

# Romania

## National Higher Education Equity Policy

### Governance

The Ministry of National Education (<https://www.edu.ro/>) is the Romanian national authority responsible for defining and implementing national policies in higher education.

### Higher Education Policy Documents

The main official documents defining the national higher education strategy / policies are:

- *The National Law on Education*<sup>1</sup> (no. 1 / 2011), with subsequent amendments
- *The National Strategy for Tertiary Education 2015-2020*<sup>2</sup>
- *The National Strategy for Roma Integration 2012-2020*<sup>3</sup>
- *The National Plan for Reducing Poverty*<sup>4</sup> with its package of policies<sup>5</sup>

### Equity in Policy Documents

Main broad and specific equity objectives highlighted in the policy documents:

*The National Law on Education (no. 1 / 2011):*

- Discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, social background, political, religious or sexual orientation is not permitted;
- Students from placement centers benefit from study places at universities specifically allocated for them;
- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds and placement centers benefit from need-based grants (a financial aid for them to cover their expenditures during their study period);
- Universities must ensure conditions for students with disabilities in their premises;
- The inclusion of students with different educational needs in public institutions.

*The National Strategy for Tertiary Education 2015-2020*

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<sup>1</sup> Available in Romanian here:

[https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2017/legislatie%20MEN/Legea%20nr.%201\\_2011\\_act\\_ualizata2018.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2017/legislatie%20MEN/Legea%20nr.%201_2011_act_ualizata2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Available in Romanian here:

[https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fisiere%20articole/Strategie\\_inv\\_tertiar\\_2015\\_2020.pdf](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fisiere%20articole/Strategie_inv_tertiar_2015_2020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Available in Romanian here: [http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Site2014/Strategie/Strategie\\_final\\_18-11-2014.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Site2014/Strategie/Strategie_final_18-11-2014.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Available in Romanian here: <http://gov.ro/ro/obiective/strategii-politici-programe/planul-national-anti-saracie-i-promovare-a-incluziunii-sociale&page=2>

<sup>5</sup> Launched in 2016, they are available in Romanian here: <http://gov.ro/ro/obiective/strategii-politici-programe/pachetul-national-anti-saracie&page=1>

- Universities may receive additional competition-based funding to stimulate overall equity (via increased enrolments of students from rural areas or under-represented groups);
- A national monitoring system which should include specific indicators measuring social inclusion (socio-economic background, students with disabilities, etc.) and dropout;
- The need for increased support targeting students from lower socio-economic background (including financial support, reformed curricula or improved social conditions);
- Facilitating flexible access routes into higher education and an emphasis on lifelong learning;
- A systemic approach at curricular level, ensuring that the most vulnerable students achieve a successful transition from secondary to tertiary education;
- Increased financial support for vulnerable students, by increasing the number of need-based grants;
- Introducing a system of study loans;
- Increasing participation, by attracting not-traditional students, including mature students by: institutional strategies targeting under-represented student groups; financial support for under-represented students to complete their studies; financial incentives for universities to enroll non-traditional students and ensure gender balance;
- Improving student counselling, to decrease dropout rates.

*The National Strategy for Roma Integration 2012-2020*

- Ensuring equal, free and universal right to education for Roma population;
- Promoting inclusive education, by eliminating segregation and tackling discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, social status, disabilities or other factors for children and young people from disadvantaged groups, including Roma.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents?

- Low-income students
- Minority groups (Roma students, students from the Republic of Moldavia)
- Students from placement centers
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs

Romania has no targets for the participation of specific equity groups.

Romania has no standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education, except for the Roma population.

Romania has no specific anti-discrimination provisions.

What specific interventions and/or instruments of equity promotion are included in the official strategy and policy documents (monetary and non-monetary)?

### ***Monetary Policy Instruments***

- Needs-based grants, to support low-income students
  - The minimum is proposed by CNFIS on an annual basis, by taking into account the fact that it must cover minimum food and accommodation costs (around 70 Euros). Universities may supplement the scholarship fund from own extra-budgetary funds.
- Special state-funded places for Roma students
- Special state-funded places for students from Republic of Moldavia
- Equity-linked financial incentives built into the funding formula to allocate public resources to higher education institutions
  - The methodology for allocating universities funding <sup>6</sup> uses specific indicators focusing on regional orientation and equity (20% from the overall qualitative indicators for 2018): ability to enroll students from low socio-economic backgrounds (5%); university's own funding for scholarships (4%); internships at Bachelor level (4%); dormitory places (5%); grants attracted by university (2%);
- Others: competition based funding for universities
  - Starting with 2016, universities can apply for institutional development funding <sup>7</sup> provided by the Ministry of National Education in a yearly competition, where equity features among targeted priority domains.

### ***Non-Monetary Policy Instruments***

- Academic and career guidance and counseling
- Reformed admission procedures – Roma students may apply for targeted places in universities (a limited number of study grants are allocated for potential Roma students)

## **Financial Resources**

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

As described above, Romania allocates financial resources for study grants for potential Roma students and allocates funds for scholarships. However, there are no specific indicators measuring the amounts allocated per beneficiary or the proportion of these funds from the entire HE budget. It is difficult to calculate such an indicator, given that each university decides what proportion of scholarships goes for equity or performance.

### **Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance criteria do take equity elements into consideration. The Romanian Methodology for external institutional evaluations – used both for initial

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<sup>6</sup> Available in Romanian here (p. 9): [http://www.cnfis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/PropunereCNFIS\\_MetodologieFB-FS-2018-final-act1-1.pdf](http://www.cnfis.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/PropunereCNFIS_MetodologieFB-FS-2018-final-act1-1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> More information available here, in Romanian: <http://www.cnfis.ro/finantare/dezvoltare-institutionala/>

authorization/accreditation and for monitoring/reaccreditation – includes evaluation items that refer to equity, such as:

- The funding allocated by universities from their own financial resources for equity-based scholarships;
- The percentage of approved requests for a place in the university's dormitories;
- The percentage of students benefitting from a scholarship.

The above-mentioned items weight in the evaluation of universities by the Romanian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (ARACIS), which then puts forward a recommendation for the Ministry of National Education. This in turn fundamentals the number of grants, and thus the funding a university receives.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

According to the National Law of Education, the Ministry of National Education is responsible for monitoring and evaluating all the public policies in the field of education. However, there are no specific instruments, methods or data in place for monitoring the impact of the equity measures. Most of the data collection is done by NGOs, although not on a regular basis.

### **Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency**

Romania has no agency dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.