

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

# Belgium (Wallonia)



## Policy Frameworks

**Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?**

- Decree defining the higher education landscape and academic organization ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39681\\_045.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39681_045.pdf))
- Decision of the Government of the French-speaking Community establishing the modest condition of applicants for an education allowance as well as the criteria used to determine the amounts of the education allowances ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46818\\_000.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46818_000.pdf))
- Decree on the fight against certain forms of ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/33730\\_000.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/33730_000.pdf))
- Decree on inclusive higher education for students with disabilities ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39922\\_000.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39922_000.pdf))
- Decree on inclusive adult higher education ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/42994\\_002.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/42994_002.pdf))
- Decree on the reception, schooling and support of pupils who do not master the language in education organised or subsidised by the French Community ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46275\\_000.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46275_000.pdf))
- Decree defining initial teacher training ([https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46261\\_000.pdf](https://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46261_000.pdf))

**What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?**

- Prohibition of discrimination based on:
  1. Nationality, alleged race, colour of skin, descent or national or ethnic origin;
  2. Age, sexual orientation, religious or philosophical conviction, disability;
  3. Sex and related criteria such as pregnancy, childbirth and maternity, or change of sex;
  4. Civil status, birth, wealth, political conviction, language, present or future state of health, physical or genetic characteristic or social origin.
  5. Reduced tuition fee and financial help available for students from modest socio-economic backgrounds. No tuition fee for scholarship students.
- Reduced tuition fee and financial help available for students from modest socio-economic backgrounds. No tuition fee for scholarship students.
- Special arrangements for students with disabilities, learning difficulties, working students and adult learners.
- Special attention dedicated to psychological and sociological aspects during the initial training of teachers. Teachers are trained to deal with students with special needs (e.g. disabilities, learning difficulties/disabilities, developmental disorders) and to prevent discrimination as defined under the first bullet point.

**Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?**

There is no standalone policy document.

**Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)**

- Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
- Gender groups
- Older or mature learners

- ➔ Students with disability
- ➔ Victims of sexual and gender violence
- ➔ Members of the LGBT community
- ➔ Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)
- ➔ Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care.

### **Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?**

There are no quantitative targets.

### **Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?**

There are two "commissions" of reference for students with disabilities:

1. Commission for Inclusive Adult Higher Education
2. Commission for Inclusive Higher Education

(<https://www.ares-ac.be/fr/a-propos/instances/commissions-permanentes/enseignement-inclusif-cesi>).

### **Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)**

- ➔ Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- ➔ Civil society organisations
- ➔ Student Organisations/Association
- ➔ Others: Please specify: Ministry of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, cabinet of the Higher Education Minister

## **Achieving Policy Targets**

### **Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?**

- ➔ Guide for the inclusion of transgender people in higher education in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels (<http://www.egalite.cfwb.be/index.php?id=18743>)
- ➔ Preparation programmes and services for refugees and refugee applicants (including French-language classes, personalized guidance for example).
- ➔ Special unit in the higher education institutions dedicated to students with disabilities or special needs.
- ➔ Campaigns for free/affordable and inclusive higher education launched by the French-speaking students' union (FEF)

### **Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?**

- ➔ Education allowances for students from modest socio-economic backgrounds.
- ➔ Reduced tuition fee for students from modest socio-economic backgrounds. No tuition fee for scholarship students.
- ➔ Financial assistance from the social services of the higher education institutions (e.g. for books,

course material, public transport costs, medical costs)

- ➔ Priority access to the institution's housing for students from modest socio-economic backgrounds.

### **Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?**

- ➔ Ministry of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels.
- ➔ ARES (Academy of Research and Higher Education).
- ➔ AEQUES (Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).
- ➔ Commission for Inclusive Higher Education
- ➔ Commission for Inclusive Higher Adult Education

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

- ➔ Collection of statistical data (on gender balance; proportion of Belgian, European, non-European students; socio-economic background of students, school enrolment by age, etc.)
- ➔ Reporting.

### **What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?**

Relatively high level of autonomy.

### **How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)**

1. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries
2. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
3. Policy setting
4. Technical assistance and capacity building

## **COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education**

### **How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?**

No data is available at this point.

## **Sources**

This country brief was prepared as part of the "[ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education](#)" report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8<sup>th</sup> ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on "Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe" on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the Ministry of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, as of 4 November 2020.