

# Spain

## National Higher Education Equity Policy

### Governance

The Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities is the department of the General State Administration responsible for implementing the Government's policy on higher education, scientific research, technological development and innovation in all sectors.

*CRUE* is a non-profit association of higher education institutions, with a membership of 50 public and 26 private universities. It is the main interlocutor of the central government and plays a key role in all the normative developments that affect higher education.

The *General Conference for University Policy*, is the body responsible for students' access to bachelor programs. It outlines general directives for university policy and ensures coordination with the European Higher Education Agreement; amongst other things.

*The Council of Universities* is the body responsible for academic coordination, as well as cooperation, consultation and proposals on university matters.

### Higher Education Policy Documents

- The University Reform Law of 1983:
- Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21
- Organic Law 4/2007, of April 12, which modifies the previous one
- Bologna Plan for Spain. Education reform of the higher education system to adapt it to the European Higher Education Area.
- Royal Decree 1721/2007, of December 21, which establishes the system of scholarships and personalized study aids

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

- All persons, regardless of their place of residence, enjoy the same conditions in the exercise of the right to higher education.

### The following equity groups are identified in the policy documents

- Low income students
- Students from remote regions.
- Students with disabilities
- Victims of gender violence

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

- The targets point to the general goals defined by the European Union and the Sustainable Development Goals for Education.

**There is no standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education.**

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

- Law 3/2016, of July 22, for the Integral Protection Against LGTBphobia and Discrimination for Reason Sexual Orientation and Identity in the Community of Madrid.
- Organic Law 3/2007, of March 22, for full equality of women and men.

**The Government of Spain uses a variety of financial and non-monetary instruments to promote equity.**

***Financial Policy Instruments***

- The State established a general system of scholarships and grants designed to remove socioeconomic obstacles that impede or hinder access to higher education. The Government determines the modalities and amounts of the scholarships and grants, as well as the academic and economic conditions that the students need to access them.
- In order for no one to be excluded from studying at university for economic reasons, the Government and the Autonomous Communities (Provinces), as well as the universities themselves, provide scholarships, grants and student loans. In the case of public universities, there is partial or total exemption from tuition fees.

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

- **Admissions:** The Government is responsible for establishing admission procedures that respect the principles of equality, merit and skills.
- **Recognition of Prior Experience for access to universities**
- **Academic and Career Guidance.** Preparation courses for entrance exams to Vocational Training and Higher education institutions. Those who take the preparatory courses for the entrance exams may be beneficiaries of scholarships or grants.

### **Financial Resources**

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

- Not available

### **Quality Assurance**

- The quality assurance criteria evaluate according to the higher education standards set by the European Community and the protocol for the verification of official university degrees (Degree and Master).
- The quality assurance criteria take the following equity elements into consideration: admission systems, definition of competencies, curricula and pedagogies, and learning resources, taking into account fundamental rights and equal opportunities for men and women, the principles of equal opportunities and universal accessibility for people with disabilities and the values of a culture of peace and democracy.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

- The University Observatory of Scholarships, Grants and Academic Performance was created by a Royal Decree 1220/2010, of October 1.
- The Observatory is a collegial body in which representatives of social agents, students, the Autonomous Communities, and universities,

participate in order to integrate all of the interests concerned by the policy of scholarships and study aids.

- The Observatory is an advisory body which studies and analyzes the results of scholarship programs and university study aids, in order to contribute to the improvement of equity, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of the Spanish Higher Education System.

### **Dedicated Equity Promotion Agency**

- University Observatory of Scholarships, Grants and Academic Performance could be considered the agency to promote equity.

### **Sources**

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