Bridging the gap to Quality Education for All: Sharing ideas and practices to enhance equity in Tertiary Education

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INQAAHE Forum 2024 2022. Bucharest, Romania

Identify global policies and practices to address inequalities in Tertiary Education

Expected Learning outcomes

1. Be able to place DEI practices in a conceptual framework which includes axis of inequality, moment and agents of intervention

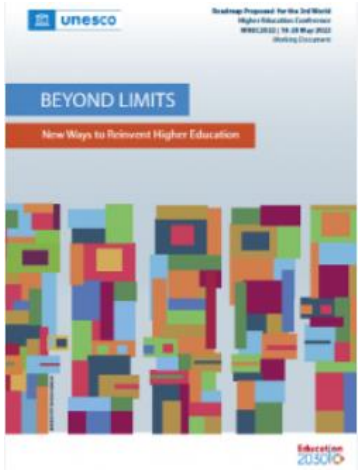
2. Maximize the interchange of practices among the participants taking advantage of the global audience

Structure of the session

Sharing ideas and practices to enhance equity in Tertiary Education	11:15-12:45
Introduction & context	20’
Let’s work (small groups) • Individual work (5’) • Table discussion (20’) • Voting (5’)	30’
Joint presentation - reporting	30’
Closing remarks	10’

Introduction and context

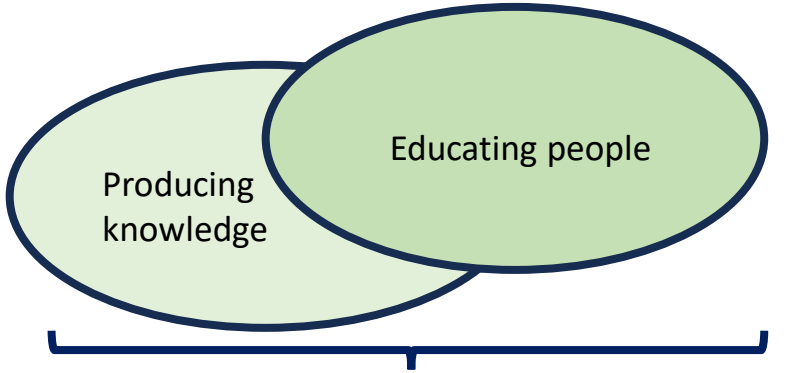
Introduction: why & what is the social dimension?



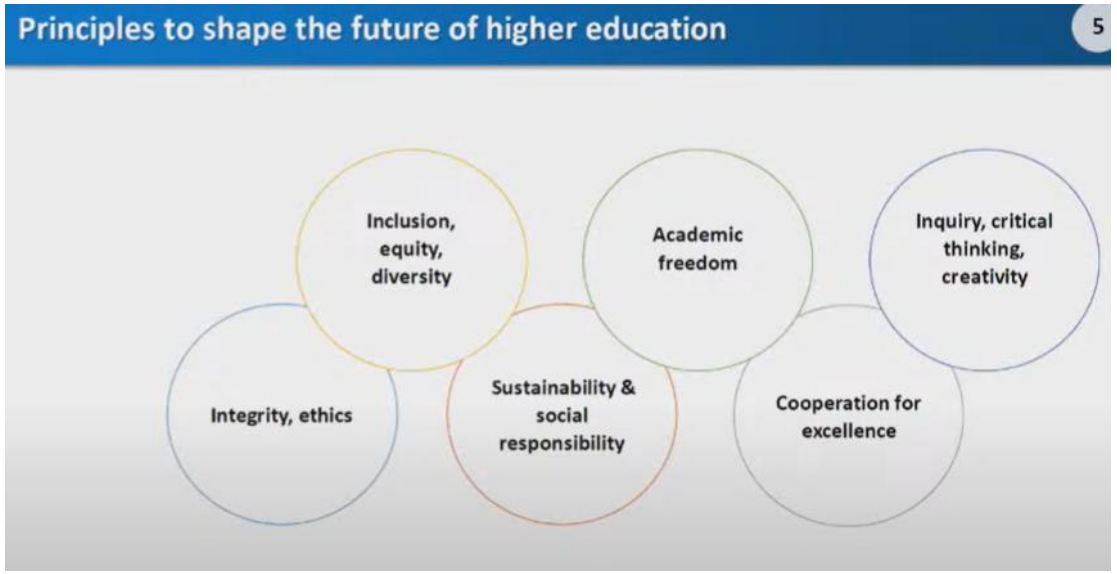
UNESCO's New Ways to Reinvent Higher Education-Roadmap 2023:

- Inclusion, Equity and Diversity, are one of the 6 principles that should shape the future of HE.
- Inequality is one of our shared Global challenges.
- The 3rd mission, Social responsibility, is not an addition, but the social outreach of actions related to education and research.

The missions of Higher Education



Social responsibility
It is not an addition: is the social outreach actions of Education & Research



Introduction and context: the social dimension in the EHEA

Ministerial conferences of the EHEA have gradually acknowledged the need to address educational inequalities

London 2007

'The student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations'

Bucarest 2012

It is agreed to step up efforts towards underrepresented groups to develop the social dimension of HE

Yerevan 2015

'*Widening participation for Equity and Growth*' Strategy

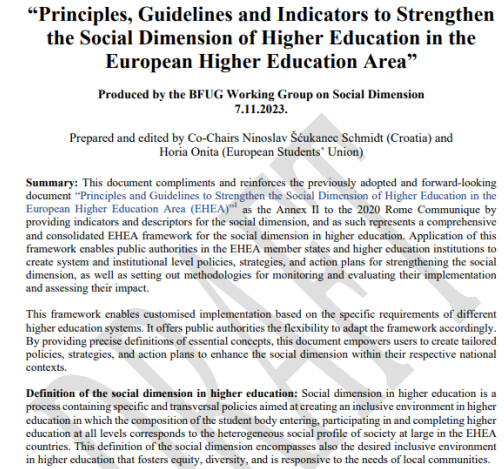
Paris 2018

At a moment when Europe is facing important societal challenges –ranging from unemployment and social inequality to migration-related issues and a rise in political polarisation, radicalisation and violent extremism – higher education **can and must** play a decisive role in providing solutions to these issues

Roma 2020

'Whenever possible, external QA systems should address how the social dimension, diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusion are reflected in the institutional missions of HEIs'

Tirana 2024



"Principles, Guidelines and Indicators to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area"

Produced by the BFUG Working Group on Social Dimension 7.11.2023.

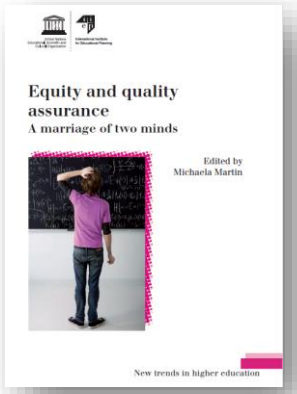
Prepared and edited by Co-Chairs Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt (Croatia) and Horia Onita (European Students' Union)

Summary: This document compliments and reinforces the previously adopted and forward-looking document "Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)" as the Annex II to the 2020 Rome Communique by providing indicators and descriptors for the social dimension, and as such represents a comprehensive and consolidated EHEA framework for the social dimension in higher education. Application of this framework enables public authorities in the EHEA member states and higher education institutions to create system and institutional level policies, strategies, and action plans for strengthening the social dimension, as well as setting out methodologies for monitoring and evaluating their implementation and assessing their impact.

This framework enables customised implementation based on the specific requirements of different higher education systems. It offers public authorities the flexibility to adapt the framework accordingly. By providing precise definitions of essential concepts, this document empowers users to create tailored policies, strategies, and action plans to enhance the social dimension within their respective national contexts.

Definition of the social dimension in higher education: Social dimension in higher education is a process containing specific and transversal policies aimed at creating an inclusive environment in higher education in which the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels corresponds to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large in the EHEA countries. This definition of the social dimension encompasses also the desired inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities.

Introduction and context: DEI and EQAPs



WHILE "EQA systems are not primarily geared towards monitoring the implementation of national equity policies, since (...) their main objective is to ensure certain standards across provision of higher Education"

EQA systems have the potential to be used as monitoring mechanism for the implementation of equity concerns

- in countries which have strong policy frameworks in place (...),
- and provided that QA agencies exploit external reports with this objective in mind.

WHY?

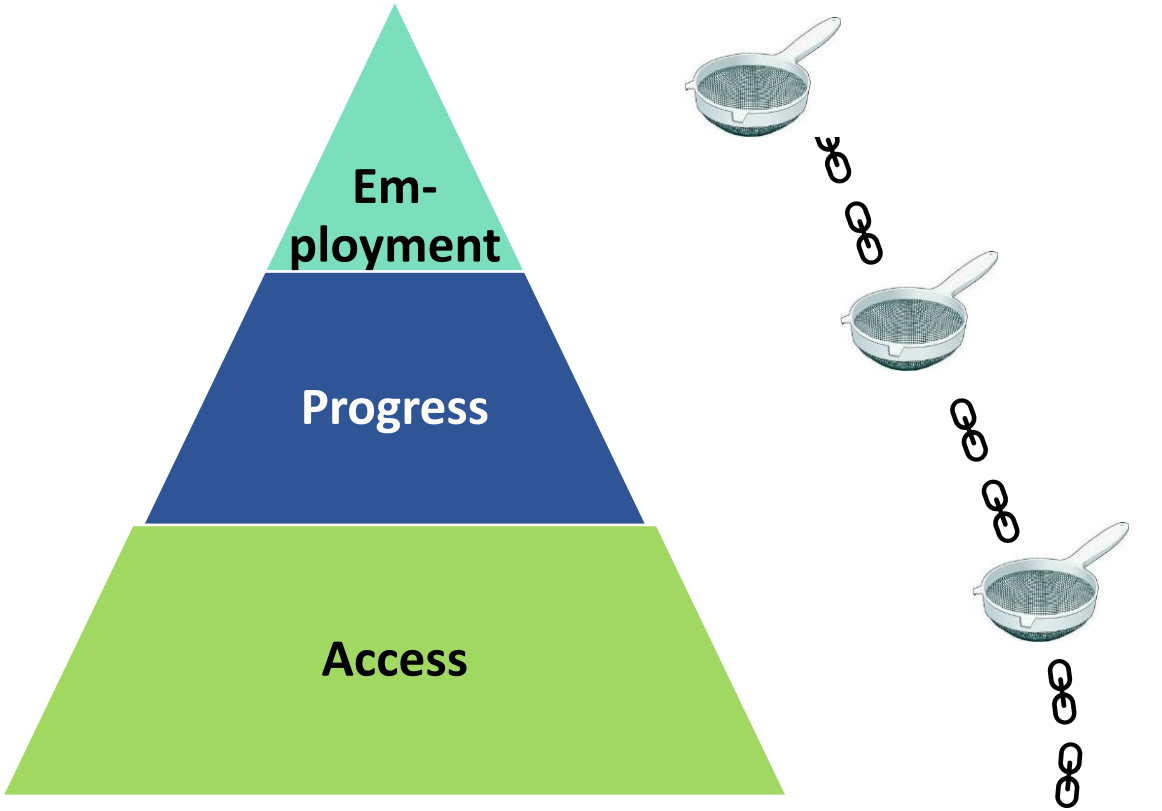
1. EQA is based in the SAR, which might trigers the Shared perception of the problem in the HE community
2. The analysis of the self-report crystallizes into an Improvement plan with defined actions, leaders and deadlines
3. Public reporting on assessment outcomes incentivize positive action

Framework 1/4: Axis of inequalities – Intersectionality

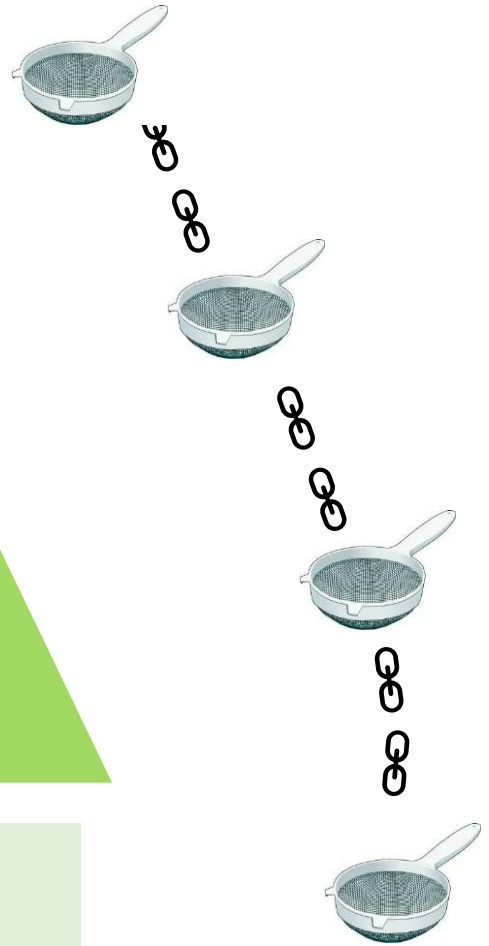
DALL·E

- Gender
- Age (mature students)
- Social class
- Ethnic / Race/ Religion
- Migration status
- Disabilities / Neurodiversity
- Territory (Rural vs urban)

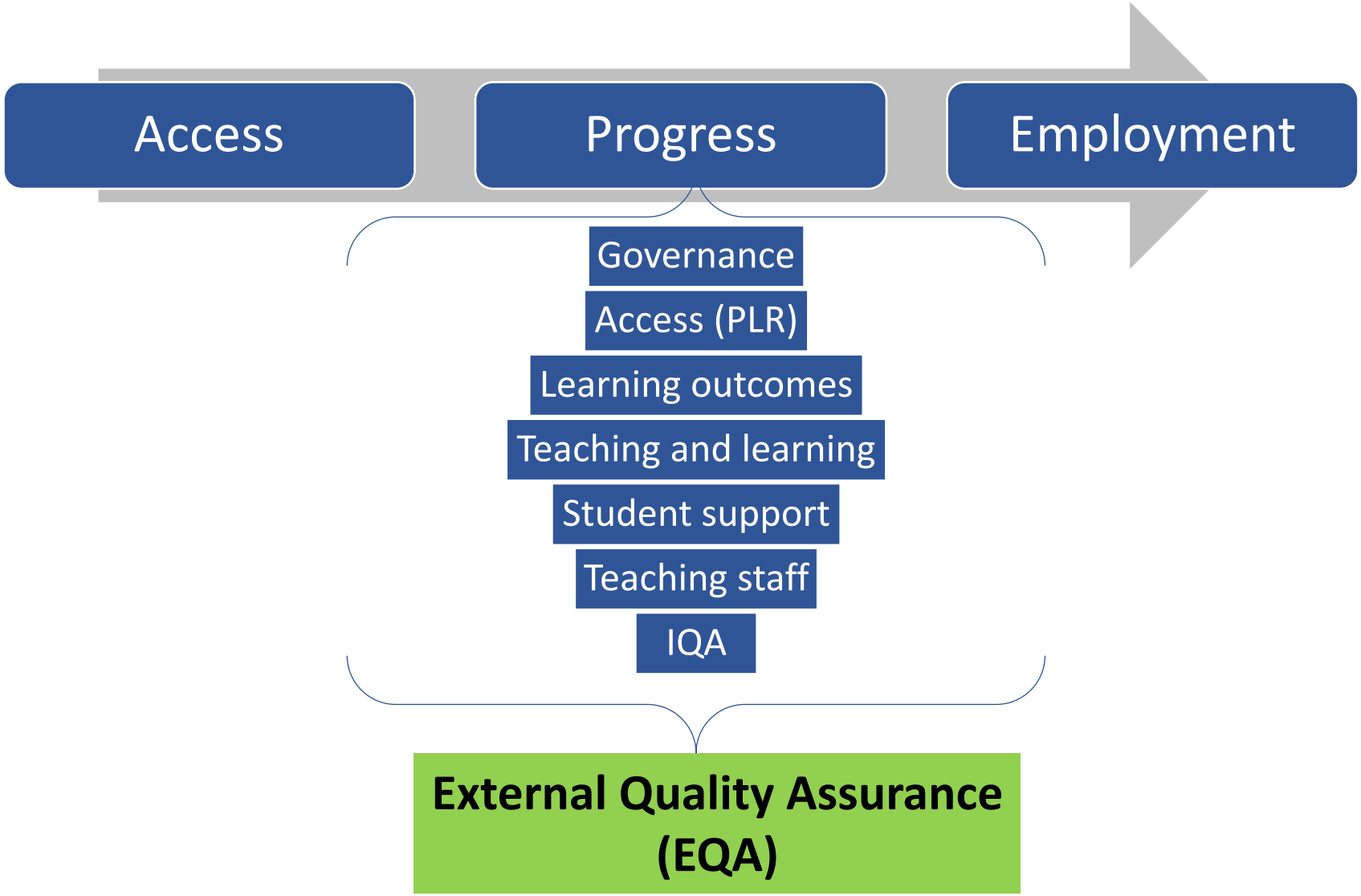
Framework 2/4: Moments of intervention



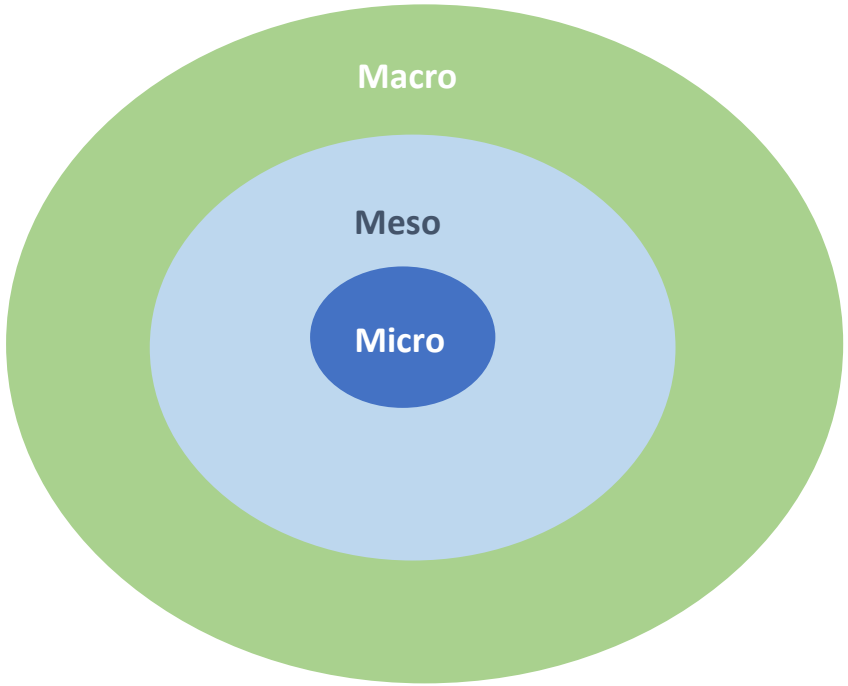
Educative experiences
previous to HE



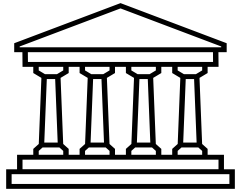
Framework 3/4: Dimensions of intervention during HEI

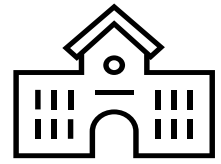


Framework 4/4: levels of intervention – agents

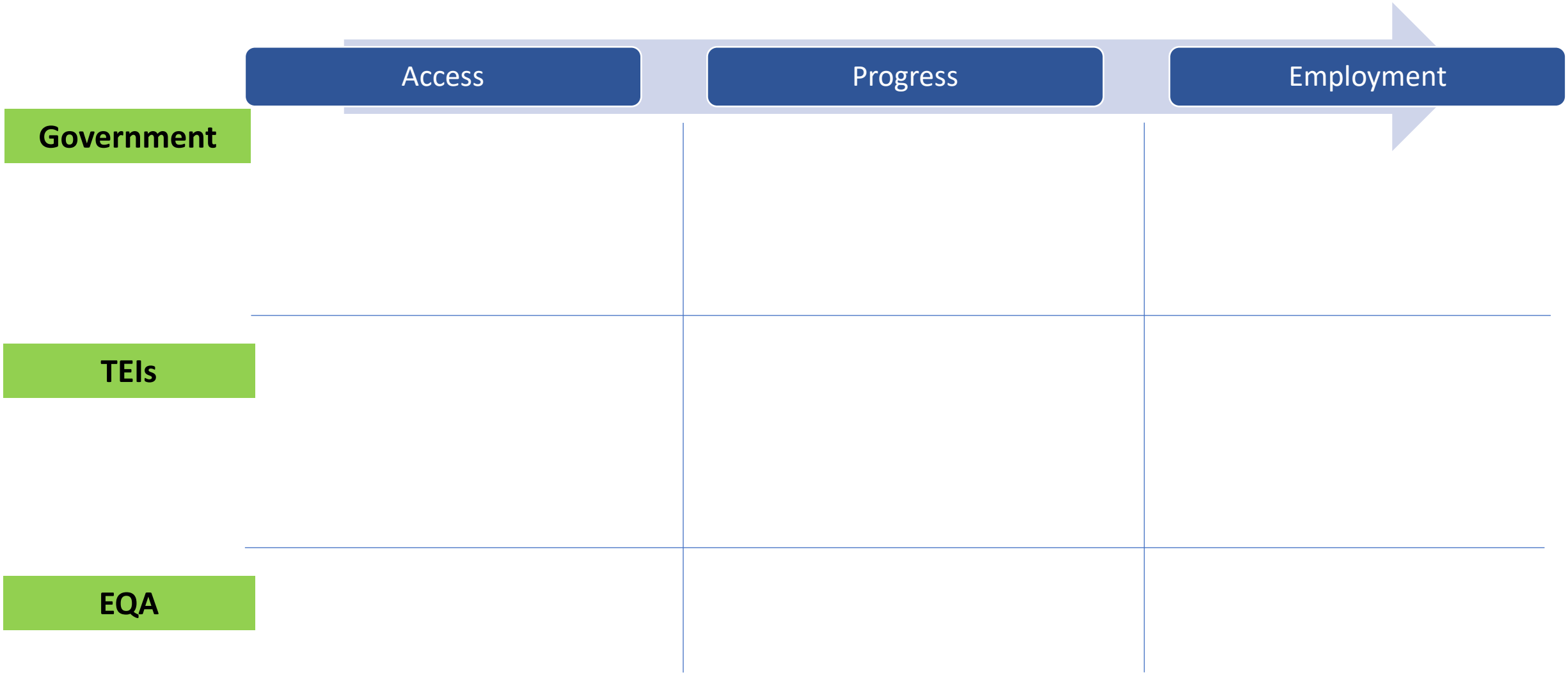


LARGE SYSTEMS Nations Legal systems Economies	**Government**
MEDIUM SYSTEMS Organisations communities	**External Quality Assurance Providers (EQAPs)**
SMALL SYSTEMS Relationships Classrooms	**T&L** **Tertiary Education Providers (TEIs)**





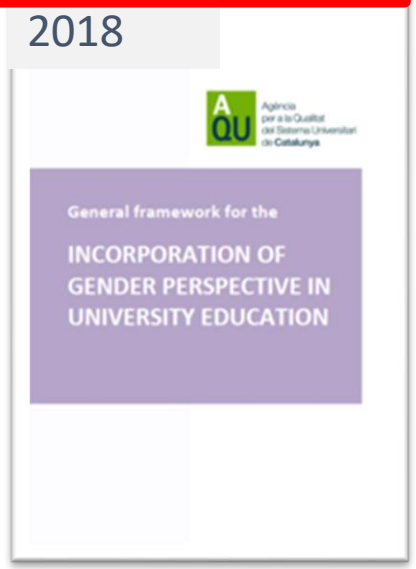
Gender equality axis



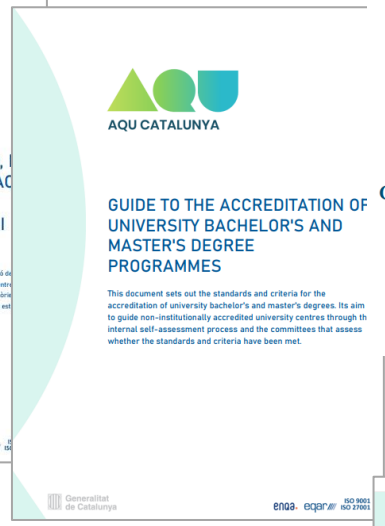
Case 1. AQU Catalunya: Framework for the Incorporation of gender perspective in HE

Article 28.1 **of Law 17/2015, on effective equality of women and men,** calls on universities to "introduce the mainstreaming of the gender perspective (...) in the curriculum of bachelor degrees and postgraduate programmes". And it also establishes that: gender must be mainstreamed in the external quality assurance processes.

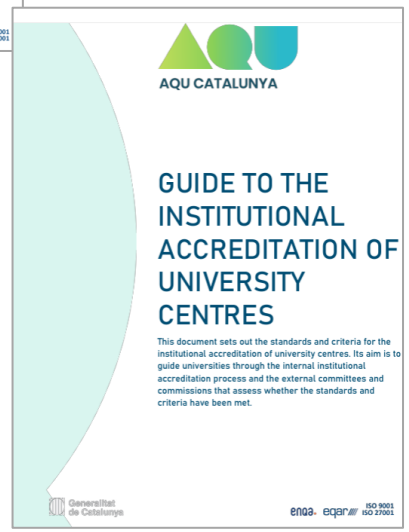
2018



2019



2022



I. ANNEX. THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

1. Quality of the training programme
2. Relevance of public information
3. Efficacy of the internal quality assurance system
4. Suitability of teaching staff
5. Effectiveness of learning support systems
6. Quality of outcomes

Curriculum

- Type of subject/disciplines in which the gender perspective is incorporated: significant contributions to the study programme content (core subjects, optional subjects, mentions and specialisms, etc.).
- Production of materials incorporating the gender perspective.
- Skills and learning outcomes.
- Teaching resources (bibliography).
  - Equality within the teaching staff structure.
  - Equality in the assignment of teaching schedules.
  - Training of teaching staff in gender mainstreaming (teaching and research).
  - Consideration of gender bias in mechanisms for assessing teaching staff.

Case 2. AQU Catalunya: Social dimension in the Institutional Accreditation

Standard 1.7. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The centre has a policy that enables it to contribute satisfactorily to the sustainable development of its social and economic environment.

The centre's policies and strategies for teaching and learning are designed to respect and adapt to the diversity of students (universal design for learning).

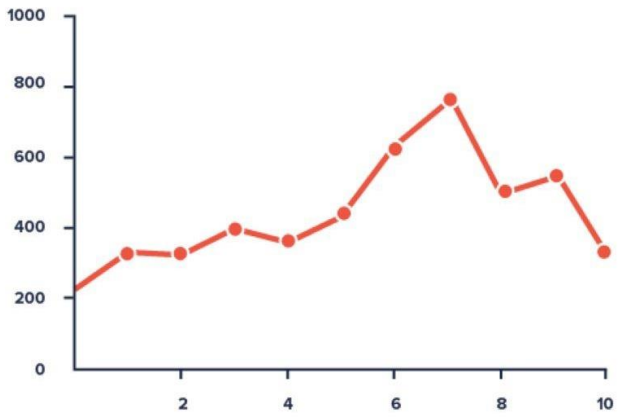
There is a plan for effective equality between men and women, which is in place and appropriate.

The **social dimension of the centre is evident in the existence of an appropriate policy for its involvement in society regarding training, research and knowledge transfer,** which also includes the incorporation of its graduates in the workforce.

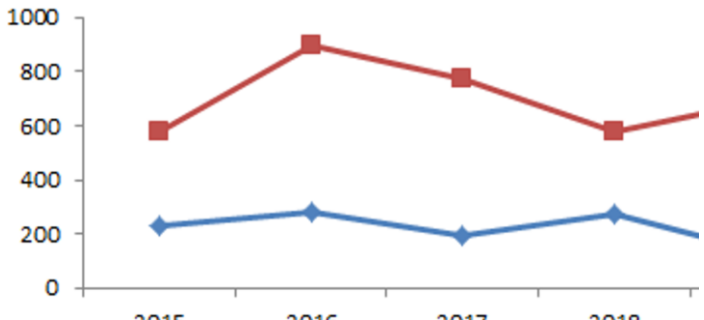
Mechanisms for analysing and reviewing the results of this policy have been introduced, and they are operative and effective

Case 3. AQU Catalunya: Catalogue of indicators

- **Output: indicator catalogue** to measure (in)equity in Catalan higher education.



Line graph showing the evolution of the university access rate of young people (16-24 years old)



Line graph showing the evolution of the university access rate of young people (16-24 years old) according to equity axis. Allows selecting by Social class and Gender.

Map of the undergraduate access rate by counties. If a county is selected, it allows seeing the evolution in the line graphs.

Case 3. Unibasq: Basque University Plans

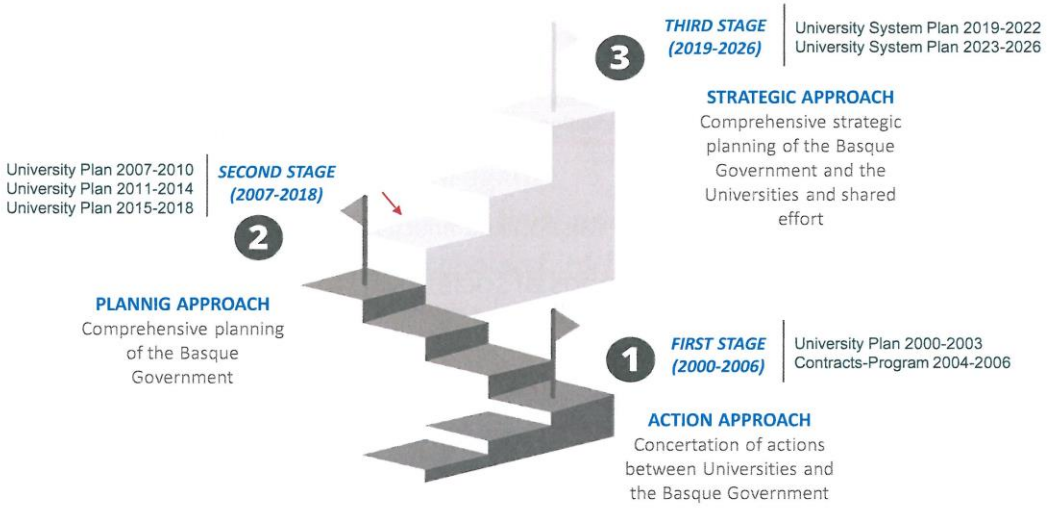


Figure 3: Evolution of the planning of university policies in the Basque Country.

Case 3. Unibasq: Basque University Plans

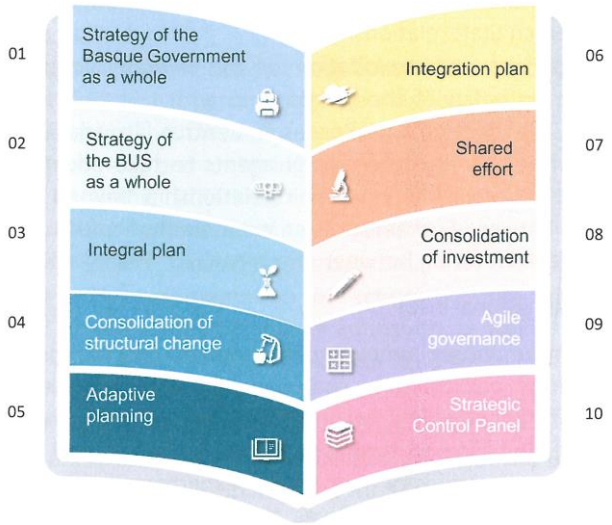
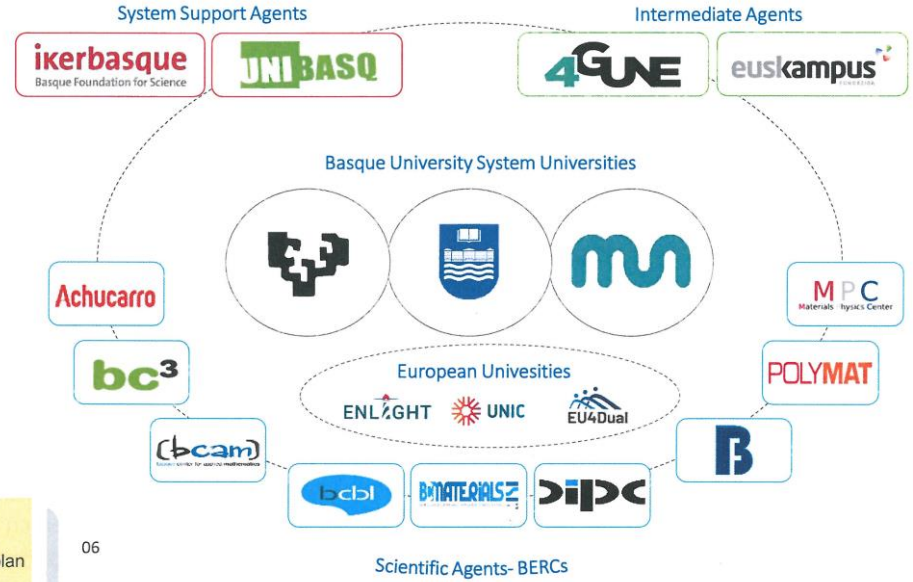


Figure 5: Strategic development bases of the USP 2023-2026



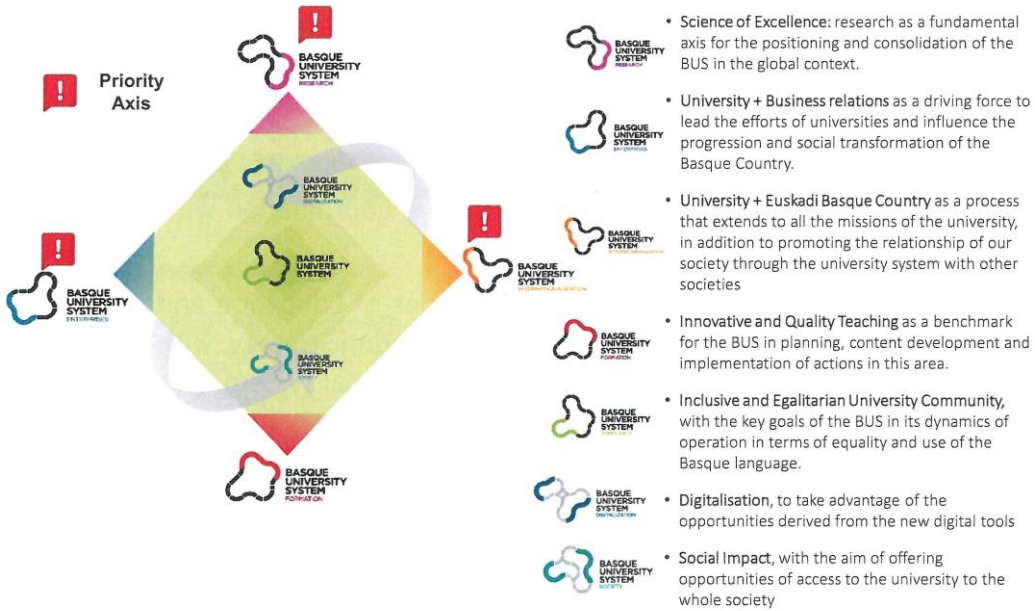


Figure 6: University System Plan 2023-2026 development axes.

Case 3. Unibasq: Basque University Plans

Inclusive and egalitarian university community	
Gender equality	• 50% women in STEM • 50% academic staff
Basque language	• 50% students
Students	Access for all to support programmes (job guidance, psychological care, etc.)
Equity	Grants
Digitalisation	Training in digital skills
Social impact	Employment rate of graduates >90% University models for measuring social impact and making it visible

1. To consolidate **universities as a reference in gender equality**, from the fields of training and research to professional development.

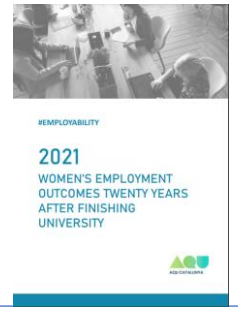
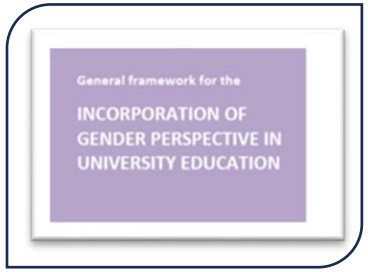
2. To contribute to the **normalisation of the use of the Basque language in the university** environment, as well as in the **workplace**.

3. To develop an offer of **support to students** in external aspects that may have an **impact on their university education**.

4. To offer **equal access to university activities** to the whole of Basque society, and especially to **groups with fewer resources**.

The cases in the Matrix

Gender equality axis

	Access	Progress	Employment
Government			
TEIs			
EQA			**Gender perspective in AQU Catalunya teaching staff accreditation (2022)**

Social class axis

	Access	Progress	Employment
Government			
TEIs			
EQA			

Let’s work!

In small groups (30’)

- **Individual work 5’**
- **Table discussion 20’**
- **Voting 5’**

Report to the plenary (30’)

Thank you for your attention!

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