rectors' Conference, the Student Higher Education Council and the Higher Education Council. In 2015 the proposed changes were rejected by the student representatives and the Higher Education Council. The Slovak Rectors' Conference did not reject the proposals but did express concern about the changes to the methodology and the amount allocated to public higher education institutions. Currently the funding methodology is linked to the budget and funding proposals but the Slovak Rectors' Conference would like to separate discussions about the actual funding methodology from the discussions about the amount of funding allocated to public higher education institutions.

With regard to the funding methodology, in 2016 the Slovak Rectors' Conference submitted a series of amendments concerning, in particular, publications, outcomes of comprehensive accreditation, and data verification. The sector also pleaded to increased funding for salaries and generally argues for a 60 million Euros annual increase of the overall public funding for higher education institutions, outside of EU structural funds or social scholarships.

The current restrictions on salaries are a barrier to greater staffing autonomy. University leaders would like to be able to pay higher salaries and would like qualifications to be reflected in the salary grid for health and education employees. This could be achieved by changes to the grid or by allowing the higher education sector to have its own salary grid. The government has rejected the proposal that higher education should have its own salary grid as it would apply to a large number of staff and would be likely to increase the costs to the State.



Slovenia

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The appointment and dismissal of the university executive head do not require external validation. Universities can decide on selection criteria and term of office. Universities must include external members on their boards but can select only some of them. Universities cannot freely decide on academic structures and cannot create for-profit legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive public funding via annual block grants for teaching activities and may reallocate funds internally across categories. While they may keep surpluses generated from public funding without restrictions, borrowing money and selling real estate require government approval. Universities may not charge fees to national and EU students at Bachelor and Master levels. The level of fees is set in cooperation with the State for international students at all levels and for all students at doctoral level.

Staffing



Universities may only hire staff within the limits set by a government-approved annual Human Resources plan. University staff have civil servant status; their salaries are set externally and dismissals are regulated in accordance with civil service rules. There are restrictions on promotions for senior administrative staff.

Academic



Overall student numbers are negotiated with the government and student selection is centrally regulated at Bachelor and Master levels. New programmes must be accredited by the national agency. There are regulations regarding the language of instruction and a programme must be available in Slovenian before a university is able to deliver it in another language.

Recent developments

- Promotions for senior administrative staff restricted since economic crisis

Organisational autonomy

The appointment and dismissal of the university executive head do not require validation from an external authority. The law refers to the selection in terms of election rights, but there are no regulations on the recruitment and election process, which are matters specified in university statutes. The election process is broadly the same at all public universities in Slovenia. Faculties select candidates who take part in the election, in which all academic and administrative staff and students can vote. In practice candidate rectors should always be working at the university and hold the position of full professor.

There are procedures outlined in law for the dismissal of a rector, but there is no ministerial involvement in the process.

Universities decide in their statutes on the rector's term of office, which is typically four years.

Slovenian universities have dual governance structures, including both senate- and board/council-types of bodies. The board/council is responsible for financial and organisational issues while the senate is responsible for academic issues including promotions and teaching.

Universities cannot decide on the size nor the composition of their boards. The board includes representatives from academic and administrative staff as well as students. External members from business and industry are proposed by their representative bodies (such as chambers of commerce) and selected by the university. Members from national bodies are selected by the ministry, who appoints all external members, including those coming from business and industry. The university representatives comprise the majority of the board – five members – and external members comprise four members.

The senate typically comprises academic staff and student representatives.

The law recognises faculties and academies of art as higher education institutions and 'members' of universities, which therefore have limited capacity to decide on academic structures. Slovenian public universities are only allowed to create non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Slovenian universities receive funding through an annual block grant aimed at teaching activities only (except at doctoral level, which is not covered). There are limited possibilities to move money between different parts of the budget, with strict rules regarding funds covering salaries. The internal funding allocation mechanism between faculties is proposed by the university board.

Surplus generated on public funding may be kept without restrictions; surplus that derives from work with companies and fees of part-time students must be spent for the investment and development of universities.

Universities can borrow money with the approval of both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance.

Universities can own buildings, and may sell their buildings with the approval of the ministry. Universities may not charge fees to Slovenian and EU students studying for Bachelor's or Master's programmes on a full-time basis. Some programmes have a limited number of places so additional places are offered on a part-time, fee-paying basis. Universities charge fees to all students at doctoral level as well as to international non-EU students at all levels. All doctoral students pay fees (partly subsidised by the State). International, non-EU students can be charged fees at all levels. The level of these fees charged is set in cooperation with the ministry.

Staffing autonomy

All staff in Slovenian public universities have civil servant status.

Universities must obtain the approval of the ministry on an annual Human Resources plan, which includes the number of proposed recruitments for the following year. The approved plan sets the limits for the recruitments. The individual recruitment process for senior academic staff is set by universities.

At the University of Ljubljana, a selection committee with one member external to the faculty and one member external to the university, reports to the dean of the faculty. The rector decides on the proposal for appointment. In the case of senior administrative staff, the recruitment process is the responsibility of faculties, with deans making the decision.

Staff salaries are set externally and apply to civil servants across all public sectors. There are nevertheless special provisions for university academic staff, which allows for additional income on the basis of extra teaching, research/project work. There are restrictions on the promotion of senior administrative staff as their status is linked to the national salary system which also includes promotion criteria. The system provides for the possibility of promotion on the basis of seniority and performance appraisal.

Dismissals are regulated in accordance with civil service rules.

Academic autonomy

Overall student numbers are agreed as a result of a negotiation between the universities and the ministry, and are subsequently approved by the Slovenian government. Each university makes a proposal to the Ministry of Education on the basis of the student numbers submitted by the faculties.

Student admission at Bachelor level is regulated by an external authority. Grades from a national examination and the last two years of secondary education are used for a central selection procedure. Entry examinations may be used for the academies of arts. Universities may set additional criteria for specific programmes. At Master level universities have a greater role in student selection.

The introduction of new programmes requires prior accreditation, which can only be undertaken by the national agency. There have nevertheless been discussions around granting the possibility for universities to seek accreditation with foreign agencies. Universities may select other agencies for additional quality assurance activities. In 2016 a proposal for a law implementing a shift from programme to institutional accreditation was accepted. The termination of programmes can be done by universities independently.

Universities can freely design the content of degree programmes.

Restrictions apply as regards the capacity to choose the language of instruction; programmes offered in another language must be matched by the same programme delivered in Slovenian.

Autonomy scorecard summary

The table below summarises the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. This is the first time that the Autonomy Scorecard is applied to Slovenia, therefore the scores only refer to the situation in 2016.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Dimension of autonomy	2016	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	65%	Medium high
Financial autonomy	57%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	44%	Medium low
Academic autonomy	44%	Medium low

University autonomy in context

While government intervention in university governance and organisational matters can be considered limited, Slovenian universities have limited scope for strategic central management due to the historically high organisational autonomy of faculties. This is, in particular, the case for the University of Ljubljana, which is the oldest and by far the largest university in Slovenia. The otherwise 'medium high' degree of organisational autonomy of Slovenian universities must be considered in this particular context.

Legislation was amended in 2016, leading to a shift in the external accreditation from a programme basis to an institutional basis. When implemented, the new regulation will include the possibility of accreditation by non-national agencies as a substitute to the accreditation by the national agency.

Upcoming legislation for 2017 is introducing a two-tier funding system in Slovenia consisting of core funding with fixed and variable parts (maximum 25%), provided on a four-year basis. The variable part is based on selected indicators, including study fields, student enrolment, number of graduates, scientific output, income generated from other parties, etc. This will be complemented by "development" financing (3% of all funds).

EUA's Public Funding Observatory reveals that Slovenia has long-term negative growth of public funding to universities from 2008 to 2014, however at a slower pace than the decline in student numbers. Public funding decreased by about 8% in real terms, whereas the student body diminished by nearly 16%, twice as fast as funding.

Views from the sector

The last major higher education and higher education financing reforms in 2010 are generally viewed positively by the sector. The further proposed legislative changes are expected to lead to further improvements.

The financial position for universities is perceived to have improved in recent years, when taking the decline in student number into consideration. However, salary levels are low and this causes difficulties for universities in trying to attract staff. There is also a need to further develop internationalisation strategies, and a key element of this is the need for financial support for doctoral students as there is currently limited funding available for doctoral studies (aside from EU funds).

There are concerns with government intervention in internal university matters. An excessive number of public authorities, including the Court of Auditors, the Administration Inspection, the Budget Inspection and the administration of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport maintain some degree of involvement in the organisational, staffing and financial matters of universities. This tends to cause inconsistency in the use of legislative and regulatory provisions, creating further difficulties for universities.

Universities would welcome more ambitious plans from government following the period of financial austerity. Universities advocate for more investment in knowledge, knowledge transfer activities, research for the future and better links to business and industry. It is considered that in this light it would be beneficial for universities to be able to create legal entities and to borrow money freely in order to make strategic investments.



Spain

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

As Spain has a federal system of government it should be noted that on university matters the situation may differ considerably between Spain's autonomous communities, particularly in relation to financial matters. The evaluation on autonomy is nevertheless for Spain as a whole.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The election of the executive head must be validated by an external authority and their selection criteria are stated in the law. The dismissal of the executive head must follow a procedure stated in the law and must be confirmed by an external authority. The main governing body, a board/council-type body, includes a small minority of external members. Universities can decide on their academic structures and can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial



Universities receive funding on an annual block grant basis with no restrictions on the allocation of funding. They can keep surpluses and own buildings. They can borrow money with the approval of an external authority. Tuition fees for all students at all levels are set by the regional governments within limits established at the federal level.

Staffing



Universities can only recruit senior staff among candidates already accredited by an external authority following a procedure stated in law. Salaries for all senior academic staff and a majority of senior administrative staff are set externally in line with civil servant status. Dismissals are strictly regulated due to the civil servant status of senior academic staff and most senior administrative staff. Universities can decide on promotions but must follow a procedure stated in law.

Academic



Universities negotiate overall student numbers with public authorities. Admission to Bachelor programmes is co-regulated, while at Master level universities can set admission criteria. All new degree programmes at Bachelor and Master levels must be submitted for prior accreditation to be funded, and doctoral programmes can only be introduced after accreditation. Universities are not able to choose either quality assurance mechanisms or providers.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

- Public deficit reduction measures since 2011 have affected universities, for example some universities experiencing greater difficulties in accessing borrowing

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

University statutes must be approved by the relevant regional government and the regional social council.

The election of the executive head must be formally validated by the regional government. The selection criteria are stated in law: candidates must hold an academic position and come from within the same university. The term of office is not stated in the law but executive heads generally serve four-year terms. The rector is dismissed by the university senate based on a procedure specified in the law, with the regional government formally validating the dismissal.

Universities in Spain have governance structures including different bodies. The law prescribes that universities have a board/council-type body ('governing council'), a senate-type body ('university assembly') and a third body known as 'social council'.

The governing council is the main governing body of universities. It sets out the strategic and programmatic lines for teaching, research, human and financial resources, as well as the guidelines and procedures for their application. It is composed of a maximum of 50 members, including the university leadership, senior academic and administrative staff drawn from across different parts of the university and up to three members of the social council. Academic staff form a majority. The board/council includes a small minority of external members, who are appointed by an external authority.

The senate guides the development of the statutes, the election of the executive head, and other functions assigned by law. It includes the executive head and senior academic and administrative staff as members and has a maximum of 300 members drawn from different parts of the university. As in the board/council, academic staff form a majority in the senate.

The social council is a third body that supervises the economic activities of universities and the performance of its services. It is responsible for approving the budget and the longer term financial plans of universities. It also approves an annual action plan to promote relations between the university and its professional, economic, social, and cultural environment. The composition is regulated by regional law and its members are appointed from the cultural, professional, economic, union and social sectors. The regional government appoints the president according to the law.

Universities in Spain can decide on their academic structures and can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities in Spain receive funding on an annual block grant basis with no restrictions on the allocation of funding. Universities can keep any surplus without restrictions, although surpluses have not been generated in recent years. Universities can own their own buildings and sell them without restrictions.

The process for universities to borrow money varies by region across Spain but it generally requires the approval of an external authority such as the regional government.

The level of tuition fees for all students at all degree levels is set by public authorities: the regional government is responsible to set the fees, within limits established at federal level.

Staffing autonomy

Procedures for the recruitment of senior academic and administrative staff by universities are set in the law. A committee whose membership comes from different universities is responsible for the recruitment. Only candidates who are already accredited by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation may be considered.

All senior academic staff, and a majority of senior administrative staff, have civil servant status. Consequently, salaries are set by external authorities (central government and regional government) for all senior academic staff and for some administrative staff, and dismissals are strictly regulated. For some senior administrative staff, such as the general manager, the universities are free to set part of the salaries. Universities can decide upon promotions but must follow a procedure stated in law, which also specifies the membership of the selection committee.

Academic autonomy

Universities in Spain negotiate with an external authority to decide on overall student numbers. At Bachelor level admission is co-regulated by the universities and the external authority, while at Master level admission criteria are set by universities.

All new degree programmes at Bachelor and Master levels must be submitted for prior accreditation to be funded. Requirements at doctoral level are more stringent as all new programmes must be submitted for prior accreditation before introduction. The approval of the regional government is necessary to introduce any degree programme. Universities can terminate programmes independently.

Universities in Spain are not able to choose either quality assurance mechanisms or providers, as programme accreditation is in place and evaluation is carried out by the national agency.

Universities can design the content of their degree programmes without constraints.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	55%	55%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	55%	55%	Medium low
Staffing autonomy	48% ¹	48%	Medium low
Academic autonomy	57%	57%	Medium low

There have not been any significant changes to the Spanish university system that have required an adjustment in the scoring since 2010.

University autonomy in context

As reported in EUA’s Public Funding Observatory, the long-term funding trend for universities in Spain remained negative from 2008 to 2015. However, the country managed to reduce the funding gap and is projected to reach the pre-crisis level of funding within a few years if the current levels of funding growth are maintained.

Student numbers remained stable over the same period and are projected to decline in the near future, while staff numbers have already decreased.

The current lack of funding in the sector means that the already relatively low autonomy that Spanish universities have is in effect further curtailed.

¹ Adaptations which combined impact on scoring is neutral when applied.

The sector was directly concerned by the 2011 decree whereby public organisations were required to reduce their deficits. Universities fall within the scope of this legislation and some universities experienced greater difficulties in borrowing money. There have been regional differences in the impact of financial pressures on public finances.

Views from the sector

There are some specific challenges faced by Spanish universities and it is considered that Spanish universities require reforms in certain areas, especially in relation to human resources. However, due to the financial crisis, it is currently impossible to initiate any significant reform process as financial concerns dominate the agenda. The differences in access to borrowing by universities depending on the region they operate in is problematic, as cash-strapped universities may be limited in their ability to secure funding from other sources because of the wider public finance restrictions in place.

Staffing reforms are needed to support international staff recruitment, but there is no funding for reforms or to increase research funding to attract high quality researchers. The civil servant status of academic staff is another challenge in attracting and employing international academic staff. The law needs to change to give more autonomy to universities in human resources.



Sweden

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

All institutions including universities that are government authorities follow applicable general rules and universities are also subject to the Higher Education Ordinance and Act. Similar rules are included in the statutes for universities with foundation status but the Higher Education Ordinance and Act does not apply to these institutions. Six Swedish universities have foundation status, which gives more autonomy to these institutions.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



The appointment and dismissal of the university executive head must be validated by an external authority. Selection criteria and the minimum term of office are stated in the law. Universities include external members in their governing bodies, and propose them for appointment by an external authority through a nominations committee. Universities can decide on internal academic structures. There are restrictions on the establishment of legal entities.

Financial



There is limited possibility to move funds between different activity categories of the block grant funding received by Swedish universities. Surpluses must be used within the same activity category for which the funding was allocated. Swedish universities that do not have foundation status may borrow money through a specific government-backed bank and cannot own buildings. Universities may not charge tuition fees for national and EU students at any level and for non-EU students at doctoral level. They may charge fees for non-EU students at Bachelor and Master levels.

Staffing



Universities can essentially decide on recruitment, salaries, promotions and dismissals. Minimum requirements for the recruitment process of academic staff are outlined in law.

Academic



Universities decide on overall student numbers. Admission criteria at Bachelor and Master levels are co-regulated. Universities may introduce new programmes without prior accreditation but cannot select either external quality assurance mechanisms or providers. Swedish universities can design the content of their degree programmes and may decide on the language of instruction.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Change in appointment process for external members of governing bodies in 2012, with a two-person nomination committee providing suggestions to the government for final appointment; as of 2017 the university appoints one of two members
- Full capacity of universities to organise their academic structures from 2011
- Partial lifting of restrictions on universities establishing legal entities
- Introduction of tuition fees for non-EU students in 2011
- Increasing demand for student places
- New quality assurance system legislation introduced in March 2016
- Greater flexibility for universities in academic staff recruitment process

Organisational autonomy

In the case of universities that do not have foundation status, the appointment of the executive head must be validated by an external authority. Selection criteria are stated in the law: candidates must hold a doctoral degree. The term of office is minimum six years, and can be extended twice by three years. The law also requires that the ministry confirms the dismissal of the executive head, although the procedure itself is an internal university matter.

Swedish universities have unitary governance structures. The main decision-making body has the characteristics of a board/council, but some of the historically established universities also have a senate-type body in addition, for which there is no provision in law. By law, the board¹ has 15 members, including the executive head. There are six internal representatives, half of them drawn from the academic staff and half from the student body. Non-academic staff are not represented. The board must include eight external members, whose appointment is controlled by an external authority (although there exists a process of consultation with the university). External members include alumni, academics from other institutions, individuals from arts/cultural bodies, business and industry representatives and representatives from both national and local public authorities. Union representatives may also attend board meetings, without voting rights.

The process for appointing external members to university governing bodies in Sweden² recently changed. The decision to revise the process was made in 2012 and it was first used for boards with a mandate starting in 2013. The new system implemented operates with a nominations committee that proposes external members for governing bodies for appointment by the government. The composition of the nominations committee in turn evolved; it comprises one person appointed by the government and, since 2017, one person appointed by the university (instead of a student representative as was the case between 2013 and 2016). The nominations committee must seek the advice of the university before submitting its suggestions to the government.

There has been a change in the ability of universities to organise their academic structures since 2010. The law no longer prescribes that universities have faculty boards. This change was applied to all higher education institutions from 2011 onwards. This change in the regulations has enabled universities to completely re-arrange their internal organisation and decision-making structures.

Universities must apply to the government to be able to join the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and to establish legal entities. The government has to seek approval from the Parliament. Only universities with foundation status may establish legal entities without requiring government approval.

1, 2 In the case of universities that do not have foundation status.

Financial autonomy

Public funding to Swedish universities is allocated via an annual block grant split into broad activity categories (teaching and research). Universities have limited possibility of moving funds between categories.

Swedish universities can keep surplus from public funding but can only use it within the category of the block grant for which the funding was received. Public universities must use a government bank to borrow money, which is usually done by institutions for infrastructure development.

Most universities in Sweden cannot own buildings. Only universities with foundation status can own buildings.

Universities may not charge fees to national and EU students at any degree level. Since 2011, universities are free to set the level of tuition fees to international, non-EU students at Bachelor and Master levels. No fees may be charged at doctoral level to any students. A major impact of this change has been a very significant decline in the number of non-EU students at Swedish universities³.

Staffing autonomy

Universities control recruitment procedures for senior academic staff, with, however, regulations including minimum requirements for universities that do not have foundation status. Changes in related regulations in 2010 have given greater freedom to universities in this area, with the removal of a series of detailed provisions regarding academic positions. A particular feature of the new system is the 'nomination route'. It allows universities to use a faster, simplified recruitment process for highly rated academics. This has been used to bring in international academics to Swedish universities.

Senior administrative staff can be recruited freely by universities. Salaries for both senior academic and administrative staff can be decided upon freely by universities. There are no sector-specific regulations concerning the dismissal of academic or administrative staff, national labour regulations apply. Promotion procedures for academic and administrative staff can be decided upon freely by universities.

³ In the first year of full fees, international student numbers dropped by 90%.

Academic autonomy

Universities decide on overall student numbers, with limited exceptions for specific fields such as medicine. Admissions criteria at Bachelor and Master levels are co-regulated by universities and an external authority. While admission requirements are set by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, universities have the possibility to set limited additional selection criteria.

Universities can open most programmes without prior accreditation at all levels, with the exception of some programmes leading to specific professions which do require prior accreditation. Legislation outlining a new quality assurance system was passed by the Swedish Parliament in March 2016 with pilot experimentation of institutional accreditation by the national agency responsible for quality assurance in 2016/2017, maintaining, however, the obligation for universities to seek approval from the quality assurance agency before introducing specific programmes as described above. Universities can terminate programmes independently.

Swedish universities can design the content of their degree programmes but learning outcomes are stipulated in law. For every degree, the qualification ordinance states the required learning outcomes.

Universities can choose the language of instruction for programmes at Bachelor and Master levels but information on programmes and programme content must be provided in Swedish. Most Master's programmes in Sweden are now offered in English and some Bachelor's programmes are also offered in English.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field. The score reflects the situation of universities in Sweden that do not have foundation status.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. "High" reflects scores between 100% and 81%; "medium high" applies to scores between 80% and 61%; "medium low" for scores between 60% and 41%; and "low" for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	55%	61%	From medium low to medium high	Lifting of restrictions on the capacity to decide on internal academic structures.
Financial autonomy	56% ¹	56%	Medium low	
Staffing autonomy	95%	97%	Remains in high	Introduction of 'nomination route' for senior academic staff.
Academic autonomy	66%	66%	Medium high	

University autonomy in context

There have been a number of developments in the Swedish higher education sector⁴ since 2010. Changes in the appointment process of external members of governing boards have seen the universities' involvement decrease and increase again with new developments for 2017. In parallel, universities received full freedom to decide on their academic structures and reduced restrictions around the creation of legal entities.

New procedures for academic staff recruitment processes has increased the autonomy of Swedish universities in staffing, although Swedish universities already enjoyed considerable autonomy in this area.

Other developments include the introduction of tuition fees for international students.

Public funding to universities has been growing faster than the student numbers in Sweden. Although the country has recently experienced some slowdown in funding, the overall funding trend remains positive, with a real-terms increase exceeding 20% from 2008 to 2015. The level of investment is particularly significant in Sweden where the student body has grown by 3% over the same period. This comparatively positive position provides important context to the relatively limited financial autonomy of Swedish universities.

¹ A change made in relation to restrictions applying to keeping surpluses had a neutral impact on the score. The 2010 score already considered the introduction of tuition fees to international students at Bachelor and Master levels.

⁴ For universities without foundation status.

Views from the sector

The sector considers that the status of universities as government authorities is very restrictive in some areas. Universities have been working on proposals to amend regulations and take the sector away from government authority in some areas.

Some of the elements to achieve greater autonomy discussed among Swedish universities are:

- The full responsibility of universities for quality assurance (now being implemented for education, suggested for research);
- the freedom to build up and use capital;
- the freedom to use direct funding for education and research (not through separate streams);
- more basic funding and less dependence on project funding;
- the freedom to sign some types of agreements (for example in international cooperation);
- the possibility to accept donations of/to develop buildings and to own these buildings;
- the freedom to establish campuses internationally; and
- the freedom to establish companies (beyond holding companies).

Swedish universities are taking a proactive approach to seek these changes through dialogue with the government.

Organisation and governance

In 2013 the government made proposals to extend foundation status to more universities, but without guaranteeing capital funding to the proposed universities. The move was therefore rejected by the sector. Chalmers University of Technology and Jönköping, both private non-profit corporations run by their respective foundations, received government capital in the 1990s when their statutes were adopted.

The current government implemented further changes to the process for the appointment of external members to governing bodies for the next appointment cycle/period. Concerns had been raised about the role of the county governor in the appointment of external members and also concerns about the role of students in the nominations committee (students being already represented on the boards). The new model consists of a two-person nominations committee appointed by the government (one person designated by the government and one person designated by the university) with no student involvement. The new appointment process including the revised nominations committees began in 2017.

The greater freedom for Swedish 'governmental' universities⁵ to organise their academic structures is a move towards greater university autonomy, as although guidelines remain they are at a very basic level so universities now have considerable freedom to design their structures as they consider most appropriate and effective. In relation to the establishment of legal entities it is still a complicated process for public universities to work in this area and public universities are lobbying the government for a change in this area.

5 Universities that do not have foundation status.

Finances

Universities would like greater freedom to use their resources strategically. It is particularly difficult to fund university links to business and industry when resources are limited to expenditure on teaching and research. Swedish universities argue for a single block grant that could be used to resource all activities, accompanied by appropriate reporting mechanisms.

Significant financial resources are currently available within Swedish universities, which means that universities are a possible target for funding clawback by the government. Universities argue for a more efficient use of resources by allowing institutions to invest strategically.

After a very significant decline in international student numbers, which followed the introduction of tuition fees, international student numbers are gradually increasing again. Swedish universities and the government collaborated to develop more focused approaches to recruitment and marketing, including expanded scholarships and grant programmes. Funding scholarships remains difficult as 'ordinary' university funds may not be used for this purpose. The recruitment of international students remains challenging as the cost of education and the cost of living in Sweden is high.

Property ownership remains problematic for 'governmental' universities. A government-owned company owns and manages about 60% of university real estate, which makes up for considerable financial assets.

Academic matters

There is considerable pressure on student places at Swedish universities. While the total number of students in the system has decreased since 2010, the demand for places is increasing. In addition, many universities had to cut student places when fees for non-EU students were introduced as the government reduced funding that had previously supported those students. The government wants to create more places in the sector, beyond the additional places allocated to certain professional areas such as teaching, nursing and engineering. More places are needed in general and particularly to try and widen participation in higher education. One notable dimension is the need to involve the significant number of young refugees now in Sweden in higher education.

The new quality assurance system that came into force in 2016 is operating a shift from programme accreditation/evaluation towards institutional accreditation. The new system will be monitored and a review should be conducted after three years. There are potential problems with the new approach as the government still intends to undertake programme evaluations of certain programmes such as teacher education. This could lead to implementing a dual system in some areas. Overall it is expected that there should be less bureaucracy and universities are engaged in positive dialogue with the quality assurance agency to develop and implement the new approach.



Switzerland

How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

The Swiss university sector is composed of ten universities, each regulated by and operating in one given Swiss canton, and two federal institutes of technology (in Zurich and Lausanne), which have specific statuses. The large majority of Swiss students are registered with the cantonal universities. Higher education in Switzerland also includes universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education. In 2011, a federal law was passed in relation to the funding and the coordination of the Swiss higher education sector. As a result, university associations were re-organised at a federal level, and political coordination was enhanced through the creation of an arena bringing together both the cantonal ministers and the federal minister responsible for higher education.

In Switzerland regulations governing the activities of universities stem from both the cantonal and the federal level, with the cantons as the primary organising authority and public funder. The federal institutes of technology are regulated at and financed by the federal level. Since each of the cantonal universities operates in a different canton, each of the ten institutions operates within a specific legal framework, making the overall picture highly diverse and challenging to cover at an aggregated level. Practices differ from one canton to the other. In addition, there is an ongoing broader 'modernisation' process whereby cantons review the legislation applying to higher education institutions, making the picture not only a complex, but also a developing one.

This profile focuses primarily on cantonal universities. Despite their diversity it is possible to outline frequent or common features, which have not significantly evolved since 2010.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



Despite variety in the system, the decision on the selection process of the executive head always has to be validated by an external authority and their term of office is set by law. Universities are usually able to decide on selection criteria and dismissal procedure. University boards/councils include only external members, whose appointment is confirmed by an external authority. Universities may decide on internal academic structures and may create non-for-profit legal entities.

Financial



Universities generally receive funding via annual block grants from the cantonal authorities without restrictions on internal allocation. Other financial restrictions vary significantly depending on the canton; close cooperation with the cantonal authorities is necessary to allocate any surplus or regarding real estate ownership. Borrowing is not directly accessible to universities. Universities and an external authority cooperate to set the level of tuition fees for all cycles.

Staffing



Universities are able, broadly, to recruit senior academic and administrative staff, decide on their salaries and promote them autonomously, although there again cantonal specificities apply. While civil servant status has been essentially phased out, senior academic staff categories remain covered by particular regulations for dismissals.

Academic



Universities do not have the capacity to decide on overall student numbers nor to select students. However, they can introduce programmes without prior accreditation, choose the language of instruction and are free to select the quality assurance providers performing new mandatory institutional accreditation.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and recent developments

The Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector was passed in 2011 and implemented from 2015 onwards, including:

- a new institutional accreditation system;
- financial provisions incentivising cooperation in the sector;
- restructuring of the higher education sector governance.

Dimensions of university autonomy in 2016

Organisational autonomy

Despite the diversity that exists in Swiss higher education, it is possible to outline frequent or common organisational features, which have not significantly evolved since 2010. While the procedures to select the executive head of the university vary, the final decision on the appointment of the rector requires validation by the relevant external authority. Depending on the canton, the law may include more or less detailed provisions on the selection procedure itself. The law will also determine the term of office of the rector (ranging from 2 to 6 years, renewable). However, selection criteria as well as terms of dismissal tend to remain a competence of the university.

There are considerable differences between universities across Switzerland as to the size and composition of their governing bodies. The cantonal law usually specifies the bodies and the number of members, or a maximum/minimum size. Universities usually have a senate- and board/council-types of bodies. The senate is in most cases a consultative body, composed of both academic and administrative staff as well as students. The board is the main executive organ and is always composed of external members, the selection of whom depends on varying rules. The final decision concerning membership of the board is taken by an external authority.

Some Swiss universities have a third, consultative body including members from local business and politics.

The cantonal universities are essentially free to decide on their academic structures, although in practice they consult with the canton. They can also create for-profit (albeit indirectly) non-for-profit legal entities (directly).

Financial autonomy

Swiss universities typically receive public funding via an annual block grant with generally no restrictions on internal allocation. Universities may keep surpluses on public funding though in practice the institution would discuss with the cantonal authorities the allocation of such surpluses. Borrowing by universities remains prohibited – however, the canton itself may contract a loan, for instance, to finance university infrastructure and report the interests onto the budget of the institution. Cantonal specificities apply.

Buildings are often owned by cantons. It may, however, be possible for a university to own buildings for historical reasons or to buy a building back from the canton. Universities that do own their buildings generally need external approval to sell them.

Universities and the external authorities continue to cooperate to set tuition fees. In some cantons the university proposes changes to the level of the fees for validation by the cantonal authority. Universities discuss fee levels together. Tuition fees cover only a small part of the cost of a programme. Universities and cantonal authorities also cooperate to set the level of tuition fees for foreign students, with more options for universities to develop differentiated fee policies.

Staffing autonomy

There have been no major structural changes in relation to staffing matters since 2010. Universities are largely free to recruit their senior academic and administrative staff, set salaries and decide on promotions. Civil servant status for university staff has been essentially phased out in most cantons. General labour laws apply in cases of staff dismissal for most staff but there are specific regulations on dismissal that apply to senior staff categories such as professors, whose contracts and conditions are akin to public sector employees. Although this may not be a legal requirement, in practice the university agrees with the canton on salary bands.

Academic autonomy

Entry to Swiss universities continues to be based on free admission. A numerus clausus applies to specific programmes, notably in the field of medicine and health. Restrictions on specific study programmes are decided by cantonal authorities and not by universities. However, this position does vary across Switzerland.

Admission criteria are regulated by public authorities and therefore universities cannot select students either at Bachelor or at Master levels.

Universities continue to be able to introduce and terminate programmes autonomously; although programme accreditation is possible, it remains voluntary. There is a four-year federal plan giving certain priority subjects to universities and universities receive additional dedicated funding to address these priorities.

A new system of mandatory institutional accreditation was set up as part of the law on the funding and coordination of the Swiss higher education sector, passed in 2011 and implemented in 2015. There has not yet been a complete procedure of institutional accreditation and the higher education institutions have to be accredited until 2023. The accreditation is valid for seven years.

Under the new accreditation system, universities must be accredited to receive federal funding. The new Accreditation Council is composed of 15-20 members from within Switzerland and from other countries. This Council examines university processes and takes decisions on accreditation. It will apply restrictions if the quality control system of universities is not considered satisfactory. Universities continue to be able to choose agencies, as long as they are recognised by the Accreditation Council.

Universities freely design the content of their degree programmes.

Universities may offer programmes in the language of their choice, with students having the right to sit exams in a national language.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field. Given the specificity of the Swiss framework, whereby each university is individually governed through cantonal legislation, the analytical approach remains based on an average.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster
Organisational autonomy	55%	55%	Medium low
Financial autonomy	65%	65%	Medium high
Staffing autonomy	95%	95%	High
Academic autonomy	72%	72%	Medium high

University autonomy in context

Swiss universities broadly operate in a stable regulatory framework and context. Public funding to universities remains on a positive trend and the system is expanding both in terms of student population and university staff.

Since 2015, the Federal Act on the Funding and Coordination of the Higher Education Sector serves the basis for the new Rectors' Conference of Swiss Higher Education Institutions.

In autumn 2012, after the law was adopted, universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education in Switzerland together founded this new Rectors' Conference, which results from the merger of the rectors' conferences that existed at the time – CRUS, KFH and COHEP. The new body started its work in January 2015.

The federal law passed in 2011 will see its financial provisions implemented as of 2017. Cantonal universities essentially receive public funding from the cantonal authorities. Nevertheless, the federal level also supports universities financially. With the new legal provisions, the emphasis will be placed on further coordination at the university sector level in cost-intensive areas. Universities will obtain financial support for developing shared infrastructure.

Views from the sector

The debate about the universities' role in student selection focuses on the 'quality' of students and their attainment levels on entry to university. This is a particular issue for certain institutions and programmes, particularly those that are recruiting globally. There is a strong attachment at political level to the principle of free admission.

University autonomy is broadly considered as satisfactory in Switzerland, in a context of close proximity with regulatory authorities. Indeed, the Swiss university sector is in a unique situation, with each of the cantonal universities operating under a specific law. However, Swiss universities consider that greater autonomy in financial matters would be beneficial although there is a preference for sustainable public funding.



How to read this profile

Specificities of the system

There are different political environments and systems operating within the different countries within the United Kingdom. Many of the issues outlined in the present profile relate to developments in England and not across the whole of the United Kingdom.

University autonomy in 2016

Organisational



English universities can decide, without the interference of the State, on all aspects of organisational autonomy, including selection, term of office and dismissal of the executive head, governance structures and inclusion of external members, as well as internal academic structures. Universities may create legal entities freely.

Financial



Universities do not require the approval of an external authority for borrowing above a certain level. At Bachelor level tuition fees to national and EU students must be set below a ceiling set by an external authority. Universities may set the level of fees charged at other levels and to international students.

Staffing



Universities recruit their senior academic and administrative staff freely. Salary bands for senior academic staff are negotiated with other parties through national bargaining arrangements, while universities decide on senior administrative staff salaries. There are no specific regulations regarding either dismissals or promotions.

Academic



Universities decide on the overall number of students since student number controls were lifted. They set admission criteria at Bachelor and Master levels. New programmes may be introduced without prior accreditation. Universities undergo institutional accreditation by the national agency. Universities can decide on the language of instruction for all programmes and can design the content of academic programmes freely.

Changes to university autonomy since 2010 and related developments

- Lifting of student number controls for universities in England, partially from 2012/13 and fully from 2015/16
- Major decrease of almost 70% in public grant funding for teaching in England (between 2011 and 2017), as tuition fee ceilings increased for Bachelor/undergraduate students
- Forthcoming changes to Scottish university governance with the Higher Education Governance Act 2016
- New quality assurance approach from 2016/17 including a new focus on teaching excellence with the Teaching Excellence Framework

Organisational autonomy

The executive heads of UK universities are appointed by their governing bodies with no validation by an external authority. There are no selection criteria for executive heads stated in the law. UK universities continue to recruit a diverse range of executive heads, who may come from other sectors or from abroad.

Universities define the terms and procedures for dismissal and set the term of office of their executive head. There is no typical length of term of office for executive heads across UK universities.

Universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland can decide on their governance structures freely. Governance models and the operation of governing bodies of universities are guided by the 'Higher Education Code of Governance' produced by the Committee of University Chairs. Universities typically have a dual governance structure, with a board/council-type body responsible for all strategic institutional matters and a senate-type body responsible for academic governance.

The Code includes provisions on the composition of the main governing body, which must comprise a majority of external members. Institutions are expected to include staff and student representatives. The Code stipulates that the university establishes a nominations committee to advise on the appointment of members.

Scotland introduced its Code of Good Higher Education Governance in 2013. It is being reviewed over 2016-2017, taking account of the new Higher Education Governance Act which was passed in 2016. The Act sets out requirements for the composition of and the process for electing and appointing members of governing and academic councils. These changes represent a restriction on the ability of Scottish institutions to determine their own governance arrangements.

Universities are able to decide on their academic structures without constraints. Universities can create both for-profit and non-profit legal entities.

Financial autonomy

Universities in the UK receive contributions to funding for research and for teaching (although to a lesser extent in England) on an annual block grant basis with no restrictions on the internal allocation of funding. Universities can keep any surpluses without restrictions and borrow money with the approval of an external authority above a certain amount. Universities can own and sell their buildings without restrictions.

Universities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland can set the level of tuition fees to national/EU students studying at Bachelor level under a ceiling set by an external authority¹. In Scotland, universities may not charge tuition fees to these students.

Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees to national/EU students at Master and doctoral levels. Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees to international students at all levels.

Staffing autonomy

Universities freely recruit senior academic and administrative staff. Salary bands for senior academic staff are negotiated with other parties as national bargaining arrangements on academic pay remain in place and there have been no major changes since 2010. Institutions retain autonomy over their own remuneration decisions. Senior administrative staff salaries are decided by universities.

There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissal of either senior academic or administrative staff and national labour market regulations apply. Universities can freely decide on promotions.

Academic autonomy

Overall student numbers are now the exclusive decision of universities in England as student number controls were fully lifted from 2015/16. Controls were implemented in 2009 and then partially lifted in 2012/13 for high-achieving students with further lifting of restrictions in 2013/14.

In response to these changes, recruitment of students from other EU countries rose, and some institutions expanded their student intake.

Universities may set admission criteria both at Bachelor and Master levels.

Universities can introduce degree programmes without prior accreditation at all degree levels. UK universities must undergo mandatory institutional accreditation, which is undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Universities can terminate programmes independently.

From 2016-17 the Higher Education Funding Council for England will introduce a new operating model for the oversight of quality in the publicly funded sector.

Universities can design the content of their programmes without constraints. They can choose the language of instruction for all programmes.

¹ In England, this ceiling has increased significantly since 2010. The cap per annum rose from 3 000 GBP to 9 000 GBP in 2012 and 9 250 GBP in 2017. The expected average fee for 2017/18 was 8 966 GBP p.a. In Wales the ceiling was set at 4 046 GBP and in Northern Ireland it was 3 925 GBP for 2016/17.

Autonomy scorecard summary

Evolutions as described above may affect the score obtained in the various dimensions of autonomy. However, some changes may not be captured directly by the indicators, or may be neutralised by converse developments in the same field.

The scores featured in the table below are the weighted results for the original scorecard (2010) and the new weighted results for the updated scorecard.

To facilitate international comparison, each system is placed in one of four clusters, based on the score for each autonomy dimension. “High” reflects scores between 100% and 81%; “medium high” applies to scores between 80% and 61%; “medium low” for scores between 60% and 41%; and “low” for scores below 41%.

Autonomy dimension	Original scorecard	Update	Cluster	Evolution
Organisational autonomy	100%	100%	High	
Financial autonomy	89%	89%	High	
Staffing autonomy	96%	96%	High	
Academic autonomy	83% ¹	89%	Remains in high cluster	Lifting of student number controls in England as of 2015/16

Changes to governance for Scottish universities are not taken into account in the present scorecard, but they are potentially a restriction on university autonomy for the universities concerned.

University autonomy in context

While direct grant funding for universities has been reduced in England, accountability requirements have changed as follows:

- increased accountability framework for activities/achievements of institutions towards government;
- there is currently a transitional phase as the sector moves more towards a student – institution accountability relationship;
- universities are now subject to consumer rights law. There are general duties to provide clear information on programmes to students and fair terms and conditions.

¹ This score was adapted from 94% to 83% due to a change of methodology regarding the choice of quality assurance providers.

There has been a decrease in public funding for teaching as tuition fee income has replaced a significant proportion of grant-based public funding in this area. In the financial year 2011/12 the government provided about 4.6 billion GBP in public grants for teaching which formed around 64% of the total funding for teaching. In 2016/17 the government provided 1.5 billion GBP in public funding for teaching which forms around 15% of the total funding for teaching. In Scotland, there has been a real terms reduction in the value of teaching funding over recent years and a cash terms reduction in funding for the 2016-17 academic year.

An updated version of the 'Governance Code of Practice' produced by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) was introduced in December 2014 and sets out high level values and elements of good governance. Although the Code remains a sector owned and voluntary document it is expected to be included as a reference point in the revised quality assessment system from 2016/17.

The implications of the new Higher Education Governance Act in Scotland, with its requirements for the composition of and the process for electing and appointing members of governing and academic councils, will begin to appear over the next few years as universities undertake renewal of governing body membership.

In May 2016 the relevant government department for universities in England published a draft legislation on higher education and research, the 'Higher Education and Research Bill' which was accompanied by a "White Paper" on higher education entitled 'Success as a knowledge economy; teaching excellence, social mobility and student choice'. White Papers are policy documents that set out proposals for future legislation and provide a basis for consultation and discussion. At the end of 2016 – beginning of 2017, the Higher Education and Research Bill, relating to universities in England, was going through Parliament.

As of 2016-17 the Higher Education Funding Council for England will introduce a new operating model for the oversight of quality in the publicly funded sector. The changes move away from cyclical external inspections towards a model that aims to monitor institutional risks and focus external oversight when and where it is required. The model is designed to build on the institutions' own quality assessment process and will involve some amendments to the accountability arrangements between governing bodies and the funding council. The same model is also being introduced in Northern Ireland and is expected to be adopted to a large extent in Wales, subject to a further round of consultation.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is also being introduced as from 2016/17 and administered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The TEF is intended to give students more information about the teaching and learning experience offered by institutions. Results will allow institutions to increase maximum permitted UK undergraduate tuition fees in line with inflation. TEF assessments are based on panel assessments of teaching and learning, using student surveys plus institutional submissions.

Finally, the prospect of the UK leaving the European Union is generating uncertainties for universities. One aspect in this regard is the status of students and staff from other EU countries enrolled or hired by UK universities.

Views from the sector

The present update indicates that the UK university system remains highly autonomous and indeed the lifting of student number controls and the tuition fee cap in England may be considered to increase university autonomy further.

A number of changes are due to take place from 2016/17, particularly in England, and this includes changes to the quality assessment system and higher education legislation during 2016/17. These changes may present some potential risks as they are implemented, but at this stage they are not expected to substantively change the sector's overall autonomy.

These changes to the operation of Scottish university governing bodies represent a restriction on the ability of Scottish institutions to determine their own governance arrangements and a reduction in their autonomy.

The Higher Education and Research Bill is expected to set up a new Office for Students that is expected to include a stronger focus on protecting students' interests. This would replace the existing Higher Education Funding Council for England which was established as a funding body for universities.

The new regulation is also expected to open up the market for new higher education providers. The basis on which degree awarding powers are granted to institutions/organisations are in line to be discussed and more private institutions are likely to be established in the UK. A number of higher education institutions in the UK now have different governance models since they are private companies but their students can access the student support system. These institutions are quite autonomous in terms of their accountability compared to institutions in receipt of public funding.

Annexes

Annex 1: Note on methodology

Developing the Autonomy Scorecard

An important facet of the methodology of the Scorecard is the involvement of the broader university community, through EUA's collective members. The Polish, German and Danish Rectors' Conferences, which represent diverse higher education systems, joined EUA in the consortium that carried out the original Autonomy Scorecard project.

The first stage was dedicated to developing and refining the autonomy indicators and describing the elements that represent restrictions as seen from the perspective of higher education institutions. Between October 2009 and April 2010, the EUA secretariat, in close collaboration with the steering committee and the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences, established a list of indicators and restrictions (annex 2). Based on this list, a questionnaire was designed to collect data from the individual higher education systems. The questionnaire was then tested by the project partners with data from their higher education systems (April to July 2010) and adaptations were made in summer 2010 to reflect the comments and experiences from this trial.

The questionnaire was submitted to the 26 participating national rectors' conferences in August 2010 (see Table 1 in the introduction). The secretaries general completed it themselves or passed it on to other experts from the same or a collaborating organisation. These responses then formed the basis for face-to-face or telephone interviews with all respondents. This allowed for the collection of more qualitative data and missing information and for the clarification of any remaining ambiguities. The interview memos were sent to the interviewees for validation and returned to the project team between October 2010 and January 2011. In the early months of 2011, a final validation round was conducted with more than half of the surveyed higher education systems, for which further explanations were required on some selected autonomy indicators.

In parallel, the work on developing a scoring and weighting system was taken up in spring 2010. The scoring system for the Autonomy Scorecard is based on evaluations of how restrictive particular regulations were perceived to be; the weighting system evaluates the relative importance of the individual indicators within each dimension of autonomy.

A technical structure for the scoring and the weighting system was subsequently developed, which was combined with the main data collection questionnaire. This made it possible to translate the collected data immediately into a score. Various rounds of comparison and validation were conducted to ensure the comparability of the collected data and scores. A more detailed description of the scoring and weighting methodologies follows below.

The data collection for the update in 2017 was organised following the original Scorecard methodology, based on questionnaires and interviews and several rounds of validation with

national rectors' conferences. In mid-2015 they received their individual questionnaires, as filled in in 2010, with interview memos included. They were invited to review each section and signal if changes were necessary, by selecting a different response option if necessary, and comment accordingly. The only addition in the new questionnaire was the creation of a specific sheet including more detailed questions on the composition of university governing bodies.

New questionnaires were also sent to national rectors' conferences that had not participated in the first Scorecard. Four new systems responded positively and joined the update: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

The returned questionnaires were subsequently collected and analysed by EUA. At this stage, after various exchange rounds, three previously included countries decided to opt out of the update (Cyprus, Greece and Turkey).

EUA organised validation interviews with all participating national rectors' conferences. No follow-up was possible with the Czech Republic, which as a result is not included either in the update.

The data validation phase spanned over a year, from late 2015 to late 2016, because of the need to validate not only responses to indicators, but also a broader narrative for each system.

The scoring system

The scoring system of the Autonomy Scorecard is based on deduction values. Each restriction on institutional autonomy was assigned a deduction value indicating how restrictive a particular regulation was perceived to be.¹ Special care was taken to ensure the consistent application of comparable deduction values to similar restrictions across different indicators and national or regional systems.

For example, for the indicator "capacity to decide on the overall number of students" deduction values were assigned as follows:

Table 2 Capacity to decide on overall number of students – deduction values

Indicator: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students	
Restriction	Deduction value
Independent decision of universities	0 points
Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, while an external authority decides on the number of state-funded students	2 points
Negotiation between universities and an external authority	2 points
Exclusive decision of an external authority	5 points
Free admission	5 points

¹ In those cases where respondents ticked "other restrictions", a deduction value was individually assigned, based on the explanation provided by the respondents.

The maximum or total possible deduction value for the capacity to decide on the overall number of students is the highest deduction value for the indicator, i.e. 5 points. A system's score is calculated as a percentage of this total. For instance, if the overall number of students is decided through negotiations between universities and an external authority, that system scores 0.4 or 40% – 2 out of 5 points – for that particular indicator.

Table 3 Capacity to decide on overall number of students – calculation of scores

Indicator: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students			
Restriction	Deduction value	Score	Percentage
Independent decision of universities	0 points	0/5	0 = 0%
Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, while an external authority decides on the number of state-funded students	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Negotiation between universities and an external authority	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Exclusive decision of an external authority	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%
Free admission	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%

In the case of cumulative deductions, the total possible deduction value is the sum of the deduction values of each possible restriction. This is illustrated by using the indicator “capacity to keep surplus of public funding”, where the maximum deduction value is awarded when surplus cannot be kept. If it can be kept with other types of restrictions, all restriction values that apply simultaneously are summed up. The following example shows a case in which universities can keep a surplus up to a certain percentage and with the approval of an external authority.

Table 4 Capacity to keep surplus – calculation of score

Indicator: Capacity to keep surplus			
Restriction	Deduction value	Score	Percentage
Surplus cannot be kept	10 points		
Surplus can be kept without restrictions	0 points		
Surplus can be kept up to a maximum percentage	2 points	2/10	0,2 = 20%
Surplus can be kept but approval of an external authority is needed	2 points	2/10	0,2 = 20%
Surplus can be kept but its allocation is pre-determined by an external authority	2 points		
Surplus can be kept with other types of restrictions	2 points		
TOTAL SCORE		4/20	0,4 = 40%

Where only a specific combination of restrictions is possible, the total possible deduction value is the sum of the deduction values of all simultaneously possible restrictions.

Using this approach, a score is calculated for each indicator. Once a score for an indicator or autonomy area is obtained, it is 'reversed', in the sense that a score of 5%, which indicates a high level of autonomy, becomes 95% (i.e. $100-5\% = 95\%$).

The weighting system

The weightings of the autonomy indicators are based on the results of a survey undertaken during EUA's Annual Conference and statutory meetings held at the University of Palermo in October 2010. The representatives of the national rectors' conferences were asked to complete a survey on the relative importance of the autonomy indicators. They were asked to decide whether they considered the indicators included in the autonomy questionnaire to be 'very important', 'fairly important', 'somewhat important' or 'not important'. 30 representatives from 18 countries participated in the survey.

The two sets of surveys yielded very similar results, indicating that the relevant stakeholders broadly agree on the relative importance of the autonomy indicators. The analysis revealed that the indicators were consistently perceived as relevant by both EUA's Council and the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences. Almost all indicators were regarded as 'very important' or 'fairly important'. Diverging views were principally expressed concerning tuition fees, which doubtless reflects different cultural backgrounds and national traditions with regard to this issue.

These results were used to develop a system to weight the autonomy indicators: in a first step, the responses were counted for each autonomy indicator – for instance, out of 30 respondents, 21 considered the ability to decide on the overall number of students as 'very important', 7 as 'fairly important', 1 as 'somewhat important' and 1 as 'not important'. Points were then assigned to the different response options: 3 points for 'very important', 2 points for 'fairly important', 1 point for 'somewhat important' and 0 points for 'not important'.²

The number of respondents who had ticked one of the four response options for a particular indicator was multiplied by the appropriate number of points assigned to that particular response option. This resulted in an indicator's so-called total 'importance value'. For example, in the case of the indicator "ability to decide on the overall number of students", 21 responses for 'very important', 7 for 'fairly important', 1 for 'somewhat important' and 1 for 'not important' were multiplied by 3 ('very important'), 2 ('fairly important'), 1 ('somewhat important') and 0 ('not important'), respectively (table 5).

² Voids were assigned 1, rather than 0 points, in order to avoid skewing the results for a particular indicator towards a lower weighting factor than warranted.

Table 5 Ability to decide on overall number of students – calculation of ‘importance value’

Ability to decide on the overall number of students	Number of responses	‘Importance value’
Very important	21	63
Fairly important	7	14
Somewhat important	1	1
Not important	1	0
Total	30	78

This calculation was carried out for each indicator, and the ‘importance value’ of all indicators within each autonomy area summed up. In a final step, the ‘importance value’ of each individual indicator was expressed as a percentage of the sum of the ‘importance values’ for all indicators within one autonomy area. For example, by dividing its ‘importance value’ of 78 by the total ‘importance value’ for academic autonomy (543), the indicator “ability to decide on the overall number of students” received a weighting factor of 14%.

Table 6 Academic autonomy – ‘importance values’ and weighting factors

Indicator - academic autonomy	‘Importance value’	Weighting factor
Capacity to decide on the overall number of students	78	14%
Capacity to select students	78	14%
Capacity to introduce and terminate degree programmes	87	16%
Capacity to choose the language of instruction	70	14%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	80	15%
Capacity to select QA providers	61	11%
Capacity to design the content of degree programmes	89	19%
Total	543	100%

Table 6 sums up the weighting factors thus developed for the indicators relating to academic autonomy. Weighted scores are obtained by multiplying non-weighted scores with the respective percentage values (table 7).

Table 7 Academic autonomy – non-weighted and weighted scores

Non-weighted/weighted scores - academic autonomy			
Indicator	Non-weighted score	Weighting factor	Weighted score
Capacity to decide on overall number of students	100%	14%	14%
Capacity to decide on admission mechanisms for Bachelor degrees	100%	7%	7%
Capacity to decide on admission mechanisms for Master's degrees	40%	7%	7%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of Bachelor degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of Master's degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of doctoral degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the termination of degree programmes	40%	4%	2%
Capacity to decide on the language of instruction for Bachelor degrees	0%	7%	0%
Capacity to decide on the language of instruction for Master's degrees	0%	7%	0%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	0%	15%	0%
Capacity to select QA providers	0%	11%	0%
Capacity to decide on the content of degree programmes	0%	16%	0%
TOTAL SCORE	28%	100%	29%

It is important to note that the different autonomy areas – organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy – are not weighted against each other. It was decided that, due to the various and intricate connections between the different autonomy areas, it would be impossible to weight the importance of financial autonomy against that of staffing autonomy, for example. The perceived importance of a particular indicator is therefore only compared with the perceived importance of the other indicators in the same autonomy area.

Annex 2: List of indicators and restrictions

Organisational autonomy

Selection procedure for the executive head	Selection of the executive head is not validated by an external authority
	Selection of the executive head is validated by an external authority
Selection criteria for the executive head	Selection criteria for executive head are not stated in the law
	Law states that the executive head must hold an academic position
	Law states that the executive head must hold a doctoral degree
	Law states that the executive head must come from within the university
	Other restrictions
Dismissal of the executive head	Procedures for the dismissal of the executive head are not stated in the law
	Confirmation of dismissal by an external authority but the procedure is decided by the university
	Dismissal by an external authority but the procedure is decided by the university
	Confirmation of dismissal by an external authority and the procedure is stated in the law
	Dismissal by an external authority according to a procedure stated in the law
	Other restrictions
Term of office of the executive head	Length of the executive head's term of office is not stated in the law
	Maximum or range of length is stated in the law
	Minimum range of length is stated in the law
	Exact length is stated in the law

External members in university governing bodies	Inclusion of external members in university governing bodies	Universities cannot decide as they cannot include external members
		Universities cannot decide as they must include external members
		Universities can decide to include external members
	Selection of external members in university governing bodies	University can decide freely on external members
		Proposal by university and appointment by an external authority
		Part of the members appointed by the university and part appointed by an external authority
		Appointment completely controlled by an external authority
		Other appointment process
Capacity to decide on academic structures	Universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints	
	Guidelines exist in the law	
	Faculties/other academic structures are listed in the law	
	Other restrictions	
Capacity to create legal entities	Universities can create legal entities without constraints	
	Universities are only allowed to create not-for-profit legal entities	
	Universities are not allowed to create any type of legal entity	
	Other restrictions	

Financial autonomy

Length and type of public funding	Length of public funding	More than one year
		One year
		Less than one year
	Type of public funding	Line-item budget
		Block grant and there are no restrictions on the allocation of funding
		Block-grant is split into broad categories and there are no or limited possibilities to move funds between these
Block grant but internal allocation possibilities are limited by law		
	Other restrictions	
Ability to keep surplus		Surplus cannot be kept
		Surplus can be kept without restrictions
		Surplus can be kept up to a maximum percentage
		Surplus can be kept but approval of an external authority is needed
		Surplus can be kept but its allocation is pre-determined by an external authority
		Surplus can be kept with other types of restrictions
Ability to borrow money		Universities cannot borrow money
		Universities can borrow money without restrictions
		Universities can borrow money up to a maximum percentage
		Universities can borrow money with the approval of an external authority
		Universities can borrow money from specific banks (designated by an external authority)
		Universities can borrow money with other types of restrictions
Ability to own buildings		Universities are not allowed to own their buildings
		Universities can sell their buildings without restrictions
		Universities can sell their buildings with the approval of an external authority

		Universities can sell their buildings with other types of restrictions
		Universities are not allowed to sell their buildings
		Other restrictions
Ability to charge tuition fees	National and EU students (at BA, MA and doctoral level)	Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees
		Universities and an external authority cooperate in setting the level of tuition fees
		Universities can set the level of tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority
		Only an external authority is allowed to set the level of tuition fees
		There are no tuition fees
	Non-EU students (at BA, MA and doctoral level)	Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees
		Universities and an external authority cooperate in setting the level of tuition fees
		Universities can set the level of tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority
		Only an external authority is allowed to set the level of tuition fees
		There are no tuition fees

Staffing autonomy

Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Recruitment is done freely by universities
	Appointment needs to be confirmed by an external authority for some staff
	Appointment needs to be confirmed by an external authority for all staff
	Number of posts regulated by an external authority for some staff
	Number of posts regulated by an external authority for all staff
	Recruitment carried out by an external authority for some staff
	Recruitment carried out by an external authority for all staff
	Other restrictions

Capacity to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Universities can freely decide on staff salaries
	Decision on individual staff salaries is restricted due to an overall limit for all staff payments
	Salary band is negotiated with other parties
	Salary band is prescribed by an external authority for some staff
	Salary band is prescribed by an external authority for all staff
	Salary is set by an external authority/civil servant status for some staff
	Salary is set by an external authority/civil servant status for all staff
	Other restrictions
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissals (national labour regulations apply)
	Dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for some staff
	Dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for all staff
	Dismissals are subject to other regulations specific to the sector
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Universities can freely decide on promotion procedures
	The law states who has to be included in the selection committee
	Promotion only if there is a post at a higher level
	Other restrictions

Academic autonomy

Capacity to decide on overall student numbers	Exclusive decision of the university
	Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students while an external authority determines the number of state-funded study places
	Universities negotiate with an external authority
	Exclusive decision of an external authority
	Free admission

Capacity to select students (at BA and MA level)	Admission criteria set by the university	
	Admission criteria co-regulated by an external authority and universities	
	Admission entirely regulated by an external authority	
Admission entirely regulated by an external authority	Capacity to introduce programmes (at BA, MA level)	Universities can open degree programmes without prior accreditation
		A minority of new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced/funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced
		Other restrictions
		Capacity to introduce programmes (at doctoral level)
	Capacity to introduce programmes (at doctoral level)	Universities can open degree programmes without prior accreditation
		A minority of new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced/funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded
		Only some universities/academic units can open new degree programmes
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced
		Other restrictions
		Capacity to terminate programmes
	Capacity to terminate programmes	Universities can terminate degree programmes independently
		Termination of degree programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority
Termination of degree programmes occurs on the initiative of an external authority		
Other restrictions		

Capacity to choose the language of instruction (at BA and MA level)		Universities can only offer degree programmes/courses in the national language
		Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes
		Universities can choose the language of instruction for certain programmes
		The number of degree programmes/courses taught in a foreign language is limited by an external authority
		Universities can choose the language of instruction only if the programme is also offered in the national language
		Universities can choose their language of instruction, but will not receive public funding for foreign-language programmes
Capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms and providers	Capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms	Universities can select quality assurance mechanisms freely according to their needs
		Universities cannot select quality assurance mechanisms
	Capacity to select quality assurance providers	Universities can choose quality assurance agency freely according to their needs (including agencies from other countries)
		Universities can only select between national quality assurance agencies
Capacity to design content of degree programmes		Universities cannot choose the quality assurance agency
		Universities can freely design the content of their degree programmes and courses (other than for the regulated professions)
		Authorities specify some content of academic courses
		Authorities specify all of the content of academic courses
		Other restrictions

Annex 3: Weighting factors per indicator

Organisational autonomy

Selection procedure for the executive head	14%
Selection criteria for the executive head	14%
Dismissal of the executive head	12%
Term of office of the executive head	9%
Inclusion of external members in university governing bodies	12%
Selection of external members in university governing bodies	12%
Capacity to decide on academic structures	15%
Capacity to create legal entities	12%

Financial autonomy

Length of public funding	14%
Type of public funding	13%
Ability to keep surplus	14%
Ability to borrow money	9%
Ability to own buildings	12%
Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students	17%
Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students	21%

Staffing autonomy

Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior administrative staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on salaries (senior academic staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on salaries (senior administrative staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior academic staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior administrative staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior academic staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior administrative staff)	12% ¹

Academic autonomy

Capacity to decide on overall student numbers	14%
Capacity to select students	14%
Capacity to introduce and terminate programmes	16%
Capacity to choose the language of instruction	13%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	15%
Capacity to select QA providers	11%
Capacity to design content of degree programmes	16% ²

1 The weighting factors do not add up to 100%, since digits had to be rounded to calculate the weighting factors.

2 See footnote 16

Annex 4: Contributors to the study

Contributors from the National Rectors' Conferences (questionnaire, interviews, validation)

Austria	Universities Austria: Elisabeth Fiorioli (Secretary General), Wolfgang Nedobity and Nadine Shovakar.
Belgium - Flanders	VLIR: Rosette S'Jegers (Secretary General) and Steven van Luchene
Belgium - French-speaking community	CREF: Elisabeth Kokkelkoren Universities: Nathalie Alen (UCL), Evelyne Goujon (ULg), Anne-Michèle Lepers (USL-B) and Philippe Lizin (UNamur)
Croatia	Croatian Rectors' Conference: Pero Lucin (President; Rector of the University of Rijeka) and Paula Pavletić (Secretary General)
Denmark	Universities Denmark: Nikolaj Helm-Petersen and Peter Dalby Larsen
Estonia	Universities Estonia: Hanna Kanep (Secretary General)
Finland	Universities Finland: Leena Wahlfors (Secretary General) and Marko Niemi
France	CPU: Jean-Pierre Finance and Eric Foucher
Germany	HRK: Brigitte Göbbels-Dreyling (Deputy Secretary General) and Henning Rockmann
Hungary	HRC: Zoltán Dubécz (Secretary General), Orsolya Heuer and Petra Perényi
Iceland	University of Iceland: Jenny Bara Jensdottir and Gudmundur R. Jonsson
Ireland	IUA: Ned Costello (Chief Executive), Michael Casey and Lewis Purser
Italy	CRUI: Marina Cavallini Universities: Michele Meoli, University of Bergamo
Latvia	Latvian Rectors' Conference: Jānis Bernāts (Secretary General)
Lithuania	Lithuanian Universities Rectors' Conference: Kęstutis Kriščiūnas (Secretary General)
Luxembourg	University of Luxembourg: Massimo Malvetti (Secretary General of the Board of Governors) and Anne Christophe
Netherlands	VSNU: René Hageman and Han van Yperen
Norway	UHR: Hege Bolstad Pettersen (Deputy Secretary General)
Poland	KRASP: Andrzej Krasniewski (Secretary General)
Portugal	CRUP: Joao Melo Borges (Secretary General)
Slovak Republic	SRK: Maria Cikesova (Secretary General)
Slovenia	Slovenian Rectors' Conference: Ivan Svetlik (President; Rector of the University of Ljubljana) and Mihaela Bauman Podojsteršek
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Spain	CRUE: Carlos Martínez Tomás Universities: Francisco José Mora (Rector) and José Antonio Pérez, Universitat Politècnica de València
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The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 47 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard wherever decisions are being taken that will impact their activities.

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