

Colombia

National Higher Education Equity Policy

Governance

Higher Education policy is managed by the Ministry of National Education (MEN), through the Vice Ministry of Higher Education, created in 2003. The Vice Ministry is responsible for the implementation of national higher education policies, the planning and the supervision of the sector.

The National Council of Higher Education (CESU) is an advisory body of the Ministry of National Education, created in 1992. The Council handles matters such as the creation of new higher education institutions, what to do with institutions with problems and the approval of graduate programs.

The National Intersectoral Commission of Quality Assurance of Higher Education, (CONACES) is an advisory institution of the Ministry. It advises on issues of quality assurance and, more specifically, on whether institutions and individual degree programs should be included in the Qualified Registry.

Higher Education Policy Documents

- Law 30 of 1992
- Law 115 of 1994
- Law 749 of 2002.
- 10- Year Plan 2018-2028
- *National Agreement for Higher Education 2034: Public policy proposal for the excellence of higher education in Colombia in the context of peace.*
- Background documents for the National Development and Sector Plan 2018-2022
- Inclusion Index for Higher Education, 2013
- Approach and Gender Identities, 2018
- Guidelines for Inclusive Higher Education 2013

Equity Policy Documents

What broad and specific equity objectives do the policy documents identify?

- To build a peaceful society based on equity, inclusion, respect for ethics and gender equity.

- To recognize and respect the dignity, rights and values of students as the center and ultimate goal of the higher education system, without distinction of race, creed, sex, cultural context or political affiliation.
- To eliminate barriers that prevent people from having the same access to opportunities, without any limitation or restriction, to a quality education.

The following equity target groups are identified in the policy documents

- Low income students
- Gender groups
- Displaced and demobilized populations
- Victims of violence
- Ethnic groups: Black, Afro-Colombian, Raizal and Palanquera populations
- Border student population
- Students with disabilities

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups?

Yes. Although they are not quantifiable.

- Promote organizational structures that guarantee inclusive education and efficiently address student diversity.
- Make admission systems and curricular structures more flexible to allow access and transit through the different levels of higher education.
- Design and implement the qualification framework system.
- Expand and consolidate the articulation system of secondary and higher education in the regions.
- Develop strategies that contribute to a culture of respect for differences, the elimination of discrimination and the safeguarding of spaces to people with disabilities.

Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education?

Yes, Colombia has a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education: *Policy Guidelines for Inclusive Higher Education 2013*.

Colombia has a number of specific anti-discrimination provisions embedded in the following pieces of legislation:

- Conpes Social 161 of 2013 (gender equity for women)

- Decree 410 of 2018, Regulation on prevention of discrimination by reasons of sexual orientation and gender identity, through the promotion of affirmative action
- Decree 762 of 2018. Guarantee of the social rights of the LGBTI population
- Law 1482 Law against racism and discrimination in Colombia. November 30, 2011

The Government of Colombia uses a series of financial and non-monetary instruments to promote equity.

Financial Policy Instruments

- Icetex Student Loans for strata 1, 2 or 3: student loans with a subsidized interest rate that allows long-term payment (twice the study time).
- Icetex Target Grants for black students to access, complete higher education (this includes Afro-Colombian, Raizales and Palenqueras populations).
- Icetex Target Grants for indigenous students.
- Scholarships financed by some ministries, public companies.
- *Jóvenes en Acción* is a conditional cash transfer program that supports poor and vulnerable youths. Students eligible for the Youth in Action Program are young Colombian high school graduates between 16 and 24 years of age, victims of violence, and displaced and demobilized people.

Non-Monetary Policy Instruments

- **Affirmative Action:** Icetex and the Ministry of Education are responsible for this policy. It focuses on three aspects of student life: financial (enrollment), social (insertion into the academic environment, accompaniment in life events and adaptation to the university environment) and academic (personalization of the curriculum, knowledge of student regulations, leveling and reinforcement tutoring).
- **Outreach and bridge programs:** The articulation of upper secondary schools and higher education institutions is a pedagogical and management process that implies joint actions to facilitate the transit and the mobility of the students between these two levels.
- **The Regional Centers for Higher Education (CERES)** is a national program that collaborates with higher education institutions, local authorities and employers. They join efforts and resources to offer quality programs in places where the supply of higher education is insufficient or nonexistent. These centers aim to bring quality education to marginalized

communities, in order to generate new opportunities for social and economic development. There are 141 such centers around the country. They have around 28,761 students and offer 748 academic programs, of which 85 are technical, 291 technological, 358 professional, and 14 graduate programs.

Financial Resources

What financial resources does the country devote to equity promotion measures?

- Not available

Quality Assurance

The quality assurance criteria take the following equity elements into consideration:

- Equitable and transparent criteria for admission and retention of students;
- Analysis of causes of dropout;
- Strategies that guarantee the integration of students to the institution in consideration of their social and cultural heterogeneity;
- Transparent compliance with the criteria for the allocation of student supports;
- Strategies aimed at the inclusion of the vulnerable and disabled population.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of equity promotion measures?

- The Ministry of National Education is responsible for monitoring all educational policies.
- The National Planning Department, through its *Sinergia* program, monitors government policies, including social and equity policies.

What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation activities?

- Not available

Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency

ICETEX, the first ever student loan agency in the world, could be considered to be *de facto* the government body that has historically been dedicated to the promotion of equity in higher education through its subsidized student loans.

Key Indicators of Equity in Colombia

Net Tuition Rate
BY GENDER, QUINTILES OF INCOME AND AREA (Colombia)

AÑO	Total	Gender		Quintiles of income					Area	
		Female	Male	1	2	3	4	5	Rural	Urban
2010	23.8	25.0	22.5	7.0	10.8	17.9	28.0	57.2	5.1	29.3
2011	23.8	25.3	22.3	7.8	12.2	17.7	27.6	55.4	5.3	29.3
2012	24.1	25.8	22.3	7.5	12.5	18.2	29.8	54.2	4.9	29.5
2013	26.3	28.0	24.5	10.2	13.6	20.6	30.6	58.0	6.1	31.9
2014	27.1	29.1	24.9	10.0	15.5	21.4	32.2	57.7	7.3	32.4
2015	26.6	28.6	24.6	11.9	14.4	22.6	31.3	54.4	6.4	32.1
2016	27.6	29.5	25.5	11.3	17.1	23.3	31.9	56.7	7.7	33.0

Source: SEDLAC (CEDLAS and World Bank), May 2018

Sources

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