A TEMPUS STUDY

Changing rules
A review of Tempus support to university governance

European Commission
TEMPUS

Issue 01 — February 2010

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus

Changing rules
A review of Tempus support to university governance

Authors

John Reilly
University of Kent, United Kingdom
and
Ard Jongsma
International Correspondents in Education, Denmark

This study has been produced within the framework of the European Union Tempus programme which is funded by the EuropeAid Co-operation Office and the Directorate-General for Enlargement.

Introduction

The rapid expansion and cost of higher education, the emphasis on 'modernising' the sector, concerns about quality and efficiency, the demands of the labour market (bringing a new focus on curriculum), the transfer of authority and responsibility with increasing institutional autonomy, all contribute to make the topic of governance of higher education a central concern within the European Union .

Higher education in Europe is still predominantly state funded which means that the debate on governance is delicately balanced between regulation (state control) and delegation (autonomy).

The European Union's neighbouring countries have a natural interest in these developments. Some prepare for accession, others for less formal relations with the EU. Most regulate their higher education sector in ways that are reminiscent of recent EU practice. This means that lessons learnt in the European Union are of relevance to them.

The Tempus Programme, which funds cooperation in higher education between universities in EU Member States and a defined set of partner countries outside the European Union, is excellently positioned to support explorations into higher education governance in countries that want to draw on the developing EU experience in this field.

Governance is a relatively new issue in the Tempus priorities and has gained in importance under Tempus IV, which means that there are a number of projects on governance which have only started recently. This study looks at finished projects and tries to identify areas that deserve future attention and support.

It seeks to reflect on understandings of governance and to emphasise the importance of the regional, national, economic, political and social context. It discusses how governance is shaped by the way in which autonomy is interpreted, by the funding regime, management and external quality assurance.

The study should encourage those involved in higher education in the Tempus partner countries to use the Tempus programme to help develop appropriate governance structures that support the diversity needed to enable their universities to realise their full potential.

Brief methodology

A shortlist of 31 recent Tempus projects associated with the topic of governance was drawn up. A detailed study of the project documentation revealed that the majority of the projects engaged more with management than governance although, as the literature indicates, the two are closely related and impact on one another. It also showed that, while governance is a priority under Tempus IV, it did not feature to the same extent under previous phases of the Tempus programme.

To avoid brief descriptions of a large number of projects it was decided to provide detailed, practical information on a small number of projects identifying strengths and challenges. Consequently, six projects from the shortlist were selected in six different countries, two per Tempus region. Projects were chosen on the basis of their scope (topic) and to ensure a broad range of good practice. The intention was to visit countries not visited in the 2008 study on quality assurance. While this goal was achieved for four projects this turned out not to be possible for all six.

A questionnaire designed to provide general and comparable information about national developments in governance was circulated to all the National Tempus Offices, who responded with valuable information and insights, often provided with the help of national authorities and other experts. The questionnaire is added as Annex I. An analysis of the results of the questionnaire is given in chapter 3.

The visits to the six projects involved meetings with senior managers, project staff, teaching staff, administrative staff and students. Where possible meetings were arranged with representatives of the national authority (typically a minister or deputy minister) or national experts, in some countries this involved a group of experts on national councils or similar bodies.

These visits revealed the extent to which projects and change were driven by enthusiastic and committed staff and the obstacles and challenges which they had encountered. Face-to-face meetings added a dimension to the understanding of what had been achieved and what still remained to be done, which could not have emerged from the formal reports on the projects. Perhaps most of all they demonstrated the impact on the individuals and teams who were implementing radical changes. The results of the case studies can be found in chapter 4.

The case studies illustrate how Tempus contributes to changing the higher education landscape through projects that have an impact well beyond the beneficiary institutions. What was particularly interesting was the way in which the projects interacted with and influenced or were influenced by emerging higher education legislation impacting on governance. Colleagues whose experience has been enriched through Tempus projects contributed to national developments. In other cases grassroots pressure and initiatives increased the momentum for reform.

Most of all, however, the projects illustrate the creativity and enthusiasm with which people in challenging circumstances commit themselves to raising standards in higher education.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the many people without whose support this study would not have been realised.

These include the staff of the National Tempus Offices who responded to the wide ranging and lengthy questionnaire on national developments and in particular the staff of the National Tempus Offices in Belgrade, Damascus, Kiev, Moscow, Rabat and Skopje without whose assistance the study visits would have been impossible to organise.

The staffs of the universities, national agencies, ministries and EC Delegations were open, sympathetic, patient and generous with their time and hospitality. A visit to the University of Southeast Europe in Tetovo which had no Tempus project gave fresh insights into a different approach to governance and the structures which had been developed in a private university.

We are most grateful to Sarah Hagart from the University of Kent who collated data from the questionnaires, helped us with the analysis and prepared the graphs and charts for the final report.

The advice, experience, and suggestions of colleagues who work (or worked) on Tempus at the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and at the European Commission, have been invaluable. The insights, enthusiasm and wise advice from Deirdre Lennan and Claire Morel in particular have guided us and to them we owe special thanks.

October 2009

John Reilly, Canterbury
Ard Jongsma, Odense

Executive summary

Higher education in the countries in this study has been and continues to be subject to legislative reform. In general, the legislative framework for higher education institutions is highly regulatory and tends to prescribe the governance structure. This means that rectors and senior managers often have to be imaginative in the way in which they work within the given structures.

Where faculties still exercise considerable independence, it seems possible to ignore decisions of the university council. However, external processes of accreditation and quality assurance are forcing faculties and institutes to collaborate more effectively.

University autonomy is a broadly desired objective and is referred to frequently but there appears to be less detailed discussion of governance. This may, in part, be due to an insufficiently developed understanding of the issue of governance and of the distinction between management and governance. It may also stem from a failure to appreciate the potential of good and effective governance to foster good management, modernisation and innovation in higher education.

In most “Tempus countries” universities still have limited or no autonomy on issues related to human resources; estate ownership and management; funding; student numbers and selection; tuition fees; and the size, composition and terms of reference of governing bodies.

Although external control of curriculum content at first cycle is still strong and accreditation of new programmes is often a cumbersome process, freedom to develop new programmes of study, particularly at second cycle level, is gaining momentum.

Financial affairs are, in general, highly regulated with only a small portion of the total budget at the university’s disposal for strategic investment. Even where formal financial responsibility has been delegated the room for manoeuvre is minimal since the detailed terms of the grant are laid down by the funding authorities. Some universities are gaining increasing freedom to invest income which they generate. In large part this comes from tuition fees and from contracts and projects. The situation varies as to whether the university or the faculty 'owns' this income. A sign of the evolving power of the university in such cases is the agreement to top-slice faculty income by a fixed percentage.

Responsibility for staff, salaries and appointments, is largely retained by the national authorities. Through Tempus projects, universities are beginning to develop expertise in the human resource management offices.

The role of the rector in state universities in all the countries visited is significant. It is a position of high status and formal powers. However, it has been difficult to determine what powers of sanction rectors have. Rectors tend to be appointed by the ministry. In a number of cases other senior officers and even deans are also formally appointed by the ministries. The projects visited and the degree to which they have been able to implement results, underline the important part a rector can play in ensuring the effective realisation of projects.

A number of the projects addressed the need for better management information, new data processing software and process review. All of these are integral to a process of effective governance but they also reveal a tendency to compartmentalise management processes which cannot persist if a more effective and efficient management is required. The key difficulty, however, is that because governance structures[1] are not developed, managing boards and councils are not in a position to identify their requirements (for management information, for reorganisation, for general structural reform) and to pursue these through radical reorganisation of the university.

Within higher education institutions, a fundamental challenge to the reform of governance and management is the attitude of staff – administrative and academic. Enlightened rectors have recognised that Tempus projects can be used to change attitudes. Tempus has been a major vehicle for change through contact with EU partners and particularly through visits and training workshops. In some of the visited universities this has broken down barriers, both between previously strictly separated units and between academic and administrative staff.

While there is a recognition of the importance of external stakeholders, their presence on governing bodies is rare. Consultative or advisory bodies exist but their use seems to be limited.

Overall, the projects visited were impressive – both in terms of the commitment of the involved staff and the achievements. However, a slightly worrying feature was that, in a significant number of projects where excellent work had been undertaken and which had resulted in tested products such as new software or new curricula, the outcomes were not being implemented either for internal political reasons or because of the national legislative situation. This may suggest that, in all types of project, there should be a more explicit commitment and involvement, not only from the head of institution but also from the ministry, to implement successful outcomes.

[1] The term 'governance structures' refers to the composition, modus operandi, culture and understanding of the role and authority of governing bodies. It also refers literally to the committee structure and the bodies which report to the governing bodies.

2. University governance in the European Union

Although preoccupations and emphasis in Tempus and in countries supported by the Tempus programme may differ from those in the European Union, developments in higher education governance in the EU provide important background to the discussion of higher education governance in the Tempus countries and inform and shape Tempus projects in the field of university governance and management.

This chapter seeks to identify general developments in governance and management in European higher education in a way which will indicate the agenda and highlight important aspects.

Literature on governance

The literature on governance and management in higher education is voluminous and growing. This brief note does not intend to provide a literature survey or a critical commentary. It will seek to identify some of the issues in a complex and rapidly evolving area.

The EURYDICE publication *Higher Education Governance in Europe* (2008)[2] provides an up-to-date survey on governance and management developments in the EU and the EEA and an introductory bibliography under its references on page 115. A recent report from the MODERN project, *Higher Education Governance Across Europe* (2009)[3], also gives a brief set of references on page 16.

The Council of Europe, OECD, European University Association, and EU Member States are all involved in active ongoing discussion, debate and publications on the role, governance and management of higher education institutions. ESIB (now the European Students Union – ESU) has published a statement indicating the student perspective on this topic.

There is a wide range of international publications – notably of US and Australian origin – addressing issues of governance and management in higher education.

The Commission funds projects in higher education governance reform. A 2006 study called *The extent and impact of higher education reform across Europe*[4] has valuable survey material. The MODERN network has an ambitious set of objectives relating to leadership, governance and management. Its first report (May 2009) provides an overview of the state-of-the-art of governance reforms in European higher education.

[2] *Higher education governance in Europe. Policies, structures, funding and academic staff*. Eurydice, 2008. Online access from: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php
[3] *Higher education governance reforms across Europe*. ESMU, 2009.
[4] *The extent and impact of higher education reform across Europe.* CHEPS, 2006.

Governance or management?

This document focuses on governance but in the literature as well as in practice, it is often difficult to avoid confusion between governance and management, notwithstanding attempts to make clear distinctions. It is indeed evident that the two have a close inter-relationship.

Drawing on *Governance in higher education, the university in a state of flux*[5] and *Higher education governance in Europe; autonomy, ownership and accountability*[6], EURYDICE defines governance as "the framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives and policies in a coherent and coordinated manner".

Governance answers the questions: who is in charge and what are the sources of legitimacy for executive decision making by different actors? Management on the other hand answers the question: how are the rules applied?

Management is concerned with the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of services provided for internal and external stakeholders."

Governance is concerned with the decision making structures of a higher education institution, the bodies charged with responsibility and their terms of reference. These structures and terms of reference cannot be divorced from the world in which the institution operates and this has led to the distinction between external and internal governance.

No single model

It is evident from the EURYDICE and other reports that there is no single EU model of governance. Indeed, the variety and diversity of practice is an aspect of the richness of the EU higher education sector.

The governance of higher education institutions is, in the first instance, determined by the legal status of the institution and its relationship with the national government.

This relationship will specify or shape to a greater or lesser extent the form of governance. It may prescribe, in general or specific terms, the governance structure for institutions and the composition of the governing bodies of the institutions.

While international developments such as the Bologna process, competition and international ranking, and the internationalisation of higher education all exercise increasing influence, it must be stressed that there continues to be considerable variation between EU Member States and within these on a regional and institutional basis. The extent to which national, regional and local legislation, politics, and the strength of trades unions and other stakeholders influence the degree of autonomy and the type and nature of governance should not be underestimated.

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5 *Governance in higher education, the university in a state of flux*, Hirsch and Weber eds., 2001.

6 *Higher education governance in Europe; autonomy, ownership and accountability*, Fried ed., 2006.

Why the focus on governance?

Perhaps the biggest single driver for the current focus on governance arises from the growth in participation in higher education. This itself is a result of government policy and increasing awareness among students and their families of the central importance of higher education for economic, social and political development, and of the skills for employability which it provides.

On the EU level, the recognition of the central importance of higher education for economic, social and political development is encapsulated in the Lisbon agenda. This identifies the central role which higher education institutions must play to realise the dynamic, knowledge-based economy. Here, too, the focus is on the urgent need to modernise higher education institutions and to grant them increased autonomy in order to be more effective in delivering the policy agenda.

The growth of the higher education sector has come with an increase in investment from governments and individuals (students and their families). Both parties are inevitably concerned with the return on their investment. For governments this is linked to the delivery of their strategic policy agenda and this concern has focused attention on the governance and management of higher education institutions. Students and their families want to be assured of the quality of their education and the recognition of their qualifications in the employment market. Thus they have a concern with the overall reputation of their institution, regionally, nationally and internationally, since this impacts directly on the credibility and currency of their qualifications.

A diverse set of inter-relationships interact on governance and management arrangements. Relations with the national authorities or a specific semi-governmental body established by a ministry, exercise the dominant influence. In many countries the ministry has a national advisory body which advises it and interacts with the sector as a whole. National rectors' conferences promulgate good practice and exert influence on behalf of the sector. National unions of students play an important role in helping to shape the student response to change and in lobbying for an effective student voice – national and institutional. Quality assurance agencies and the internal power structure within institutions also contribute to the shape and relationships of governance structures.

At an international level, the European Commission and bodies such as the EUA, encourage, promote and influence change in governance and sponsor studies designed to identify and disseminate best practice and promote an active debate on all the issues.

Modernisation and reform

Within the EU the words most frequently associated with governance and management are 'modernisation' and 'reform'. A Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament called *Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation*[7] states that:

[7] *Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation*. EC, 2006.

"Universities will not become innovative and responsive to change unless they are given real autonomy and accountability … Universities should accept full institutional accountability to society at large for their results".

"This requires new internal governance systems. It also requires universities to overcome their fragmentation … and to target their efforts collectively on institutional priorities for research teaching and services."

A Council Resolution of November 2007[8] invites the Member States among other things to:

> "Take the necessary measures to modernise higher education institutions by granting them autonomy and greater accountability to enable them:
> - to improve their management practices;
> - to develop their innovative capacity;
> - to strengthen their capacity to modernise their curricula to meet labour market and learner needs more effectively;
>
> and to enhance access to higher education thereby meeting the requirements of economic and technological competitiveness and broader societal goals."

Governance principles and preoccupations

The EURYDICE study on governance in Europe focuses on four areas:

- National, strategic policies in relation to funding and academic staff
- Structures of governance – internal and institutional
- Public and private funding
- Academic staff

These are important features of governance but they do not reflect the full extent of the responsibilities associated with an autonomous institution.

In its recommendations, the Council of Europe's Higher Education Forum on Governance sought to identify key principles. These included the statement that "governance of systems and institutions of higher education should be based on the adequate inclusion of all relevant stakeholders". To ensure successful attainment of the agreed set of goals, it should be founded on the principles of:

- transparency in procedures and tasks;
- effective mechanisms of accountability of those involved in governance;
- the ability to reach, win acceptance for and implement decisions;
- participation and the rule of law.

Because higher education institutions differ in complexity, composition, size and role, the identification of what might be termed the key areas of governance responsibility tend to be generic. They would normally cover:

- Issues relating to students – such as recruitment, curriculum, assessment

[8] *On modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness in a global knowledge economy, European Commission, 2007.*

- Strategic planning
- Financial management
- Human resource management
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Property and estate management
- External relations - including international partnerships

This list could be extended but it is evident that each of the areas indicated is complex and that full responsibility for each of them, together with an appreciation of their inter-dependencies and inter-relationships, requires strong and effective governance as well as professional and efficient management.

Although funding and human resources management are key aspects of governance, they should not obscure the fact that there are other issues of parallel importance. These include the degree to which competition between institutions is allowed and encouraged, e.g. for the recruitment of first cycle students especially if this is selective; the extent of institutional freedom in relation to curriculum and new programmes of study; the vexed and controversial issue of tuition fees; all of which provide challenges and need to be reflected in the governance concerns and structures of an institution.

Governance and autonomy

Full responsibility for the recruitment, appointment, terms and conditions of employment (including processes for the quality assurance of staff), for academic staff, is a further manifestation of a fully autonomous higher education institution but the EURYDICE study indicates that, in the majority of EU countries, a “regulatory state model” persists, limiting institutional independence in recruitment and terms of employment – perhaps less so in salaries and promotions, although salaries still tend to be negotiated and agreed at a national level.

For their part, higher education institutions have pressed for increasing autonomy in the way in which they manage their affairs and governments have in general recognised that increased autonomy is essential to accommodate rapid growth, change and diversity of institutions. Autonomy thus serves the interests of governments and institutions although their perspectives and objectives are not always the same.

Although there is a trend towards increasing institutional autonomy, this autonomy is regulated in a range of ways. This regulation may apply to the way in which funding may be used and audited; the number of students that may be admitted; methods of selection of students; the way in which new programmes of study may be introduced and accredited or validated; external quality assurance; the appointment of the heads of institutions, senior managers and academic staff; and the role and rights of students.

External financial audit applies throughout the EU and influences governance and management since there is a shared, collective responsibility to satisfy external criteria and performance targets for funding. This means that institutions have to establish effective internal financial management and monitoring, generally overseen by a high level finance committee, which reports to the governing body. The governing body thus has oversight of and responsibility for the financial governance of the institution.

External accreditation and quality assurance influence governance and governance structures because they too entail shared, collective responsibility to satisfy the criteria for recognition. Recognition is not solely a technical matter of accreditation but relates to wider public and international recognition which has an impact on governance. Governing bodies increasingly understand that their institution is operating in a competitive environment for student recruitment, for research and even for government funding. Unless the institution is successful in all aspects of its operation its ranking – regional, national and international – will be affected and governing bodies respond to this imperative.

The concept of institutional autonomy also entails, as indicated in the Commission's Communication, that universities must "overcome their fragmentation into faculties, departments and other units to target their efforts collectively on institutional priorities for research, teaching and services".

This implies that there should be a strong central governance with a parallel management structure. This should not, however, be interpreted as meaning that all activity has to be centralised. Effective, strong governance and management at an institutional level are compatible with devolved powers and responsibilities within a legal, policy and reporting framework clearly identifying the institution as the primary authority.

Funding

Since governments continue to be the main funding providers for higher education in Europe, the degree of institutional autonomy is limited by specific requirements, regulations, legislation, contracts, and the need for accountability. The pressure from higher education institutions for more independence, while expecting (indeed requiring) substantial resources from a government which for its part needs to be assured about the ways in which the resources will be used, leads to inevitable tensions. These tensions contribute to the dynamic, changing, evolving structure of governance and management in European higher education. It seems likely that this will continue to oscillate between periods of freedom and restraint in response to current economic, social and political exigencies.

Governments and institutions have tended to focus on funding as the critical area and it is true that full responsibility in relation to funding is central to the autonomous institution. However, while governments may allow freedom in the way in which institutions manage public funding, they will always attach strings. They will require deliverable outcomes[9] as well as the establishment of effective systems of financial management and accountability.

Higher education institutions may be encouraged to diversify their funding sources but their freedom may be circumscribed in a number of ways. The amount which may be charged for tuition fees is generally limited particularly for first cycle studies and there may be requirements in relation to the use of the fee income. While income generated from research contracts tends not to have restrictions there are likely to be conditions relating to the way in which private funding can be used.

[9] Such as numbers of students admitted, numbers of students graduated, employability data, quality assurance, robust financial procedures, internal and external audits.

Various surveys and analyses indicate the diversity of practice and the limits on institutional autonomy in raising and using private funds, establishing private companies, and exploiting intellectual property rights.

Notwithstanding the diversity of practice and regulation, a tendency can be discerned of increasing encouragement to seek private funding. While the management and accountability issues are not dissimilar, the search for private funding does raise other governance issues, ethical and political, concerned with the direction of the institution, its types of funding and its objectives.

Structures

The governance and management of higher education institutions in the past might be characterised as collegial or democratic insofar as the governing bodies were representative of the academic community. The heads of institutions (rectors/presidents), deans, and heads of departments were elected, normally for fixed periods of office, with a limit on the total period which an individual could serve. Governing bodies representing the range of academic interests tended to be large and could be said to be unwieldy and not congenial to rapid change and effective decision making.

In many EU higher education institutions there are two governing bodies. An academic governing body, often called the senate, which is responsible for academic matters, in particular curriculum and programme approval, and a decision making body with a wider range of strategic and policy responsibilities including finance and human resource.

Recent surveys identified the growth in advisory bodies, consisting largely of external members, representing a range of interests. External members may be representatives of local or regional authorities, trade unions, employers, former graduates and the local community as well as distinguished individuals from a variety of backgrounds. In some cases these bodies are the decision making bodies.

The increasing presence of external members on such decision making bodies raises questions about the academic integrity and mission of the institution. For this reason, there is a tendency to balance external with internal members (including students) on decision making bodies. However, it must be stressed that this does not tend to apply where there is only one governing body – the academic body. The presence of external members in these is rare.

What seems to be missing from the literature on governance, is a more detailed discussion of the changing role and responsibilities of governing bodies and whether, for example, it is appropriate to adopt as a general practice a two-tier structure with an overarching governing (decision making) body and an academic governing body which reports to it.

The need to respond to external demands for accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and the relevance of qualifications for the employment market has meant a decline in the collegial element in university governance. It has also tended to produce more stringent internal regulation. A culture of leaner governance has developed with smaller, more executive style governing bodies geared to effective decision making, rather than exhaustive debate.

This corporate approach is less congenial to older, classical universities – but with the need for more entrepreneurial, proactive, competitive institutions, taking increasing ownership of recruitment, research, financial management, income generation and staff, such a model may be better suited to more transparent and accountable governance and management structures.

The emphasis on effectiveness and efficiency has obvious implications for the professional nature of the governing body. Neither an overarching governing body nor an academic governing body can be effective if it is not provided with the best financial and management information on which to base its decisions. This implies that comprehensive and quality assured management and management information systems are in place; that performance data on all aspects of the institution's activities is available; and that the decision makers fully understand the implications of the data. This in turn requires a highly developed, professional staff and a commitment to staff management training and development throughout the institution. Without this, even the most elegant governance structures will be ineffective.

Any discussion of governance would be deficient without reference to the increasing focus on leadership. Not only the executive role of the head of higher education institutions has changed in response to changes in relationships with government, but also the expectation that the head of institution and the middle management will increasingly develop a leadership role. The multi-faceted nature of most higher education institutions and the varying demands from external stakeholders, the public, academics and students, make this role a demanding one for which staff entering senior management are increasingly looking for high-level training and development to complement the personal qualities which they bring to the posts. Higher education leadership colleges or foundations provide high level training and contribute to the understanding and professional development of all those concerned with higher education governance and management.

With the extension of the autonomy of higher education institutions, the role of the head of institution (rector/president) has changed and the post has become more executive and powerful. There are a range of methods for appointing heads of institutions with some form of election from the academic communities still being the dominant one. In a number of cases ratification by the ministry is still required. It seems likely that as the process of modernisation and institutional autonomy develops, the focus on the process for appointing heads of institutions will develop and governing bodies will want to have a stronger and more influential role. This will probably be accompanied by wider, more open national and international competition for the posts. Job descriptions will be tailored to the mission of the institution and appointing committees will be given delegated authority, although the requirement for endorsement by the governing bodies will persist.

As a general rule deans and heads of departments continue to be appointed following some form of election but as their management responsibilities increase and become more explicit with devolved budgets and increasing executive responsibility coupled with explicit reporting lines, more open and external competition may be expected. Here too it can be anticipated that governing bodies will expect some involvement and consultation. Moreover, heads of institutions may wish to have a major say in the appointment and terms of office of 'their' middle managers.

Students are generally represented in the governing bodies of higher education institutions, normally through representatives from the student union or student council or its equivalent. The role of students in the governance of higher education institutions is an important manifestation of the changing role and outlook of institutions and entails recognition by governments and higher education institutions of the need to engage and empower students in student centred education for an economy and society in which they will become leading players.

The recognition of the need to engage students actively in taking an increasingly responsible part in their education and personal development extends beyond formal representation on governing bodies. Student feedback and evaluation of their courses, their involvement in curriculum development and an outcomes approach to teaching and learning means that institutions need to be more focused on student needs and performance. This generates the demand for better and more public management information on outputs and causes governing bodies to address a whole range of student related issues. The presence of students on the governing bodies helps to ensure that these are addressed in a critical and constructive manner.

Private institutions

Private higher education institutions have, in principle, more freedom in the way in which they structure their governance and management. However, in practice, in most countries they, too, are subject to government regulation and are expected to adhere to the norms of good practice in their governance and management. Certainly, as with the sector as a whole, they will be subject to the quality assurance and accreditation regime and be expected to conform to national financial audit requirements. On the other hand, they tend to have more freedom in the membership of their governing bodies and the way in which they appoint and reward members of the senior and middle management. Subject to employment legislation, they may also be expected to have more freedom in hiring and dismissing staff.

Research

The governance of research within a university, while falling within the general remit of academic governance, is increasingly seen as a separate if not independent area requiring a specific structure and organisation.

Institutions need to compete for research resources from private and public funders both of which are adopting more demanding requirements. Because national policies on research funding and development are changing and becoming more focused and targeted, higher education institutions inevitably have to take a strategic view of research development, particularly as it tends to be a key international as well as a national performance indicator. The governance, management and administration of research funding and the issues relating to facilities, staff contracts, ethics, risk management and intellectual property all require a more business oriented approach than in the past.

At the same time, since research is seen as integral to the mission of most higher education institutions, the governing board as well as the academic board tend to attach high priority to research and research funding.

Conclusion

Although this note has tried to identify EU developments and preoccupations, it must be stressed that there continue to be considerable variations between Member States and within Member States on a regional and institutional basis. The extent to which authorities and other stakeholders influence the degree of autonomy and the type and nature of governance should not be underestimated. However, the pressure for increased transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency will be dominant themes for whatever changes take place, simply because these themes are at the heart of modern, democratic societies which have come to realise the centrality of higher education to their future.

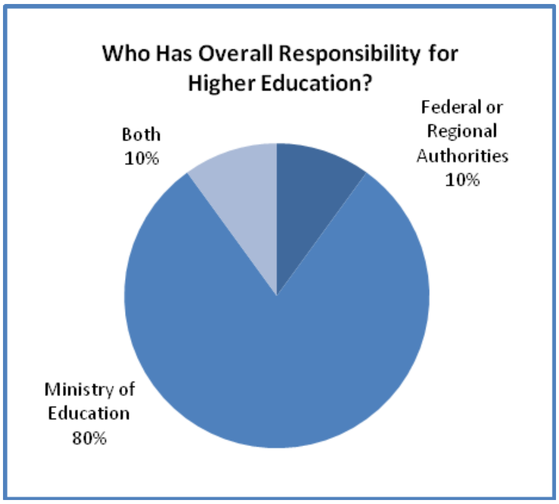
3. Higher education governance in Tempus countries

The 27 countries incorporated in the Tempus programme represent a geographic, cultural, economic, political and social diversity which is rich, exciting and challenging. This is particularly true in the field of university governance where history and tradition play a significant role and where there is a range from countries with effectively one higher education institution to countries with over a thousand.

The following commentary is based on a questionnaire completed in large part by the National Tempus Office in each Tempus country – in some cases following close consultation with experts and the relevant ministry

The questionnaire drew heavily on the EURYDICE study *Higher education governance in Europe*[10] and to a lesser extent on the report *The extent of the impact of higher education governance reform across Europe*[11], prepared for the European Commission.

Overall responsibility



In virtually all Tempus countries central management of higher education institutions by the government (ministry of education) is the norm. In a small number of countries regional authorities share responsibility with the central government.

Approximately 25% of countries have established an independent body to allocate funding to higher education institutions.

The majority of countries have established a national quality assurance agency although nearly 40% of these did not consider these to be independent.

The role of government and autonomy

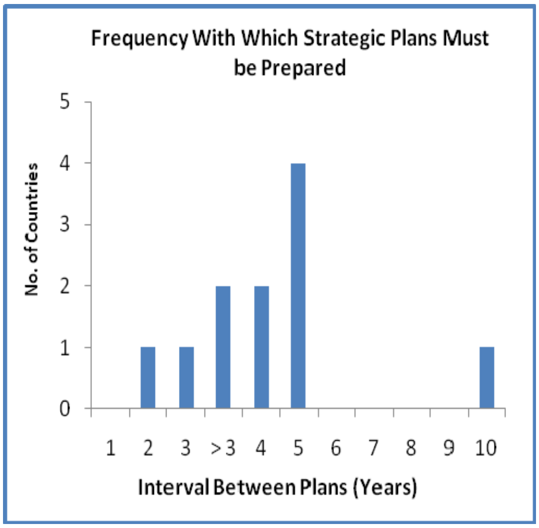
In just over a third of the Tempus countries the ministry has created a higher education national advisory body. In parallel, most countries have a national rectors conference which sees part of its responsibility as reflecting and representing the views of the sector to the government and commenting on draft higher education legislation.

The central influence of government on universities is particularly apparent in relation to the structure of institutional governance. In the majority of countries the ministry incorporates

[10] *Higher Education Governance in Europe. Policies, structures, funding and academic staff*. Eurydice, 2008.
[11] *The extent and impact of higher education reform across Europe.* CHEPS, 2006.

the structure of institutional governance in the higher education law or in specific higher education regulations which are often detailed and specific.

Paradoxically 45% of ministries do not require higher education institutions to develop a strategic plan and even in those countries which do require higher education institutions to develop a strategic plan, around half do not apparently require these plans to be approved by the ministry.

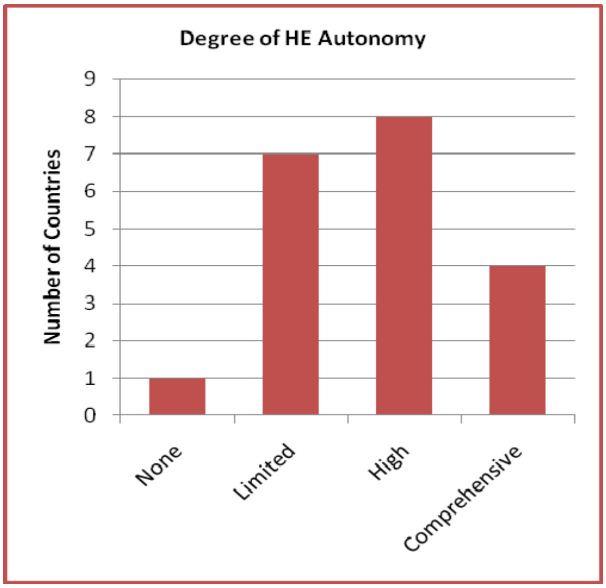


Whilst only 55% of ministries require a strategic plan, 75% require an annual report from higher education institutions but in a small number of countries neither a strategic plan nor an annual report is required.

More than half of the countries have a national database on higher education activities. Of these the majority describe the database as either 'comprehensive' or 'fairly comprehensive'. The absence of comprehensive national databases in half of the countries surveyed has serious implications for the establishment of benchmarks and performance indicators.

The role of rectors and senior managers of universities is critical to governance and management but only 20% of the countries in the survey currently have a national programme of leadership and training for rectors and senior managers and a similar low proportion expect rectors or senior managers to undertake any training in leadership or management.

Institutional governance



Within the EU, the development of autonomy for higher education institutions is considered a priority. The responses to the Tempus country survey suggest that in two-thirds of the countries state-funded higher education institutions are regarded as autonomous. The case studies suggest that the interpretation of 'autonomous' varies and that the perspective of the central government and the individual higher education institutions can be significantly different.

The response to the questionnaire

reveals that the majority of higher education institutions have at least limited autonomy but only a small number of countries would consider it to be comprehensive.

Although the questionnaire did not address this particular point, it is evident from the site visits that at government level the granting of autonomy is perceived to be evolutionary or developmental. In this context, the process for the appointment of rectors, presidents, heads of institutions, is perhaps most significant. In over 50% of the countries the heads of institutions are formally appointed by the government and in over half of these cases there is no selection procedure and the process is not considered to be open.

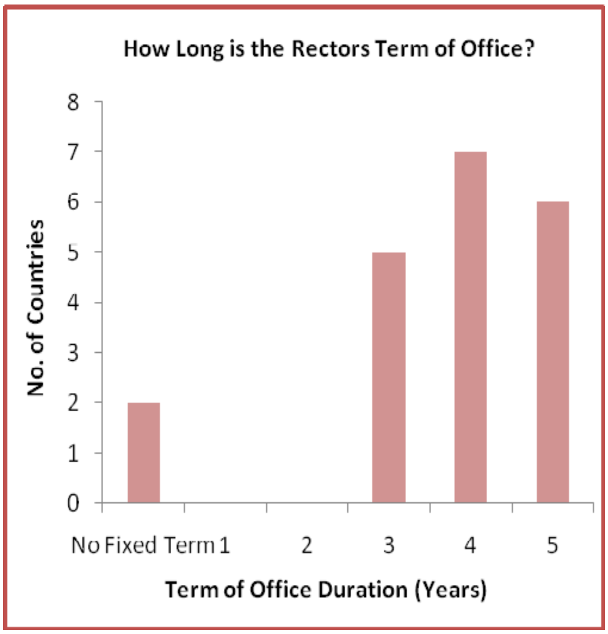
On the other hand, in the other 50% there is a selection procedure which involves either a committee or voting and can include, in a small number of cases, external advertisement outside the university. In a few countries it is also possible to appoint a rector from another country although whether this happens in practice is not clear.

Governance structures

Responses were evenly divided in answer to the question: "Would you describe the governance structure in your country in general as: collegial / democratic or executive / managerial?"

Tempus country higher education institutions normally have a senate or an academic council or equivalent. In all cases academic staff would be represented on the senate / academic council or equivalent. In the majority of countries, students would also be represented but external membership is less common.

Over 60% of the countries normally have a separate (i.e. in addition to the senate) decision-making body (a governing body or council). Of these, over half indicated that students would be represented on such bodies and around two-thirds indicated that external stakeholders would be represented. In most cases where external stakeholders were represented they formed less than 50% of the decision making body. In about one-third of the countries there are advisory or supervisory bodies with a variety of membership, including senior managers, academics and students.



Surprisingly, in a small number of countries, it appears that heads of institutions do not have a formal job description. However, the majority do and responsibility for the formal description falls fairly evenly between the institution and the ministry, i.e. in approximately half the countries the ministry issues the job description and in the remaining half, the institution is responsible.

Rectors normally have fixed-terms of office. They may be reappointed and in some cases there is no finite term to the period of reappointment.

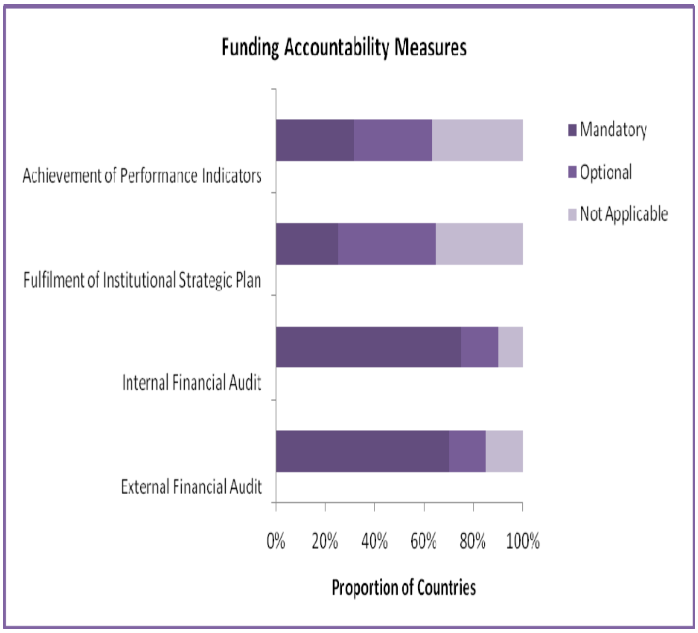
In a similar way, deans and heads of department may be reappointed. In both cases there is generally a form of election.

Private higher education institutions

Private higher education institutions play a significant role. 60% of countries indicate that they have many private higher education institutions. Surprisingly, the responses suggest that, in 53% of the countries, private higher education institutions are not regulated by the ministry although, where they are regulated, they are subject to the same regulations as State higher education institutions.

Funding

In the allocation of funding, negotiation and past costs play a significant role, as does the adoption of a formula approach[12]. Of the funding models suggested few countries use a performance contract as the basis for institutional funding. Two-thirds of institutions are allowed to make investments to supplement funding by government.



Research is funded separately in 90% of cases and funding for research projects tends to be allocated on a competitive basis.

The replies do not reveal the extent to which, following the allocation of funding, institutions have flexibility in how they use the funding. However, the site visits suggest that, in general, flexibility is highly circumscribed with a limited area for discretion. In the majority of countries, external financial audit and

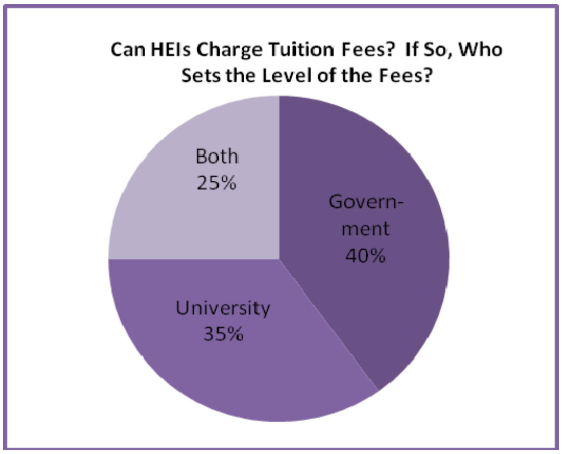
[12] There are a great variety of formulae for the allocation of funding. They generally include student numbers with weighting for different categories, such as laboratory or non-laboratory studies, medicine / science / humanities, undergraduate / graduate, full time / part time research. Other factors affecting funding through formulae can be the geographical region, the promotion of centres for key activities and capital project funding. The essence of a formula approach is that it seeks to identify funding 'drivers' and to fund institutions on the same basis while making the funding as transparent as possible.

internal financial audit are mandatory although, surprisingly, in a few countries they are optional.

The fulfilment of strategic plans and performance indicators is a mandatory requirement in about 30% of the countries.

In the majority of cases institutions are not allowed to carry forward unspent funds from year to year. Although no proof of this is provided through this survey, this often leads to excessive spending as the end of the financial year approaches as under spending can affect next year's budget. However, where funds can be carried forward, in most cases, there is no limit on the amount which is allowed.

In all countries higher education institutions charge tuition fees. In nearly 90% of the countries tuition fees constitute 15% or more of higher education institution funding.

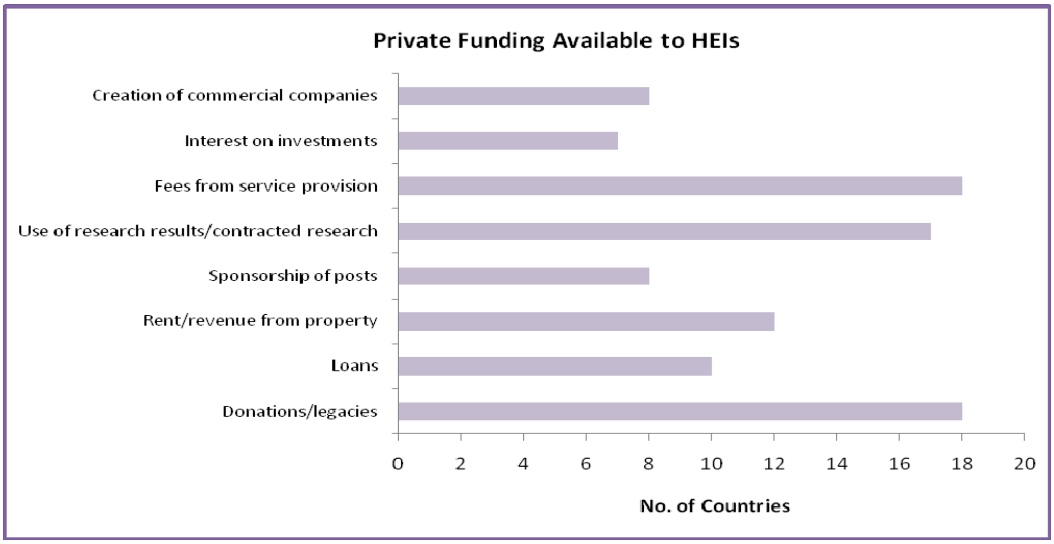


In a third of the cases, institutions are free to set the level of the fee. In the remainder it is determined either by the government or by negotiation. In just under 50% of the countries there are legal restrictions on the level of fee which may be charged.

Two-thirds of the countries do not restrict their higher education institutions in the way in which they may use tuition fee income.

Universities are generally encouraged to seek private funding and while a third of the countries restrict ways in which this may be used, the rest leave universities free to determine how to spend these funds. Where private funding is raised, in the majority of cases institutions are required to report on the amount and use of such funding.

The extent to which this potential (private funding) is being exploited is unclear, although in the site visits there were excellent examples of successful private funding.



In a small number of countries, private higher education institutions receive some public funding but, in general, they are expected to be self-sufficient and evidently play a significant role in the provision of higher education.

Academic Staff

The employment, management and quality assurance of academic staff is an important indicator of the degree of autonomy and a key factor in university governance. In 60% of Tempus countries academic staff are directly employed by higher education institutions. In the remainder they are classed as civil servants.

The situation is slightly different in relation to salary levels. In over 60% of the countries, salary levels are not determined by the university. On the other hand, in most countries, universities have flexibility to award additional payments and promote academic staff.

The majority of countries have established national criteria for the selection and recruitment of academic staff. In 75% of countries recruitment is on the basis of competitive examination. National advertisement for academic posts is normal – whereas international advertisement is the exception. Some 20% of academic staff are not interviewed prior to appointment. Over 80% of academic posts are fixed-term appointments. Academic staff are in general subject to regular appraisals although in 25% of the countries this is not the case.

While a quarter of the countries did not appear to have programmes of staff training and development, national training programmes are available in one third of the countries and 70% of countries offer training at an institutional level.

Students

Student representation on university governing bodies is widespread, although students are not represented in 20% of countries. In the majority of cases, the students are student union representatives but in a small number of countries, students are directly elected to governing bodies.

Interestingly, students are less well represented at faculty level and even less well represented at departmental level (50% countries indicated representation). In 70% of cases, students have full voting rights on the committees on which they sit.

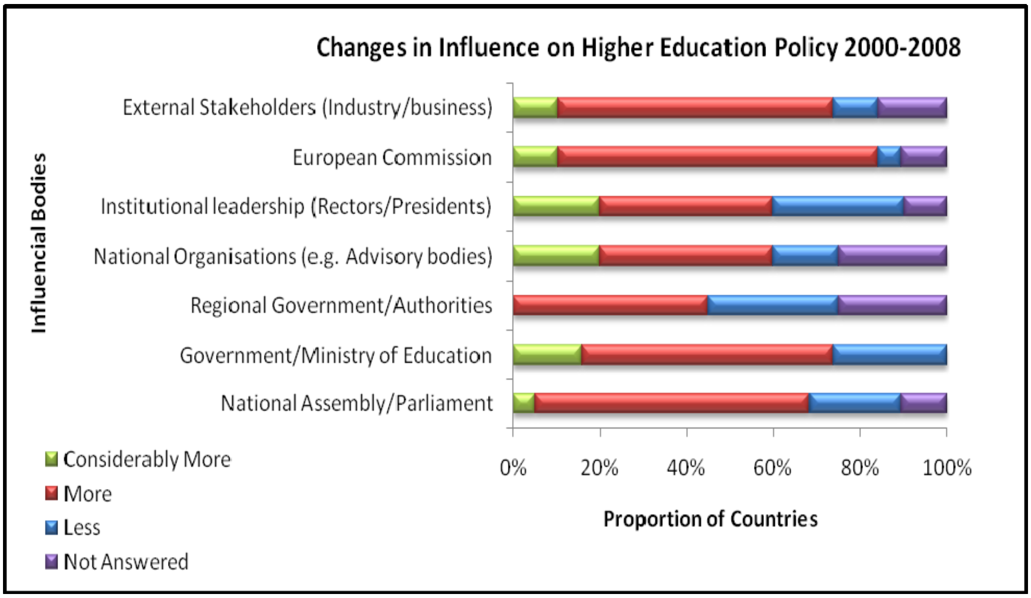
Students are represented on curriculum planning committees in only 25% of countries.

In roughly half the Tempus countries, students are involved in the appointment process for rectors and deans but in most countries they are not involved in the appointment of heads of department and academic staff.

The impact of higher education reform

The respondents to the questionnaire were asked to indicate the extent to which the influence of a number of bodies on national higher education policy had changed between 2000 and 2008. (Questions were drawn from *The extent of the impact of higher education governance reform across Europe*[13], prepared for the European Commission in 2006.)

Influences on higher education policy



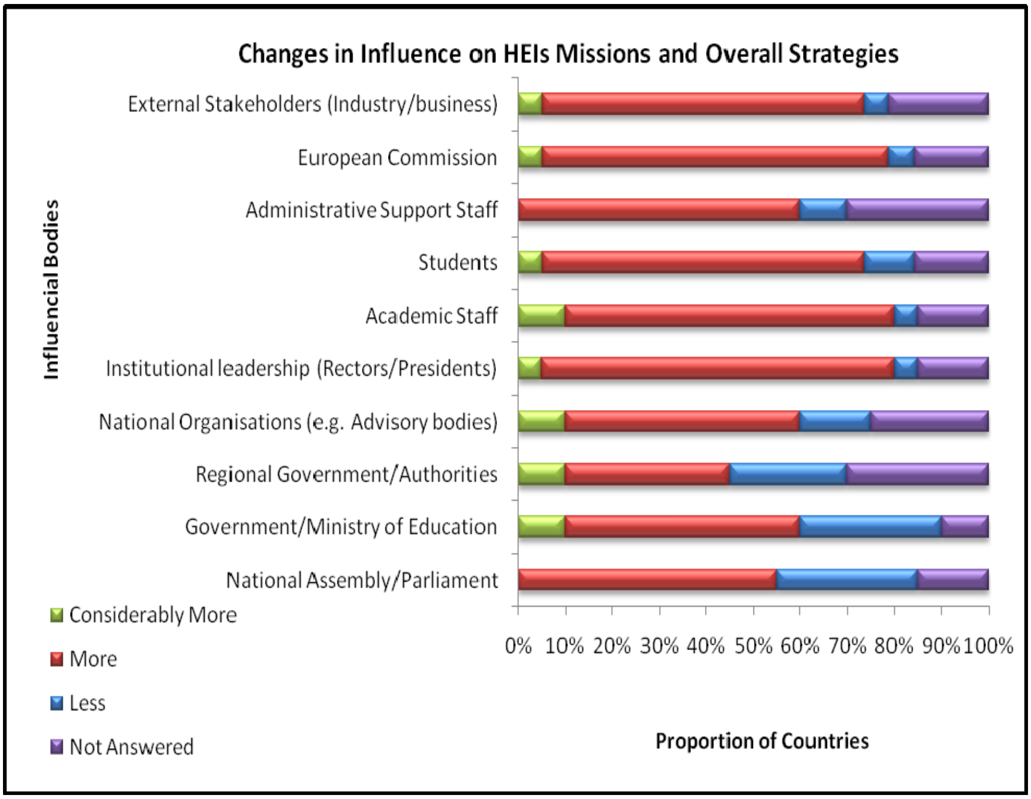
Weighting replies (not answered = 0, less influence = 1, more influence = 2, considerably more influence = 3) and calculating an average weighting for each body, provides an indication of which bodies were perceived to have had the greatest change in influence.

Influential Body	Degree of Influence
Government/ministry of education (or equivalent)	1.80
European Commission	1.75
Institutional leadership (rectors/presidents or equivalent)	1.70
External stakeholders (industry/business…)	1.60
The national assembly, parliament or equivalent	1.55
National organisations (advisory bodies, representative bodies)	1.55
Regional government/authorities	1.20

[13] *The extent and impact of higher education reform across Europe.* CHEPS, Enschede, 2006.

Influences on institutional missions and strategic objectives

Respondents were also asked to indicate the influence on the strategy and mission of a higher education institution of each of the stakeholders listed.



The weighting system shown above was applied to these replies.

Influential Body	Degree of Influence
Academic staff	1.75
Institutional leadership (rectors/presidents or equivalent)	1.70
Government/ministry of education (or equivalent)	1.60
European Commission	1.60
Students	1.55
External stakeholders (industry/business…)	1.50
National organisations (advisory bodies, representative bodies)	1.45
The national assembly, parliament or equivalent	1.40
The institutional administrative/support staff	1.30
Regional government/authorities	1.25

Conclusions

While this survey provides interesting information about important facets of higher education, it must be treated with caution for a number of reasons:

1. It aggregates data from vastly different countries;
2. It is provided at national level and is not qualified or modified by detailed institutional data other than the case studies referred to elsewhere in this report;
3. There will inevitably be wide variations between the formal, theoretical position and the actual realisation of university governance and management in individual institutions.

Nevertheless, some tentative generalisations are possible.

There is a strong degree of central control and management of higher education, notwithstanding assertions about autonomy. This is manifest in detailed regulations relating to the structure of governance; the appointment of Heads of Institutions; the degree to which institutions are dependent on national funding; the establishment of national criteria for the appointment of academic staff; the relative absence of external members of governing bodies. The formal presence of students on governing bodies is significant, but equally noteworthy is the weaker position of students at Departmental level both in terms of recruitment and governance.

Key words which recur in discussions of university governance are 'autonomy', 'transparency', and 'accountability' and these are also reflected in Tempus countries although in a number of areas, responses suggest that this is work in progress.

In all countries and in all major sectors of the economy, particularly the public sector, safeguards against corruption and fraud are accorded high priority. This applies with equal force in higher education. Good governance is not only concerned to protect an institution from these vices but also able to demonstrate, through its decision-making processes, the effective scrutiny of all aspects of the management of the university. At the same time, it should ensure openness and the publication of detailed management and financial information and performance indicators relating to every aspect of the life of the institution which will give public confidence in the standards being applied.

A culture of good governance with an accompanying commitment to transparency and clear decision-making processes represents the best ultimate protection against corruption and fraud – and ensures the enhancement of quality, particularly when it recognises the inherently competitive world within which higher education has to operate.

In two key areas more work would be needed in "Tempus countries" to ensure that good governance could be demonstrated: the collection, storage, analysis and publication of comprehensive data on higher education institutions (currently only 55% of countries have a national higher education database which gives detailed information on all aspects of higher education: students, staff, outputs; income; expenditure) and institutional reporting against strategic plans (only 55% of countries require universities to develop a strategic plan).

The legislation and regulations which have been reviewed are detailed and prescriptive. However, their prescriptive nature may militate against the essence of good governance and meeting specified requirements. Rather than inculcating a culture of good governance which seeks to establish ownership of systems, regulations, and a commitment to quality management, benchmarked against national and international standards, they may engender a ‘rules’ approach which focuses on implementing and enforcing regulations.

4. Case studies

Six Tempus projects were visited in the framework of this study. The visits involved meetings with senior managers, project staff, teaching staff, administrative staff and students. Where possible meetings with representatives of the national authority or national experts were arranged and in some countries this involved a group of experts on national councils or similar bodies.

The case studies illustrate how Tempus contributes to changing the higher education landscape through projects that have an impact well beyond the beneficiary institutions.

What was particularly interesting was the way in which the projects interacted with and influenced or were influenced by emerging higher education legislation impacting on governance. Colleagues whose experience has been enriched through Tempus projects contributed to national developments. In other cases grassroots pressure and initiatives increased the momentum for reforms.

Dnepropetrovsk National University

Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine
UM_JEP-24217-2003
System modernisation of the university management
2003-2005

Areas affected:

- Faculty management
- Information management
- Student involvement

Situation

Ukraine has experienced economic and political difficulties in recent years which have had an inevitable impact on the development of higher education and the pace of change and modernisation.

Challenges

The Higher education system is characterized by a high degree of central direction by the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, TEMPUS projects have helped to contribute to a climate for change.

In response to the central direction University management has also tended to be centralised with a continuing reliance on hard copy documentation and limited development and training in the use of information technology for management purposes The legal framework in which the University is obliged to operate inhibits internal delegation partly because of explicit legal requirements and perhaps also because it is not sufficiently appreciated that effective delegation with real responsibility can improve processes and does not lead to a diminution of the authority of senior managers.

Solutions

The starting point for the project was the sense that it could help the University to develop an appreciation of how Information Technology could be used more effectively for management purposes. It was suggested that the project 'System modernisation of the university management' at Dnepropetrovsk National University was also based on an assumption that decentralisation, formalising procedures and making them transparent, would contribute to modernisation

The objective was to develop software to make the life of senior university administrators easier by reducing paperwork and introducing electronic communication and authorisation. It was envisaged that such new working methods would encourage new ways of thinking.

The software was designed not only to help but also to begin to change the way in which administrators operate. It particularly targeted the work of the university's Education Office: the production of the timetable, curriculum information and approval, staff workloads, the administration of examinations, the production of transcripts, and registration.

A key element of the project was to transfer curricula information from paper to a user friendly online format. An electronic system was designed to facilitate the process of curriculum design and the production of information for students and staff. Middle management indicated that this software had helped them to solve management problems because it provided a better flow of information between department, faculty and the rectorate.

The project succeeded in realising a number of these objectives.

A new Centre for Telecommunications has been established with responsibility for the university network and providing a helpline for users. Following the project and on the basis of lessons learnt from it, the university developed a new Unit for Methodology and Academic Processes. A new system for lifelong learning, making use of information technology is also in the process of being developed.

Although production of the information has been facilitated considerably and use is made of electronic format for 'orders' from the rector, the approval and authorisation process is still not electronic, partly because of regular technical breakdowns and also because hard copy still has to be presented to the rectorate. However, the systems analysis carried out in the framework of the project has provided an opportunity to rationalise the system of signature requirements.

The software developed through the project has only been fully accepted and adopted at a small number of faculties, partly because of the technical fragility of the intranet and partly because of the continuing adherence to paper.

Nonetheless, the Education Office is now able to undertake analyses of student data and provide information about work placements. The International Office has acquired a database with full details of mobility information on staff and students and can monitor the experience of students and staff who study abroad. The increased transparency which results from this has enabled the vice-rector for international affairs to delegate the coordination of international activity to the heads of department. It is hoped that this will provide a model for further delegation.

In a similar way the Student Office was provided with a detailed student database. In addition to the information previously held on paper, new data fields were identified, such as those relating to the transfer of credits. This result goes beyond the project's original objectives.

Students were actively involved in the project. They helped to develop the new software and gained a deeper understanding of the management structures and administrative processes. This was an innovative way of actively involving students in the management process and contributing to improving and facilitating management information – markedly different from the normal process of student consultation and membership of university bodies.

A final key outcome of the project has been the creation of an Education Management Department with responsibility for coordinating management data and information.

The existing Education Law was perceived as an obstacle to achieving some of the objectives, particularly because of the requirement that every specialisation should have its own department, which inhibits effective and efficient governance and management and entails cumbersome decision making processes.

Information gathered suggests that while on the one hand there is a collegial approach with large numbers of staff sitting on the University Scientific Council and the rectorate, on the other hand the large number of departments (120) have made it difficult to streamline the executive. Even the proposals for slimming down the organisation would leave 64 departments and the current number of 18 faculties.

The proposals 'to streamline' require legislation but at the time of the visit, the university had been waiting for six months for a new law, in the preparation of which it had been deeply involved through its participation in a consortium of eight Ukrainian universities, which had developed a national project pursuing greater autonomy.

Conclusion

While the project did not directly address issues of governance and management at a high level, it throws light on some important issues.

It addressed the heavy and continuing reliance on paper documentation and multiple signatures which is not only burdensome but inhibits decision making and executive action. The project used IT solutions as an incentive to promote new ways of thinking and to encourage reform through indirect means.

The development and implementation of an effective management information system is an essential component for modernising the management of the university and while there remain some cultural and technical hurdles in the introduction of a university-wide management information system, the software developed through the project has been fully accepted and adopted in a small number of faculties.

All parties shared a belief that the current legislation is an obstacle to change and development in governance and management. It was not clear to what extent the anticipated new legislation would grant a measure of autonomy or whether the proposals for change from the consortium of eight universities would be implemented. On the other hand, it should be recognised that moving from a highly centralised management with limited autonomy in academic matters and no autonomy in financial matters will require a substantial change in governance, management structures and organisation and a programme of staff training and development at national and university level to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the change.

University Sts Cyril and Methodius (Skopje) and University St Kliment of Ohrid (Bitola)

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
UM_JEP-41019-2006
Promoting a model of integrated university in the FYR of Macedonia
2006-2008

Areas affected:

- Financial management
- University statutes
- University integration
- Student administration and study credits

Situation

In 2000, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia launched a number of reforms with the adoption of a new higher education law. Despite its good intentions, it fell short in a crucial area: it lacked any binding sanctions or incentives for the real integration of universities which were a loose association of independent faculties. Faculties were independent legal entities which negotiated their budgets directly with the national authorities. The rector was respected but largely ceremonial with little authority over deans and thus unable to rationalise and integrate services or establish a collective strategy for the university.

Thus, when the universities of Skopje and Bitola asked the European University Association (EUA) in 2003 to become involved in its Institutional Evaluation Programme, the key conclusion of the evaluation was that the fragmentation of both institutions would hamper developments in quality assurance, autonomy, and convergence with Bologna targets.

Reforms were needed but there was no money. The national budget for all higher education institutions at that point stood at €15M. In the years that followed European partners were found and a proposal to the Tempus programme was prepared, resulting in a project that would develop a working model for an integrated university in the country.

Challenges

The EUA's verdict was severe. It said that "maintaining the status quo of legally independent faculties [would be] a disastrous choice for the universities as genuine university autonomy is essential for developing an accountable institution based on strong internal quality mechanisms".

The proposal to Tempus contained a long list of reasons for the integration of the partner universities. They included the need to develop a quality culture and demonstrate accountability for it, the need to plan strategically the use of pooled resources for services that can be coordinated without duplication in each faculty, compliance with Bologna commitments, easier transfer of students and their credits between faculties, and more effective ways of responding to the needs of the surrounding communities and stakeholders.

An integrated university cannot be created overnight and the project team therefore ‘only’ set out to develop a model, gather support, and raise awareness and debate.

The consortium made clear from the outset that it had no intention of creating ‘an autocratic central body’. It acknowledged the value of decentralised initiative, but wanted to streamline management and governance, free resources and improve transparency and accountability.

Solutions

What the consortium could not have foreseen was that the national authorities were about to launch new legislation that would offer some of the most binding legal frameworks in the region for the integration of higher education institutions. This pre-empted much of the work of the consortium. The new law was detailed in its description of the new university governance structures. It stipulated the management bodies and their exact composition. Within three years from the adoption of the new law these bodies had to be in operation at all higher education institutions in the country.

University senates are the main governing bodies. They are responsible for financial matters. The senates have two members from each faculty and one from each institute, while 10% of the members are students.

The university has a management board (called the University Council in the new law) with 11 members. Five of them are nominated by the University Senate while six are representatives of the wider external community, including nominees from the government, the chamber of commerce, the city, enterprises and students.

The rector has an executive committee consisting of the rector, the vice-rectors and the secretary-general, which meets on a weekly basis. The rector also presides over the Rector’s Board which includes all deans, the heads of institutes and vice-rectors.

Faced with this precise description of management and governance structures, the project team reviewed its original plans and decided to focus on the practical implementation of one of the most urgent challenges of integration: a reformed system of financial management. The project partners in Vienna and Brussels were asked to help with this and provided invaluable inspiration for structural changes.
The project proposed that a university finance office should be developed and that one vice-rector should cover the portfolio of finance.

All faculty finance staff would be members of the central finance office although they would remain physically located within their faculties. They would thus provide consolidated financial support for both the faculties and the university.

Each dean now has a vice-dean for financial affairs who sits on the university’s Finance Committee. This idea grew directly from the project, as did the idea to develop a three-year financial plan. The Finance Committee reports to the Rector’s Board which in turn reports to Senate.

In recognition of the need to draft detailed regulations for university policy in a range of areas, the project was also used to prepare:

- draft regulations for each of the three cycles,
- a template for programme specification to be used by all faculties,
- a paper on student administration,
- the implementation of ECTS and joint programmes.

These all represent major outputs from the Tempus project and are in the process of being implemented.

A new university statute is also partly an outcome of the Tempus project because it draws on experience and thinking that arose from visits to EU partners and detailed discussions with them.

Because the project took place in parallel with the changes within the university, it offered an excellent opportunity to check and validate the proposed responses to change against practice elsewhere.

The description above applies in broad terms to both the universities of Skopje and Bitola, but there were some marked differences between the two. In general it would seem that change had been easier to implement at the younger and smaller institution in Bitola. This conforms to experience in other countries in the region where often the classical capital universities find radical change more difficult to accommodate.

Not only have some of the national reforms proceeded faster in Bitola but the financial formulae are more generous towards the university. In Bitola 10% of non-state income is paid to the university's central funds, compared with 5% in Skopje. (The remainder is retained by the faculty or department which 'earns' it.) Even 5% represents a huge change culturally and financially.

The experience of Bitola confirmed a number of elements in the national situation which had been outlined during meetings in Skopje. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by a university dispersed over several cities, it was evident that the outcomes of the project were being understood and implemented in a more systematic way in Bitola. A clear indication of this was the commitment to communicate with the deans and other managers following each of the project workshops. This brought about a wider involvement within the university, a better understanding of developments in other parts of Europe and hence more willingness to recognise the importance of benchmarking in the development of the university.

Time pressure and the focus on the technicalities of the new financial regime have meant that there has been less discussion and focus on the roles of the University Council, the Senate and general governance and management. Nevertheless, the rector of Bitola seems to have instituted a clear management structure with responsibilities and reporting lines and is committed to a professional approach – not only to financial administration but also to general management and administration.

Conclusion

Because the project proceeded in parallel with imposed structural changes it is inevitably difficult for all parties to distinguish the specific contribution of the project since thinking and discussion on all the changes is ongoing and the project and the legislative changes are deeply intertwined.

While in certain procedural areas, such as finance, the project has greatly contributed to the development of regulations in Skopje, it was less evident to what extent the project had contributed to an understanding in the university as a whole of the implications of an integrated university.

The relationship between the University Council and the Senate was not one on which the vice-rectors seemed to have reflected and it does not appear that the project has contributed insights in this area. On the other hand, the development of new portfolios and reporting lines for four instead of two vice-rectors may owe a good deal to the project and the contributions of the European partners.

The size of the university in Skopje probably inhibits broad involvement of a wider cross-section of deans and academic staff but the experience of Bitola still confirms that such involvement greatly helps to promote and accommodate change.

Damascus University

Aleppo University
Syria
UM_JEP-32120-2004
Quality university management and institutional autonomy
2004-2007

Areas affected:

- University management
- University mission and strategy
- Quality assurance (academic and administrative)
- External stakeholder involvement
- Curricula

Situation

Syria is in a process of political, economic and social change. Its six state universities (one of them virtual) and 13 private higher education institutions are gradually being granted increased levels of autonomy, but are not fully prepared to take on the new challenges.

A new education law adopted in 2006 opened the door to reforms that in principle can start a process of modernising curricula and governance structures so that the higher education sector can better respond to the country's needs and be aligned with international developments. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, delegation should be an incremental process because universities have to be equipped and adjust to manage effectively a situation in which they have full autonomy. However, for the institutions this incremental approach means that they do not feel that they have the confidence of the ministry or indeed the powers to manage institutional change and reform, so that they are in an uncomfortable situation.

Challenges

Quality is under threat from an exploding student population, dwindling funds and a consequent boom of private higher education institutions. Study programmes are becoming outdated, with an emphasis on theory in four and five-year undergraduate programmes. Governance, management and financial structures all need reform and modernisation.

It is in this light that the activities of the consortium behind the Tempus project pursuing quality university management and preparing for more autonomy at Damascus University (and partners) must be seen. From a long list of areas that urgently require action if the momentum of legislative change is to be maintained it opted to try to change the culture, focusing on strategic and policy issues.

Solutions

The consortium, of four public universities, one private university[14], the Ministry of Higher Education and project partners at the Humboldt University in Berlin and Karl Franzens University in Graz, targeted five main objectives:

1. to establish a higher education regulatory framework for defining university mission statements, academic standards and university evaluation;
2. to draw up a mission statement for the University of Damascus;
3. to implement a system of quality management and organisational development;
4. to define and implement high quality academic standards in two pilot faculties in the University of Damascus – the faculties of medicine and agriculture;
5. to evaluate two study programmes using newly developed evaluation instruments for faculties.

The need for quality, in higher education is undisputed, and is less politically sensitive. The project therefore increasingly concentrated on developing the fourth and fifth objectives that related to quality standards and tools.

The participating universities faced a number of challenges in endeavouring to introduce a quality culture. There was a general lack of awareness of the quality debate and from this followed an absence of a quality culture and a lack of process ownership.

The project was a catalyst for change. Its guiding principle was to foster the widest possible participation of internal and external stakeholders and, through surveys and other activities, to raise general awareness of developments internationally in the field of quality. At the same time, an emphasis was placed on transparency in the work of the project.

In Damascus, a detailed student survey of about 7% of the students was undertaken. The draft *University Mission Statement* which resulted from this and workshops with internal and external stakeholders was presented to stakeholders for comment. One outcome of this activity was a decision to meet with students and external stakeholders on an annual basis to report back on progress.

The strategic plan for the university was developed in the Quality Assurance Office, the establishment of which was a direct result of the project. Although the office is a small one, it is reinforced by the establishment of a Quality Assurance Office in each faculty.

The *Strategic Plan* focused on four areas:

- legal and organisational frameworks
- the academic programme
- administrative processes
- outreach to society

The *Strategic Plan* and the *University Mission Statement* were ratified by the University Council in 2007.

[14] Damascus University, Aleppo University, Al Baath University, Tishreen University, University of Kalamoon.

Quality coordinators have been selected and a training programme in concepts of quality has been inaugurated. Four pilot faculties have been identified to develop new academic programmes in the context of the proposals and experience relating to the Faculty of Agriculture.

It was stressed that curriculum reform impacts on the whole structure and organisation of the university and places new demands on staff. However, inhibiting factors are that a number of staff work part-time in private universities to augment their salaries and that all those involved in the project and in the Quality Assurance Centre (with the exception of one administrative member of staff) do so on a voluntary basis.

The consortium put its work on quality assurance to the ultimate test when it developed a fully revised four year undergraduate curriculum in agriculture to replace the existing five year curriculum. One third of Syrians are employed in agriculture so this is a critical area where reform would have an immediate and measurable impact. The new curriculum was practically oriented and placed less emphasis on theory that was deemed less relevant for current needs in society. It was approved by the University Council.

The curriculum was submitted for accreditation two years ago but has not yet been approved, which exposes the weakness in the current, cumbersome, curriculum development and accreditation process: by the time it is accredited it will probably be outdated – such is the speed of developments today. It also exposes the need for a governance structure that allows swift strategic decisions to be made within a more autonomous, yet fully accountable institution.

Conclusion

This project was ambitious and although its results may not be tangible, it served as a primer for change. This change has materialised in some of the areas that the project addressed and where the environment was prepared. In other areas its main achievement has been to stimulate debate and nurture new ways of thinking about university development.

While this project did not directly address matters of governance, it sought to engage a wide range of staff in establishing a strategic plan, drawing up a university mission statement and developing a model approach to curriculum development and change in the Faculty of Agriculture, which it is hoped will be replicated in other faculties.

The visit and discussion of the project revealed a number of features of university governance and management which should be noted.

The absence of a governing body to which the president of the university reports, means that there is not a clear separation of powers. The president is in some sense responsible to the present University Council but at the same time chairs it and, through his executive board, effectively steers and controls the agenda. This would be appropriate if there was a clear division of authority between a governing body and a university council or senate.

Although the University Council has responsibility for budgetary and financial matters, it appears that the senior officers responsible for management accounting and financial affairs do not attend and do not report to the president but rather to the ministries of higher education and finance.

The appointment of the senior management of the university is still made by the government. *Prima facie* such political appointments are difficult to reconcile with a process of granting universities autonomy. They entail considerable powers of patronage which militates against an objective, critical approach to the development and management of the university.

University of Novi Sad

Novi Sad, Serbia
UM_JEP-18077-2003
Towards an integrated university via internal agreement
2003-2006

Areas affected:

- Information management
- University integration
- Student involvement
- National reforms

Situation

In Serbia most traditional universities are loose collections of independent faculties. These operate as separate legal entities, receiving their funds directly from the national authorities. This has made their integration extremely difficult.

As a result, strategic decisions tend to be made at faculty level while the rectorate is rather a ceremonial office.

Through priority setting and targeted requirements, Tempus has consistently supported the development of the conditions that must be met in order to move towards greater integration of universities. Until the start of Tempus IV, a total of 13 projects addressed various related topics and raised awareness of the necessity of integration. Doing this while respecting the differing interests of all parties (authorities, central management, faculty leaders, staff) has been an arduous task that has taken long to bear fruit. This Tempus project exemplifies this process and the difficulties encountered while at the same time demonstrating how persistent nudges in one direction may eventually move an entire system.

The work of the project proceeded in parallel with important national legislative developments and an understanding of the implications of the Bologna Process for the structure and organisation of higher education institutions in Serbia.

Challenges

The Serbian situation poses challenges to university governance. Except at some private universities and at the newly established state university in Novi Pazar (founded in 2005 on a departmental structure without the legal power of the faculties that is typical of the other state universities), strategic planning can only be done at faculty level, making prioritisation based on the changing needs of a university's immediate environment a process that can only be effectively steered by the national authorities, increasing the universities' dependence on these and going directly against the spirit of the Bologna Declaration, of which Serbia has been a signatory since 2003.

It is difficult to change this situation and transfer power from faculties and the national authority to an integrated university management especially if the university is not given the tools and the power to achieve the change. Strategic decision making must be based on reliable information. The development of a harmonised university-wide information system is therefore an absolute prerequisite if the central management is to take on strategic responsibilities.

Solutions

Based at the progressively spirited University of Novi Sad (but involving all large state universities in the country), the Tempus project ‘Towards an integrated university via internal agreement’ aimed to put in place an information system that would optimise communication flows, prevent duplication among the different faculties and generally support the development of a culture of integration. The philosophy behind the project was that it is better to integrate voluntarily and in a managed way than to have integration imposed from outside.

Novi Sad has a history at the forefront of higher education reform. University staff who had written the first reform-oriented university statutes in Serbia in 2002 were also involved in the drafting of new national higher education legislation but political turmoil after the 2003 assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic slowed down reform.

With no new law to back up the drive towards integrated universities, Novi Sad set out to rewrite its statutes and provide a template for other universities’ statutes. These were quite radical and did not survive the critical judgment of the faculty deans.

At this point the university decided to seek EU support and lead the way, on a voluntary basis, by developing its model for an integrated university, starting with a cross-faculty information system.

The Novi Sad approach to the information system was not to try to centralise activities but to produce an integrated system drawing on the resources and information available in each of the faculties so that a unique system would provide detailed information on all aspects of the work in each faculty, such as student data, study programmes and timetables. It also included financial information, currently unavailable to the university.

It should be noted that Novi Sad currently has 14 faculties and most of them have adopted a software system developed by the Faculty of Engineering, although a number use their own systems. The objective of the software produced under the project is to provide a summary of data produced by these individual systems.

Notwithstanding the successful development of the software, faculties are still resisting its introduction which means that the central offices of the university still have to make written requests for information from the faculties and there is considerable variability in the level and quality of data provided by each faculty.

While faculties have resisted the full implementation of an integrated data system, the implementation of a national accreditation system has given a strong incentive to the faculties for the first time to cooperate in providing standardised information. It would seem that the impact of accreditation is applying pressure which will mean that the decision of the new rector to implement the software within the next year – two years after closure of the project – may be effective.

Conclusion

The tangible outputs of the project are an integrated information software system which is ready for application; an increased understanding of the implications of an integrated university among a wide-range of key actors nationally and in each university; and a growing perception of the potential contribution of students, who were involved in the entire process.

In relation to governance, it is less easy to discern the tangible impact of the project. The new law, while prescriptive in a range of areas, is silent about the role and responsibility of the rector – simply stating that "the executive officer of the university shall be the rector". While the law requires the establishment of a university council as "the administrative body" the powers of this council are limited and real power still remains with the senate and the faculties, which can continue to be separate legal entities.

While there are some general principles of governance in the law, it is difficult to determine whether there is any active discussion of their implications within the universities although it has to be recognised that moving from a fragmented to an integrated system is not easy. It is evident that the impact of the requirements of accreditation and quality assurance, at least in the University of Novi Sad, have exerted pressure on the faculties to collaborate at university level and reinforced the need for an integrated information software system.

In focusing on the need for collated, comprehensive, consistent data for management, the project has identified a key prerequisite for effective governance. On the other hand, there has been less documented reflection on the implications of integration for current and future governance structures and in particular the future role, responsibilities and powers of the rector.

While, at the time of writing, it continues to be possible for faculties to remain independent legal entities, the project laid important building blocks for further reform, the most notable of which is probably the close cooperation in its framework which brought together all rectors and the relevant deputy minister to plan the country's general directions of reform and work together on the new legislation.

Yaroslavl State University

Yaroslavl, Russian Federation
UM_JEP-24090-2003
Raising management quality in a Russian university
2003-2006

Areas affected:

- Quality management
- Evaluation and (self-)assessment
- University integration
- Managerial staff roles
- External stakeholder involvement

Situation

Yaroslavl University is a classical university with around 7000 students and over 400 academic staff. At the time of the Tempus project, focusing on quality management, it was ranked 23rd among the 180 classical universities in Russia.

In June 2003, its top management attended a two-day seminar, supported by Sheffield Hallam University, on the theme of organisational excellence, using self-assessment techniques developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). The seminar exposed a number of problems, such as a lack of delegation of responsibilities from the rectorate, low staff motivation stemming from missing or unclear job descriptions and lack of staff development opportunities, no overall university development strategy, a poor understanding of processes, especially between faculties and departments, and the absence of a system for establishing and monitoring quality criteria.

Challenges

Before the project started there was limited understanding of the concept of quality management and the process approach to management and organisation. Deans were generally elected as eminent researchers, rather than effective managers.

At the time when the proposal was written, the university faced two major challenges. It had to prepare to attract additional funds from sources other than the government and it faced the demographic challenge of a decrease in potential applicants which would increase competition with other higher education institutions in the region.

Both challenges required a more customer-oriented approach, the customers being employers and local business, as well as students.

Responsiveness to customers requires flexibility and initiative on the part of university staff. Flexibility requires ongoing change in methods and structures across the whole organisation. Unfortunately many members of staff had a static view of the university as a fixed element in society, with a guaranteed existence that provided them with jobs for life. The idea of continuous adaptation to client needs was foreign as was the vocabulary of 'clients' and 'customers' in relation to a university.

Moreover, the strong sense of hierarchy at all levels resulted in a tendency for many staff to depend on instructions from above before acting, even if they fully understood the problems to be dealt with. Fear of disapproval from superiors often led to inaction. This sense of hierarchy also inhibited the horizontal collaboration that is essential for the effective maintenance and improvement of processes.

Solutions

The aim of the project was to apply the EFQM Excellence Model in the Faculty of Psychology and the Faculty of Biology and Ecology. This model would help to describe and, where necessary, develop customer oriented processes in student admissions and an orientation to the employment market through curriculum management. Curriculum management in this context relates not to the development of curricula but the processes related to student course choice, timetabling and the recording of curriculum information.

The project generated an approach to customer satisfaction and cross-departmental working which was novel for all those involved. There was initial resistance from some faculties until after the first workshops which helped to generate a more positive approach.

The faculties used the EFQM self-assessment model which is designed in positive terms seeking to identify what is good and what can be improved rather than identifying weaknesses and failures. By the end of the project virtually all the faculties and departments were involved in self-assessment.

In its first stage the project focused on academic quality management but it was subsequently extended to administrative departments. As such it fostered cooperation between administrative and academic colleagues as well as among faculties.

The university lawyer was actively involved in the project because all the changes proposed as a result of the project had to be compliant with the federal laws in relation to admissions and curriculum management.

As a result of the project the Quality Management Department was established and it has encouraged departments to participate in the process.

The outcomes of the project were discussed by the Academic Council and part of the responsibility of the vice-rector for education is now to report on quality management issues to this council.

Following a 2006 federal decision to make quality management systems a requirement for accreditation, the Academic Council approved the adoption of the quality management process for the whole university. In this sense, the timing of the project and its outcomes could not have been better since Yaroslavl University was well prepared to meet this new accreditation requirement.

Students were not actively involved in the project. However, student surveys and feedback were part of the project work. Student feedback is now used in admissions but there is still no university-wide feedback system on curriculum issues. Some clear criteria for quality evaluation (performance indicators) have been developed in relation to the competitiveness of Yaroslavl graduates, the number of applications for admission, the number of fee-paying students, employer satisfaction, and analysis of students' progress data.

As a result of the project the Optional Education Department, as well as dealing with continuing education, has been charged with a wider brief for marketing the university and raising funds. In other words, it has developed into the commercial and enterprise office for the university.

In the Faculty of Biology and Ecology it was considered that the project had been of considerable help in the general management of the educational processes within the faculty. The project had provided a clear set of criteria for quality evaluation which had been used to develop new approaches. As part of the process, the opinion of stakeholders – students, parents, employers – had been sought and this had led to proposals to develop new modules – for example a course in Applied Informatics in Chemistry.

The management role and responsibilities of the deans have increased. As a result of the review of management processes and particularly the work of the rectorate, deans and deputy deans are now no longer teaching officers. This decision arose directly from the experience of the project.

The project encouraged a change in management style at all levels, with a more cooperative and team approach that replaces the previous compartmentalised system. A set of common standards has been developed with a greater understanding of how each section depends on the other for the delivery of these standards. The definition of processes has not only helped to clarify them but also to make them more transparent. This has led to a more open system of governance and management. The senior and middle management of the university is now considered more prepared for change and equipped to manage it.

The university does not have a formal Advisory Board but has an informal one that consists of representatives of the local business community and the regional administration. This Advisory Board is not yet as effective as the rector would like it to be because it has not been easy to persuade either business or regional government to take a more active role. It meets on an irregular basis for consultative purposes.

Conclusion

Although the project was not directly concerned with university governance, it has generated an understanding of the processes at work throughout the university, it has professionalised management structures and it has instilled a cooperative culture that will support good governance. At the top level of the university it has helped the rector to focus on key management issues, to identify areas for delegation, to streamline processes to make them more efficient, and to increase the use of ICT.

The focus on teamwork and cross-departmental working has also engendered a more collaborative and consultative management style. New organisational units have been established through merging and breaking up departments – always with a focus on effective inter-unit discussion and teamwork.

In making processes more transparent, the project can be expected ultimately to contribute to better governance as well as more effective management.

The deans and deputy deans have become full-time managers with increased responsibilities.

Overall, the university is developing a culture of self-assessment and quality enhancement focusing on customer needs and in particular the demands of the labour market.

The extent to which new governance and management arrangements can be implemented is limited by the regulations that define the relationship with the ministry and the direct reporting line (rector to ministry) that this involves, plus the ongoing legislative changes.

Université Abdel Malek Essaadi

Tetouan, Tanger & Ifrane, Morocco
UM_JEP-30113-2002
La gouvernance de l'université en contexte d'autonomie
(University governance and autonomy)
2002-2005

Areas affected:

- Information management
- University integration
- Quality assurance
- Financial management
- External stakeholder involvement

Situation

The University of Abdel Malek Essaadi is a multi-site university based in three cities. It consists of eleven 'institutions' (a term used by the university which appears to cover faculties and institutes). It has some 22,000 students.

As is the case for all Moroccan universities, the constitution of its University Council is set out in legislation adopted at the turn of the millennium. It consists of elected academics, external members, representatives of administrative staff and students. It has about 40 members.

The council establishes a number of commissions with responsibility for discrete areas. Again, this is specified in the national legislation.

The University Council is the only governing body and hence deals with all matters affecting the university.

The basis for the development of universities is the *Charter on Education* and the law of 2000/2001. This established each university president as the manager of the university.

The ministry is currently engaged in a process of what it calls "re-dynamising and reinforcing autonomy". The basis for this is the *Programme d'Urgence 2009-2012*, drawn up in close consultation with the key stakeholders. Fundamental to the new relationship will be a three-year contract between each university and the ministry based on a university plan of action with key performance indicators.

The new contracts for the universities will be designed to achieve the key objectives of the law, the reform of university structures and the development of real responsibility exercised by presidents and university councils linked to educational reform of the curriculum, to achieve a better preparation of students for the world of work.

Following the law of 2000/2001, the ministry issued a large number of regulations covering all aspects of university governance and management.

Challenges

The *Programme d'Urgence* has established a number of priorities. Universities must double the number of graduates in programmes that are more effectively oriented towards the labour market. Each university must prepare a programme of action stretching over four years which will be the basis for negotiation and for the establishment of a contract with key performance indicators to be reviewed each year. The first contracts were to be issued in July 2009.

A spin-off impact of this new approach has been that each university has had to engage actively in the preparation of the university strategic plan. This has forced most of the universities to adopt a radically new approach to an integrated strategy.

In the context of these changes the Université Abdel Malek Essaadi wanted to reinforce and modernise its central administrative services and information systems, and to establish an integrated management system linking the seven university establishments in three different cities.

In addition to the establishment of structures, new operating systems and processes, a key challenge was to change staff attitudes towards governance and management and engage as large a number of them as possible in the active promotion and implementation of the project. A key finding of a survey undertaken at the start of the project was that staff perceived their work in relatively watertight compartments isolated from other parts of the university. There were no clear job descriptions for posts and although there were organigrams, these tended to be theoretical and not to indicate effectively how different units were interrelated. Finally there was limited recognition that staff should be providing a service.

Solutions

This was an ambitious project. The key and possibly unique feature was that it was initiated by the president of the university and arose out of his own strategic plan for the development of the university. The advent of the Tempus programme presented an opportunity, which he seized, to put this strategic plan into action.

The project set itself nine targets:

1. A new information system.
2. An integrated management system linking the seven university institutions in three cities.
3. A new teaching and learning resource centre.
4. A centralised student office (student services).
5. The development of the university finance office.
6. The development of services for central planning, estates management and human resources.
7. The establishment of an external relations office to develop the university's relations with enterprise in the community.
8. The development of a research and international relations office.
9. The development of the library service.

The key objective for the president was to engage a large number of academic and administrative staff in the project which was organised on the basis of teams for each area of work. Individual members of the teams were expected to engage in a type of benchmarking with EU partner institutions. The partners had been chosen specifically because of their links with the university and their geographical location in regions linked with this region of Morocco.

The project was initiated at a time of substantial change. Before the new law, universities had been faculty-based. The new law established universities with new powers granted to their presidents. The president became chair of the University Council which had been established as a decision making body.

The president took personal responsibility for the restructuring of the university. His objective was to persuade administrative and academic staff to work together. To this end, when the project was approved by the European Commission, staff were asked to apply to participate in the project. They had to indicate a commitment to modernise in the area in which they were working and to implement the outcomes of the project.

It was necessary to make it clear, in particular to academic staff but also to administrative staff, that the modernisation of the university was as much their responsibility as it was that of the senior management. This evidently caused consternation among many academic staff who were resistant to the idea of modernisation and to active participation in establishing new governance structures. Nevertheless, as a result of this call, 70 academics out of a total of around 500 and 30 administrative staff out of a total of around 300 were found to participate, representing a significant percentage of each group. All these staff participated in the mobility visits to partner institutions. It should be noted that a number of them had never previously travelled outside Morocco.

For both administrative and academic staff, it was a novel development to bring them together to develop mutual understanding and to work together to improve the governance and management of the university.

Each participant had to produce an individual report. A key evaluation criterion was to monitor the contribution of those who had participated, to the university following the project. A key spin-off has been the personal development of a significant number of the staff who participated, many of whom had not previously thought in constructive terms about career progression were now either in management roles or preparing for management roles.

Many of the headline objectives of the project were achieved.

An office for quality assurance has been established. Each dean was required to appoint a member of staff to be responsible for quality within the faculty. The effectiveness of this arrangement, however, depended on the leadership qualities of the dean. It was evident that, while some faculties had been successful in implementing new processes and procedures others had been less effective.

As a result of the project, the basis of a university information system has been established. It is not yet an integrated management system but does provide more consistent and coherent information than has previously been available. The new information system has been developed to operate through a central service which means that all entities within the university now use a common form for their data which is collated centrally. The software which is used (Apogee) was promoted by the ministry and is widely used in France. An intranet between the dispersed institutions and three cities has not yet fully been established but another Tempus project to establish it is well under way.

A centre for teaching and learning has been established. The staff, who had participated in the project, learnt a great deal from the EU partner institutions and sought to introduce new teaching methodologies. In some of the faculties new methods have been adopted by all staff – whereas in others there has been a minimum of change in methodology and use of new technology.

Although the project has helped to develop the finance office, the university is not autonomous in financial matters. With the exception of salaries the university is free to allocate the remaining resources, however, the room for manoeuvre is, in practice, extremely limited.

As a result of the project, a job description template was established to enable descriptions of all posts to be completed, including the competences and level required for the post.

The project enabled the construction of a framework for all the processes in each of the areas addressed and this facilitated the development of a process model. The process approach was entirely new to the university and staffs who were trained to utilise this model trained other staff. One important dissemination outcome of the project is that staffs in a number of other universities have also been trained in the concept of process modelling. (See also the case study on Yaroslavl State University above.)

The Student Office established by the project has been effective in collating student information.

Conclusion

This was a broad and ambitious project. It is noteworthy because of the total commitment of the president who was the architect of the project and oversaw its implementation.

It is evident that new structures have been put in place and also that the project was successful in terms of the engagement of a large number of staff, many of whom have benefited in terms of career development.

It was also important in bringing together teams of administrative and academic staff, in breaking down barriers between these two parts of the institution and in recognising the need for a more coherent and less compartmentalised approach to strategic management and planning.

The project established the infrastructure for effective governance. While the president has shown leadership and a strategic approach, by his own admission it is evident that there is still work to be done to persuade the University Council that it is a genuine decision making body and all parts of the university that they must implement the decisions of the council.

The plans within the ministry for significant developments in devolving responsibility to the university will mark a further major step towards full autonomy. However, the reservations in relation to transferring full responsibility for staff may continue to cause difficulties.

It is apparent, however, that the transfer of responsibilities is still regulated in great detail by the ministry, where this is seen as necessary to deliver national objectives and ensure accountability.

5. Summary of main findings

During each of the site visits some time was taken to try to understand the governance structure of the institution and general developments relating to governance in the higher education sector in the country. Inevitably the time for this was limited.

The legal framework

Higher education in all of the visited countries has been and continues to be the subject of legislative reform. Consequently the Tempus projects were taking place in the context of and often simultaneously with changes brought about by new legislation. This made it difficult to identify with certainty which results stemmed from the projects, which results stemmed from legislative changes and how the two had interacted.

National objectives in relation to higher education institutions tend to be expressed in terms of reform, developing integrated universities (formally reducing the legal powers of faculties), making universities more efficient, and establishing programmes of study which are more oriented to the labour market.

In general, the legislative framework under which the universities operate is highly regulatory and tends to prescribe in detail their governance structure. As a result, universities are not able to develop their own governance structures in the context of their particular situation and mission.

This means that rectors and senior managers have to be imaginative in the way in which they work within the given structures. They have limited facility to reward individuals who are asked to take on particular responsibilities outside the designated legal framework.

Autonomy

While the term autonomy is widely used, there is no universal interpretation of it. Attitudes towards institutional autonomy are characterised by nervousness on the part of the ministries on the one hand, which are reluctant to forego central control and argue, understandably, that universities need to be prepared before they can become more autonomous, and academic and administrative staff on the other, who are suspicious and not enthusiastic to engage in a change process which many see as threatening and likely to bring a radical transformation in their role and status. Rectors in general seem to be pressing for increased autonomy.

While autonomy is stated to be an objective and is referred to frequently, it seems there is less detailed discussion of governance. National legislation prescribes the governance structure and, as indicated above, this does not permit the institution freedom to develop a structure which is appropriate for its purposes. Hence, the size of the decision making body (university council) is, in general, too large for effective discussion and decision taking and this encourages the sense that the bodies are consultative and advisory and allows many members to avoid engagement at an institutional level and to continue to pursue a sectional agenda.

In most countries universities still have little real autonomy on issues related to human resources; estate ownership and management; funding; student numbers and selection; tuition fees; and the size, composition and terms of reference of governing bodies.

Rectors tend to be appointed by the ministry. Appointment processes vary from some form of election to nomination by an appointed commission. In a number of cases other senior officers are also formally appointed by the ministries.

On the other hand freedom to develop new programmes of study, particularly at second cycle level, is gaining momentum. At first cycle there is still a strong degree of national curriculum content control. As is common in the EU, new programmes of study have to be accredited by a national body. This tends to be a slow, cumbersome and conservative process which is at odds with the declared intention of responding more actively to the labour market and producing graduates with key skills and competences for employment and employability. This would require a speedier and more flexible approach to designing and approving new curricula and programmes of study. Minor changes to programmes of study and modules tend to take place within the institution. It is evident that if universities are to be granted more autonomy in relation to programme development and approval, they will require further developments in their governance and internal processes to ensure an effective quality assurance process. Indeed an emphasis on quality management and process applies to all the key areas of governance listed above.

Decision making processes

There seems to be a lack of clarity about decision making processes and the way in which decisions can be implemented. Where faculties still exercise considerable independence, it seems possible to ignore decisions of the university council. However, external processes of accreditation and quality assurance are forcing faculties and institutes to collaborate more effectively. In a similar way, the process in Morocco of preparing for a contractual relationship with the ministry on the basis of a university's strategic plan is pushing the separate elements within universities to work together.

The role of the rector in state universities in all the countries visited is significant. It is a position of high status and formal powers particularly as the signatory of university documents.

In contrast the management authority of the rector often seems to be less clear and more limited. It is difficult to determine what power of sanction rectors have, especially when deans are appointed formally by ministries and faculties have retained considerable powers. Even in the recently 'integrated' universities rectors have to rely on their personality and negotiating skills. The Tempus projects in Russia, Morocco and the FYR of Macedonia provide examples of the effective role that a rector can play in ensuring the realisation of the project, illustrating the importance of leadership.

Although none of the rectors, vice-rectors or deans, had had leadership and/or management training, those to whom the question was put indicated that they would value this (see also discussion of staff and staff training below).

A visit to the University of South-East Europe in Tetovo provided a valuable insight into how a private university in the region approaches governance. This university has separated the various elements of governance with a senate, a university council, a university board, and an executive board. All of these are relatively small and operate within a clear remit of responsibility and reporting lines which tend towards a corporate approach to governance, which appears to have been successful. The university is in the process of preparing for the appointment of the new rector which involves consultation and the preparation of a detailed job description and responsibilities which will be framed to conform with the national legislation but which will, nevertheless, confirm the rector as the executive head of the university.

Finances

Financial autonomy is, in general, highly circumscribed and does not include responsibility for salaries which means that rarely more than a quarter of the total budget is available to the university. Even where formal financial responsibility has been delegated to universities, their room for manoeuvre is minimal since the terms of the grant are laid down, often by the ministry of education. To add to the confusion, many universities also have a direct reporting line to the ministry of finance. This dual reporting line is a further complication in the whole issue of governance.

In a number of cases, universities are gaining increasing freedom in relation to income which they generate. In large part this comes from tuition fees but also from contracts and projects. The situation varies as to whether the university or the faculty 'owns' this income. A sign of the evolving power of the university in such cases is the agreement to top-slice faculty income by a fixed percentage.

For rectors, full financial autonomy is seen as the key element in establishing more autonomous institutions but there are two corollaries to this – full financial responsibility will entail a change in the employment status of staff from employees of the state to employees of the university and there will be significant resistance to this from trade unions, as for example in Morocco. At the same time, universities will need to establish high quality financial management and information, structures and processes and engage in a wholesale education and training, not only of professional staff but also senior and middle managers, all of whom will need to recognise that financial independence and managing budgets entails new responsibilities and will be accompanied with strict accountability requirements.

Compartmentalisation

The need to develop financial infrastructure and management and information processes applies equally to all aspects of the management of the university. A number of the projects addressed the need for better management information, new data processing software and process review. All of these are integral to a process of effective governance. They also reveal a tendency, in the current situation, to compartmentalise management processes which cannot persist if a more effective and efficient management is required.

The key difficulty, however, is that because governance structures are not developed, managing boards and councils are not in a position to identify their requirements (for management information, for reorganisation, for general structural reform) and to pursue these through radical reorganisation of the university. In one university which was visited there are 104 departments. The rector would like to reduce this to 60 but is hampered by the national legislation and the fact that interest groups are all represented on an unwieldy university governing body, which makes it difficult to secure radical change and reform.

Staff

Within higher education institutions, a fundamental challenge to the reform of governance and management is the attitude of staff – administrative and academic. Enlightened rectors have recognised that Tempus projects can be used to change attitudes. Tempus has been a major vehicle for change through contact with EU partners and particularly through visits and training workshops.

In the best cases, this has meant breaking down barriers, not only persuading previously strictly separated units to work together in teams, but also and more fundamentally, between academic and administrative staff – each of whom need to recognise their inter-dependence, the benefits of working together and an understanding of the new 'service' paradigm involving student-centred learning and skills for employment and employability.

Responsibility for staff, salaries and appointments, is largely retained by the ministry. Universities are beginning to develop expertise through Tempus projects in the human resource management offices. This process will need to be accelerated and developed rapidly if all staff – academic and administrative, contracts and salaries are to be fully devolved. Moreover, staff and trade unions will need to be persuaded that, in the long term, this will be advantageous.

External stakeholders

Although there is recognition of the importance of external stakeholders, the presence of external stakeholders on governing bodies is rare. Consultative or advisory bodies exist but their use seems to be limited. While there is recognition of the need for more involvement with employers, it is apparent that employers may be reluctant to be more actively involved. Partly because there is no culture promoting such involvement, partly because of political factors and the continuing tight legislative regulation of institutions, and partly (as it was put to us in one country) because of the need to allay academic suspicion that the process of granting autonomy to institutions is not a way of granting external stakeholders power over the academic community.

Implementation of Tempus project results

Overall, the results of Tempus projects were impressive – both in terms of the commitment of the staff involved and the achievements. However, a worrying feature was that, in three or even four of the projects visited, although excellent work had been undertaken and resulted in tested products such as new software or new curricula, they were not being implemented either for internal political reasons or because of the national legislative situation. This may suggest that, in all types of projects, there should be a more explicit commitment not only from the head of institution but the ministry, to implement successful outcomes. There will no doubt always be associated caveats but it may help to ensure implementation.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

In considering the recommendations below it must be borne in mind that governance is a sensitive area because it relates to the national political, economic and social situation; the legislative framework; the institutional history and identity; the employment status of senior managers, administrative and academic staff; and the national priorities for higher education.

There are no frameworks or models for governance within the Bologna Process, only general exhortations about reform and autonomy. The governments of Tempus countries will resist attempts which might be interpreted as promoting particular governance forms. Nevertheless, the following recommendations are framed so that general issues relating to governance might be addressed by the European Commission, national governments or individual institutions.

1. The development of a shared understanding of the meaning of autonomy for higher education in the areas listed below. Because this is a sensitive topic it might be best addressed through regional structural measures projects focusing on each of these specific areas:

    a. The development and implementation of institutional strategy and policy in response to national strategy and policy.
    b. Responsibility for financial management and revenue generation and encouragement to develop this as a means of reinforcing independence.
    c. Full responsibility for staff, salaries and appointments – academic and administrative.
    d. Responsibility for curriculum development and management in the context of national qualification frameworks and national quality assurance and accreditation requirements.
    e. Responsibility for estate ownership and management.
    f. Responsibility for internal quality assurance.

2. The development of a strategic approach, accompanied with appropriate staff training and development, to foster engagement with processes of change, institutional autonomy and governance among academic and administrative staff at all levels.

3. The development of programmes of management and leadership training for senior and middle management with the possibility of establishing a Tempus leadership initiative, preferably on a regional basis.

4. A review of institutional and national infrastructures and processes to provide integrated management information and effective data on all aspects of university activities.

5. A range of studies on the detail of governance – the appointment process and the membership, structure, size and relationships of governing bodies, including the representation of external stakeholders. This might include consideration of whether a more corporate approach is appropriate – involving a managing board (university council) with overall responsibility and an academic governing body (senate) with

responsibility for academic and curriculum issues, and reporting to the managing board.

6. A series of complementary projects - regional, national and institutional - on the process of appointment, the role, powers, responsibilities and reporting lines for heads of institutions, deans and other senior managers.

7. Promotion of and support for projects on quality management processes and procedures in each of the discrete areas of university activity to provide the infrastructure necessary for the implementation of good governance.

8. The development of national, regional and international benchmarking and key performance indicators to assist the process of effective governance and management.

Annex I. List of used abbreviations

CHEPS	- Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies
ECTS	- European Credit Transfer System
EEA	- European Economic Area (EU plus Liechtenstein, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland)
EFQM	- European Foundation for Quality Management
ESU	- European Student Union
EU	- European Union
EUA	- European University Association
EURYDICE	- The Information Network on education in Europe
FYR	- Former Yugoslav Republic (as in the FYR of Macedonia)
JEP	- (Tempus) Joint European Project
MODERN	- European Platform for Higher Education Modernisation
OECD	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

eacea-p10-05/2010/EN

Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency
Tempus & Bilateral Cooperation with Industrialised Countries

Write to us:
Tempus Programme
Avenue du Bourget, 1 (BOUR 02/017)
1140 Brussels
Belgium

Visit us:
Rue Colonel Bourg, 135-139
1140 Brussels
Belgium

Phone: +(32 2) 299 6867
Fax: +(32 2) 299 4530

Website:
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus

General questions about the programme:
EACEA-Tempus-Info@ec.europa.eu

Questions about a specific Call for Proposals:
EACEA-Tempus-Calls@ec.europa.eu