

Social Dimension in Higher Education: Implementation of National Policies at HEIs in Croatia

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Social dimension of higher education – HEIs in Croatia

- *National strategy* and legislation (Government, Ministry of Science and Education)
- Recommendations - Rectors' Conference
- Implementation - Higher education institution (university, faculty)

- University strategic documents
- Regulations, guidelines, measures and activities for enhancement of inclusion
- Quality Assurance documents

- National Plan for the Advancement of Social Dimension in HE (January 2019)

Key objectives:

1. Systematically collect and process information relevant to the improvement of the social dimension of HE
2. Improve access for under-represented and vulnerable groups
3. Provide equal opportunities for all students during their studies
4. Increase the rate of completion and employment after graduation
5. Improve the system of financial support
6. Include standards related to the advancement of social dimension in the quality assurance system

1. Collect and process information

- Centralised data collection (in collaboration with the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education, Ministry of Science and Education, Agency for Science and Higher Education)
- Registration procedure – questionnaire for new students
- Periodical analyzes and surveys at universities on drop-out of students
- Annual reports on students' achievements

2. Access to higher education

- Higher-education promotion
- Admission advantages
 - candidates with disabilities
 - candidates without parents, under 24 years of age
 - war veterans
 - children of deceased war veterans
 - children of war veterans with disabilities
 - children of dismissed or perished war veterans
 - children of dismissed, perished civilian war casualties
 - children - civilian war casualties

3. Equal opportunities for all students during their studies

- Investments in infrastructure and facilities improvement
- Counselling centres
- Committee for support to students with disabilities – flexible study programmes
- Technical and IT support
- Peer support Course
- Financial support for students of lower social and economic status as well as for students with disabilities
- Support to part-time students (Student Employment Act, november 2018)

4. Completion of studies and employment

- Increase of work-based learning – internship agreements with employers
- Student support activities – Counselling centre
 - Individual academic and psychological counselling
 - Career counselling
 - Mentoring programmes
 - Peer support – student mentor projects
 - Application to ESF Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020
Development, improvement and implementation of internship in higher education
- Tracking employment of graduates
 - Alumni associations
 - Croatian Employment Service

5. System of financial support

- Scholarships and financial support for under-represented and vulnerable groups of students at university level
 - students of lower social and economic status
 - students with disabilities
 - part-time students
 - students with children
 - students experiencing difficulties (loss of parents, hard disease etc.)
- Availability of accomodation
 - admission advantages for under-represented groups of students
- Cooperation with companies, banks, foundations, local government, NGOs

6. Quality assurance system at HEIs

- Quality assurance documents with embedded standards related to the improvement of social dimension of higher education
 - Quality Policy regulations and manuals
- Continuous monitoring and evaluation of students' achievements
 - Measures for improvement of student's achievements
 - Semestral evaluation of courses and students' achievements
 - Periodical reports on internal quality assurance and follow-up action plans
- Continuous improvement of processes and procedures related to under-represented and vulnerable groups of students
 - external evaluation reports and external experts recommendations