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2009-10-01

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Recommended Citation

Hazelkorn, E.: Trends in Higher Education: What's Happening in Ireland. 'Delivering Change in the Higher Education Sector', Higher Education Leadership Conference, Dublin. October, 2009.

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Trends in Higher Education: What's Happening in Ireland

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'Delivering Change in the Higher Education Sector'
16 October 2009

Higher Education Policy Research Unit

The Future?

- The era of laissez faire in higher education is ending.
- It will be replaced by a higher education system characterised by directed diversity.
- The key element of such a system is a coherent system of higher education institutions, co-ordinated to respond effectively to national goals.
- The key drivers of change are the related dictates of quality and resourcing.
- The mechanisms required to achieve this will include quasi contractual agreements, performance related funding, rationalisation of provision and greater mobility/flexibility in staffing.
- In addition to a coherent system of higher education, the system of education at all levels must be more co-ordinated with more porous interconnections, especially between post primary and tertiary levels.

T Boland, June 2009

Themes

- Globalisation and Higher Education
- Trends and Selective Experiences
- Responding to the Crisis

1. Globalisation and Higher Education

Setting the Future Global Context (1)

1. Globalisation is forcing change across all knowledge-intensive industries, creating a 'single world market'. The 'battle for brainpower' complements traditional struggles for natural resources. '
2. Application of knowledge is the source of social, economic and political power. Knowledge production (research) transcends national boundaries requiring membership of global networks. Today, knowledge is a geo-political issue forcing HEIs to respond to a diverse range of global, national, regional and local stakeholders.
3. Simple distinctions between basic and applied research have been replaced by the 'knowledge triangle': the inter-relationship between education, research and innovation.

Setting the Future Global Context (2)

4. Worldwide comparisons are becoming increasingly significant. Global rankings measure the knowledge-producing capacity & talent-attractiveness of HEIs.

5. The EHEA and ERA are being reshaped/restructured to ensure the EU can better compete. At the same time, other nations are investing heavily in higher education and human capital.

6. The 'Golden-age' of Higher Education is disappearing at a time when the 'reputation race' is accelerating. This puts particular pressure on small, publicly-funded HE systems.

National Context

- HE Review:
  - Assess HE's fitness-for-purpose, develop vision and national policy objectives, and identify 'focused targets' for the next 5 years;
  - Consider number and roles of institutions, governance and accountability, level of resources and potential for greater efficiency 'having particular regard to the difficult budgetary and economic climate that is in prospect in the medium term'.
- *Building Ireland's Smart Economy*:
  - Restructure HE system will be priority with new Higher Education Strategy to enhance system wide performance;
  - New organisational mergers and alliances that can advance performance through more effective concentration of expertise and investment;
- *Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes*
  - Savings proposed incl. €10.2m capital

2. Trends

Overview of Trends

1. Global competitiveness, systems and governance
2. Funding
3. Research, assessment and rankings
4. Internationalisation and the ‘battle for talent’
5. Changing workplace and academic work

1. Global competitiveness, systems and governance

- If higher education is the 'engine' of the economy, then the productivity, status, quality of the HEIs/the system is key indicator;
- Rise of worldwide rankings focuses attention on 'attractiveness' of nations and HEIs:
  - World cities and city regions competing;
  - Focus on capacity of institutions;
- Increasing diversification of provision and differentiation of institutional mission
  - Growing gap between elite and mass;
  - Rising significance of private, fee-paying, sector;
- Drive for greater accountability and transparency,
  - Pressure for value-for-money and satisfy investor-confidence.

World-class Universities vs. World Class Systems

- Two major policy positions being adopted around the world:
  - Few research universities concentrate all world class research across all disciplines; rest concentrate on undergraduate or professional teaching with limited locally relevant applied research.
  - Spread of teaching and research excellence with universities as 'main proximity knowledge providers' driven to specialise because of relevance and competences.

Selective Experiences

- China: €16b since 1996 on '211' and '985' initiatives developing 100 world-class universities w/ focus on 10 top.
- Germany: *Exzellenzinitiative* (2005) = €1.9b over 5 years for 10 universities
- France: €5b campus-renovation fund to 10 best bids, forcing mergers plus increased autonomy (2007).
- Denmark: University mergers (2007) 27→11; competitive based funding model (2009-).
- Norway: HE Review recommends mergers 38 →8/10 HEIs, removing traditional distinctions between universities and colleges.
- Australia: HE Review endorses 'excellence wherever it occurs'
- EU: Classification Project

Net Acceptances by Sector, 2000-2008

Type of Institution	2000		2002		2004		2006		2008	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Colleges of Education	1,203	3	1,117	3	1,311	4	1,478	4	1,726	4
DIT	3,345	9	3,297	9	3,098	8	3,000	8	3,141	7.5
IoTs	15,722	42	14,812	40	14,345	38	14,294	36	15,555	37
Universities	15,714	42	15,629	43	17,398	46	18,226	47	19,745	47
Others	1,541	4	1,712	5	1,644	4	1,957	5	1,950	4.5
Total	37,525	100	36,625	100	37,796	100	38,955	100	42,117	100

CAO, Board of Directors Report,

Ireland

- Current system constrained by historical circumstances and unresponsive to changing national and global requirements.
- HE Review to focus on the fitness-for-purpose of the 'system' as a whole:
  - Excellence and international competitiveness;
  - Top-down differentiation not adequate response to diversity of opportunity and research mission.
- Governance at the system level similar to US state-systems to ensure greater coherence, collaboration and efficiency, and avoid duplication.
- Review of HE Systems and Governance
  - Modernisation agenda: 'restructure or die' (*THE*, 9 July 2009);
  - Shift from autonomy to increased regulation or steering;
  - Strategic or regional clusters and institutional mergers.

2. Funding

- Declining public support for public services w/ growing gap between public provision and rising costs;
- Differentiation through competitive funding;
- Funding tied to measurable performance outcomes/indicators;
- Diversified funding/income sources:
  - Differential and de-regulated tuition fees;
  - Competitive or externally earned funding;
  - Private, endowment, alumni funding;
  - Commercialisation of research and other knowledge products/services.

Selective Experience

- Australia
  - Institutional Compacts with resources allocated according to mission and performance;
  - Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) – student loan system or fee-paying;
- Finland
  - Planning Agreements with resources allocated according to mission and performance;
- Core funding averages ~ 50% of total budget.

Ireland

- GRAM – new funding model for all HEIs:
  - Core funding linked to student numbers – likely to change from incoming students to completion rates;
  - 5% research performance – likely to increase.
- Will see greater emphasis on performance-based funding
  - Shift from inputs to outputs
  - Link to mission?
  - Funding tied to particular competitive initiatives – and driving behaviour.

3. Research, assessment and rankings

- Research is:
  - Increasingly project-based, externally funded with timely outcomes;
  - A ‘business’ and not simply an intellectual pursuit;
  - Collaborative and interdisciplinary knowledge;
  - Emphasis on usefulness knowledge: applied and not-yet applied.
- Funding and opportunities tied to priority research domain;
- Increasing emphasis on measuring performance & international benchmarking
  - Peer vs. metric-based assessment;
  - Impact: citations vs. employability;
  - Basic vs. applied – with greater emphasis on shorter time-lines and deliverables.

Selective Experiences

- EU: Expert Group: Assessment of University-Based Research
- UK: Research Assessment Exercise
  - Shift from RAE with peer-review to metrics-based
  - ‘League table’ of research excellence; concentration of ‘winners’
  - Economic Impact indicators
  - Tied to resource allocation
- Australia: ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia)
  - Research output measured by 4 standard types: academic books, book chapters, refereed journal articles, conference papers
  - Social and economic impact
  - Tied to resource allocation
- Netherlands: Research Embedment and Performance Profile (REPP)
  - Assessment tied to institutional mission
  - Self-study element
  - Not tied to funding

Ireland

- PRTLI
  - ‘Unofficial’ research assessment exercise
  - Aligning Research Strategy, Priorities & Performance
  - Coherence, Consolidation and Collaboration
- Sunday Times Ranking – indicator for research income
- HEA/Forfás Mapping Exercise
- Indicator studies, e.g. RIA, IUA
- Citation project: IUA + DIT
- HE Review
  - RAE-type process
  - Performance-based institutional and academic contracts.

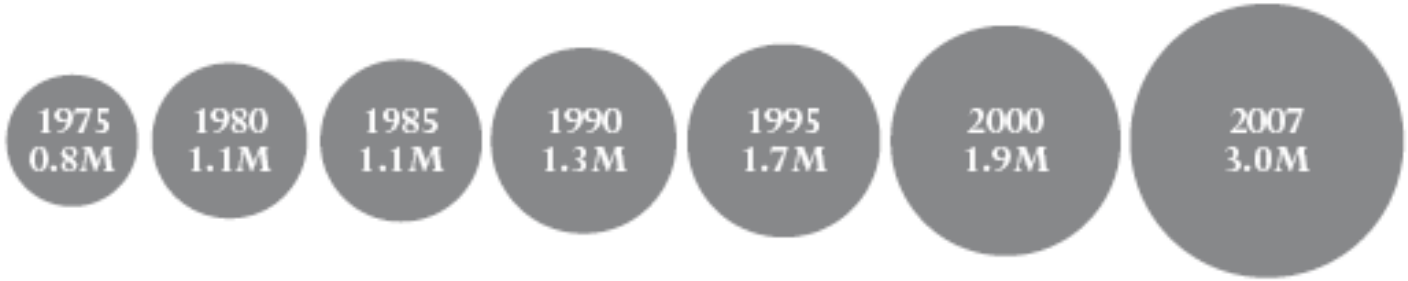
4. Internationalisation and the ‘battle for talent’

- ‘Battle for Brainpower’ and ‘Scramble for Students’:
- Discerning, diverse, mobile international students
  - Students seen as ‘citizens’, ‘consumers’ and ‘clients’
  - Changing student experience
- Globalization and internationalization of education
  - Transportability of internationally accredited qualifications – is the Bologna model the new world model?
  - Global rankings influencing student behaviour and choice
  - Cross-border student mobility, esp. for English-language specialist and postgraduate programmes

Growth in International Students

Box C2.1. Long term growth in the number of students enrolled outside their country of citizenship

Growth in internationalisation of tertiary education (1975-2007)

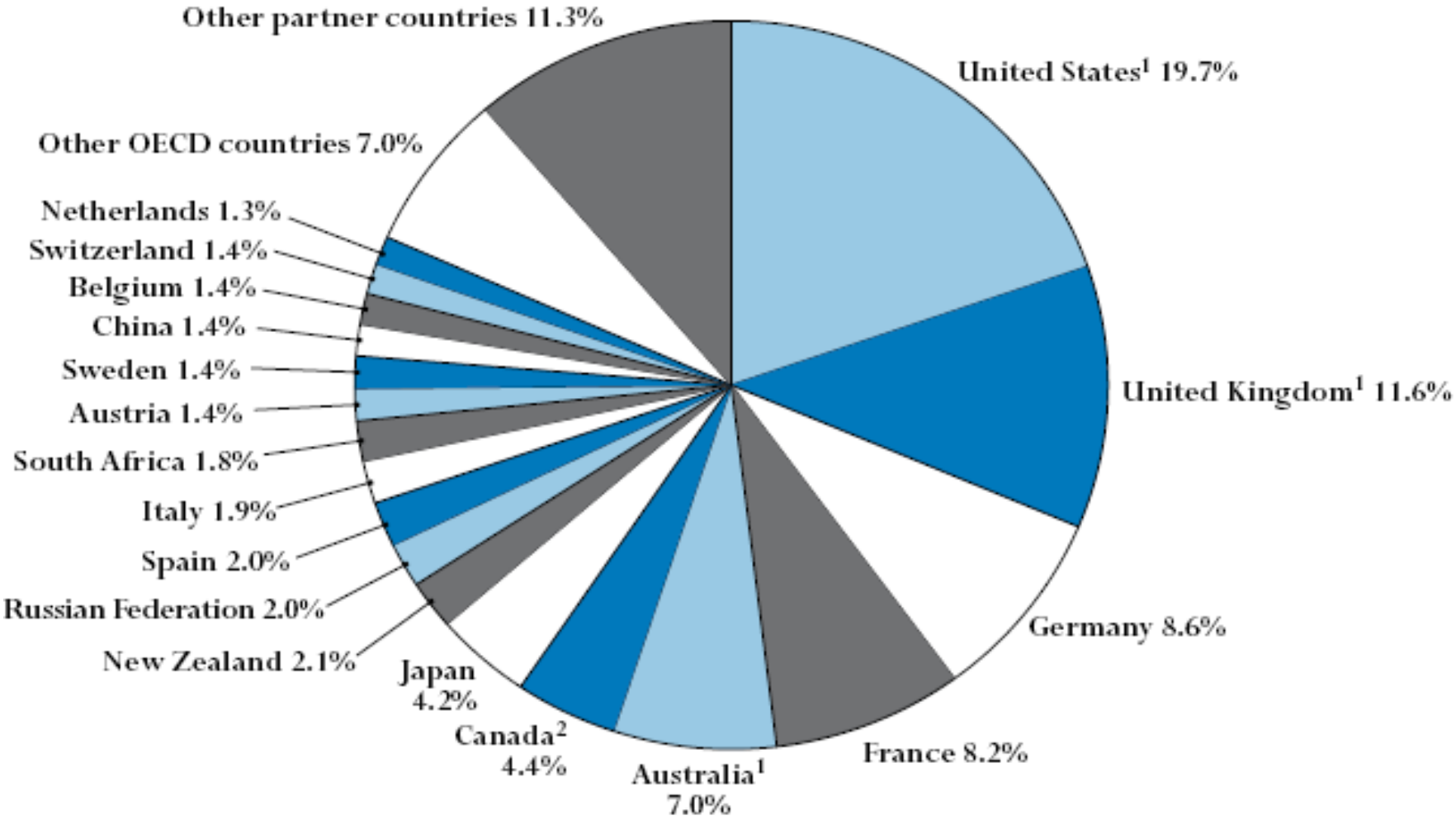


Source: OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Data on foreign enrolment worldwide comes from both the OECD and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). UIS provided the data on all countries for 1975-1995 and most of the partner countries for 2000 and 2007. The OECD provided the data on OECD countries and the other partner economies in 2000 and 2007. Both sources use similar definitions, thus making their combination possible. Missing data were imputed with the closest data reports to ensure that breaks in data coverage do not result in breaks in time series.

Education at a Glance, 2009, OECD

Percentage of foreign tertiary students reported to the OECD who are enrolled in each country of destination



Education at a Glance, 2009, OECD

Rankings influencing Student Choice

- Rankings influencing students and governments:
  - ‘Since global rankings have appeared, we are receiving an increasing number of foreign delegations.’
  - Our “profile has increased because of rankings” among international students, recruitment agencies and other HEIs who want to form partnerships with us.
- Scholarships and Recognition
  - Mongolia and Qatar are restricted to students admitted to highly ranked international universities
  - Recognition of foreign qualifications (Macedonia automatically recognizes qualifications from the top 500 universities listed in the THES or SJT or U.S. News and Report)
  - Singapore: Foreign University Status

Ireland

- Trend in student acceptances between universities/IoTs has changed dramatically over last 10 years;
- Critical mass of many smaller colleges raises questions regarding viability and capacity, esp. regarding research;
- Level of internationalisation quite low – despite English language;
  - ~9% of third-level students in Ireland are international, but Ireland has only ~.9 % (27,275 in 06/07) of the international student market.
  - Restrictions on recruitment may force top talent to move elsewhere;
  - European neighbours actively reducing barriers to international education, devising innovative policies and incentives to attract (and keep) international students – important at multiple levels – in their institutions and countries.

5. Changing workplace and academic work

- Emphasis on performance and outputs – as the vital criteria for appointment, tenure and promotion;
- Government and institutional priority-setting replacing and driving (and changing?) individual research agendas;
- Changes in academic contracts and terms of employment with an emphasis on flexibility;
- Faculty in universities experiencing 'work intensification'; newer HEIs experiencing paradigm shift within 'three concentric circles of change':
  - Emphasis on research and productivity to underpin quality;
  - Institutional changes in response to competition and policy drivers;
  - Changes across HE sector broadly.

Selective Experiences

- UK
  - Performance targets for student recruitment, student satisfaction, quality assurance and research ratings
  - Emphasis on ‘getting ahead in career’ rather than ‘advancing knowledge’
  - Need for staff development, certification in teaching, educational management, etc.

- US
  - Tenure process being extended from normal 7 to 10 years
  - 9 month contracts
  - Academic salaries pegged to market value, research performance, etc.
  - Increasing dependence on casual, part time faculty

Ireland

Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes: 'Permanent structural reduction in public service posts'.

- Scope for greater productivity;
- IoTs/DIT
  - Requirement for an annualised contract;
  - Extra payment for work forming part of normal duties;
  - weighting allowance for hours worked after 6pm of 1.5;
  - rates of pay in music schools for one-to-one tuition.
- Universities
  - No specific provision in relation to teaching hours;
  - Formal academic workload management system across the sector;
  - Undergraduate teaching commitments for senior academic staff;
  - Performance management across the system;

3. Responding to the Crisis

Golden Age of HE Over?

- Crisis Precipitating Trends Already Apparent
- Permanent Structural Change in HE and the HE System
- Ireland is late addressing many of these issues.

- How is higher education going to cope with less money?
- Should HEIs be allowed to fail?
- Who and which HEIs will benefit?

Short-term tactics

- Reduce or freeze recruitment
- Outsourcing support services
- Downsize and merge
- Selective programme elimination
- Increase workloads
- Increase contract working – reduce or redefine tenure
- Stop maintenance

Longer term strategy

- Strategically focus on mission and key fields of excellence
  - Real proven strengths in at least 2 sides of knowledge triangle: teaching, research & innovation
- City-Region collaboration
- Identify new opportunities by aligning curriculum to key sectors
- Adopt new technologies and alter pedagogy
- Downsize or merge
- New business model for HE?

Need to take tough choices or won't exist in the future.

Strategy for Small Nations

- Small nations face particular difficulties seeking to build world class universities without sacrificing other policy objectives.
- Despite strong growth in recent years, Ireland's performance and level of investment remains low compared with EU and OECD colleagues;
- Ireland should develop a strategic response:
  - Portfolio of high performing, globally-focused HEIs horizontally differentiated according to mission and field specialisation;
  - Strategic/regional clustering of HE and research institutes actively engaged with government, industry innovation and arts via the formation of global knowledge cities/regions;
  - A 'whole of country strategy' should focus on enabling balanced global engagement across teaching, research, and doctoral training.

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http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/rankings