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Mapping Portuguese institutional policies on access against the European Standards and Guidelines

Orlanda Tavares | Sónia Cardoso | Cristina Sin

Bologna

ESG ➡️ **Part 1** ➡️ **HEIs**

Quality Culture & Strategy, Policy and Procedures for study programmes QA

Portuguese Context

HEIs initiatives on student access and their alignment with ESG

Student Access

Poor definition and high variability

1) **Portuguese HEIs' policy on access?**
2) **Link with quality assurance?**

Different strategies to implement ESG (1.1. QA procedures and 1.6. Information systems)?

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Lifelong
Learning
Programme

Collection and disaggregation of data (offers/enrolments/non-completion/graduates)

Support mechanisms for the admission and progression of distinct cohorts of students

Changes (and main drivers) in HEIs' enrolment patterns

Barriers regarding effective policy and procedures for access

Access: major area of State regulation of the HE system

Access to Public HE

- Nationally centralised and regulated system of *numeri clausi*
- Institutional autonomy: management of vacancies for each study programme within defined limits

Access to Private HE

- Ministry defines vacancies numbers (study programmes)
- Applications managed by HEIs, independently of the centralised placement system (public sector)

Access to Public HE

National competition

- *General Track*: secondary education diploma and national exams
- *Special Track*: for specific student groups, as militaries

Special Competition

- Mature students (older than 23 years)
- Students with other appropriate post-secondary qualifications (CETS)

Special regimes

- Special groups of students, as high performance athletes

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o **4 Public HEIs**: 2 Universities (**α** and **β**) and 2 Polytechnics (**δ** and **γ**);

o Selection criteria: HE subsector and HEIs' size and geographic location

o 2 contrasting Scientific Areas: *Engineering* and *Arts*

o **Content analysis:**

  ▪ HEIs' documents

  ▪ **Semi-structured interviews (June 2011)**

    1. Members of HEI's central management and administration

    2. Members of faculty/schools (deans, study programme directors, teaching staff and students)

	Faculty/Schools	Study Programme
HEI α	School of Sciences and Technology	Civil Engineering
	School of Arts	Design
HEI β	Faculty of Engineering	Civil Engineering
	Faculty of Fine Arts	Design of Communication
HEI γ	School of Technology and Management	Civil Engineering
	School of Education	Arts and Design
HEI δ	School of Technology	Civil Engineering Plastic Arts – Painting and Inter-Media

- **Framed by the national policy context**

- Possibility of **institutional direct intervention**: special access exams, minimum access marks…

- **Strategies to attract students especially related with the special competition access stream** (students older than 23 years and CETs regimes).

  - ➢ More systematised among polytechnics maybe due to the shortage of candidates

  - ➢ Mostly evident in *Arts* maybe due to the fact that *Engineering* holds a greater capacity to attract students.

Overall tendency to collect and disaggregate data (different cohorts of students), though not all significant data are collected, nor are always systematised and monitored by specific services

HEI α

- Comprehensive Report

- Integrated System of Information

- Data disaggregation (non-traditional students)

Globally, no specific concern with ethnic minorities' issues, but different strategies to support 'other' groups of students (lower socio-economic groups, non-native language speakers, mature students, students with disabilities)

HEI δ

- Support Service

- Social Services

- Learning Support

Changes

Increase in mobile students under the influence of the Bologna Process

Growth in regional students

Opening to new publics

Difficulty of attracting students (polytechnics) as the main restriction to the institutional quality policy

Barriers

Universities

- **National regulations on access**: *numeri clausi* system and fixed number of study programmes
- **Grades used as selection criteria** for HE access under the national access system

Polytechnics

- Students' increasingly lower **educational background**
- **Blurring between** the roles of **polytechnics and universities**
- **Geographical location**

Numeri clausi and centralised placement systems = HEIs' low autonomy to select students
Strategies to increase student numbers differ according to HEI's social reputation (status)

- ❑ **Portuguese HEIs seem to be only partly accomplishing ESG 1.1. (QA procedures) and 1.6. (Information systems)**
    - ▪ **not all the data are collected and systematised by formal structures specially designed for that purpose**
    - ▪ **despite efforts to assure and improve quality at the level of access, they seem to be in a very early stage and not driven by clearly formulated policies or strategies**
- ❑ **Though HEIs develop their own policies on access, this does not seem to be accompanied by policies and procedures for quality assurance or by a quality culture in what concerns access**

Thank you for your attention!