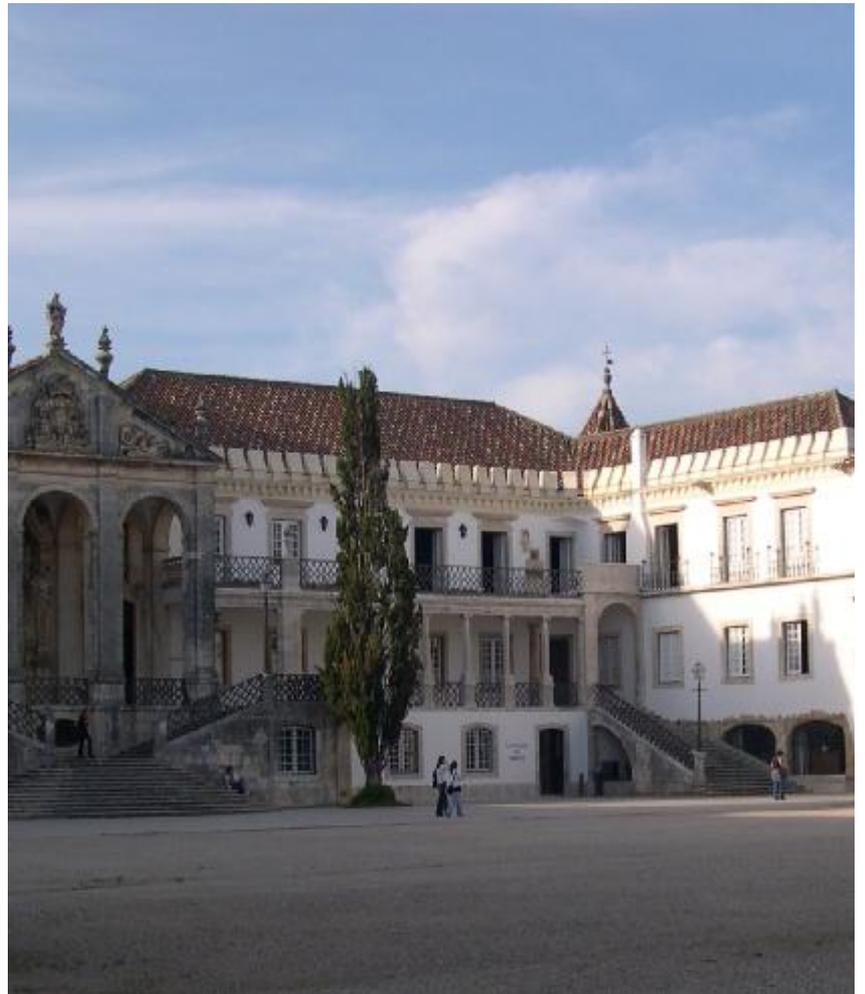




Center for
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Progress in higher education reform
across Europe

Governance Reform

Volume 3: Governance fiches

External Governance Fiche: Slovenia

Part 1: External governance arrangements for public universities in 2008

In 2008, Slovenian public universities have rather high institutional autonomy – both in absolute terms (related to midpoints of scale) and comparison with the EU average - particularly when it comes about entering partnerships, staffing issues, funding and finance. Slovene institutions are also higher as regards autonomy in BA student selection and Quality Assurance. With regard to accountability Slovenian institutions are exactly on the midpoint. In terms of autonomy in T&R programmes Slovene institutions are slightly below the average.

Slovene universities have almost no autonomy when it comes to internal governance structures. The Higher Education Act (HEA) determines obligatory decision-making bodies at two levels of the university: at the rectorate and at the faculty level (faculties are “members” of a university), but universities are allowed to add in their constituent act and statute additional governance bodies.

Universities are free to decide how many and which type of senior academic staff they want to have. The freedom of determining salaries of academic staff is limited by the salary system of the Public Sector Act, by the Collective agreement for non-commercial activities and by the Collective agreement for education activities. Salaries depend on the position and function academic staff is recruited for and their academic record and habitation. In addition, efficiency criteria and working conditions, as well as personal competences and additional activities determine the final amount of salary.

Universities accept all qualified students up to the number of study places available. The HEA defined admission criteria for all three study cycles and rules for preregistration announcement and enrolment in higher education. In case there are more students than places offered by HEI the HEI can decide to limit the entrance quota for accredited study programmes by setting additional admission conditions. These additional criteria have to be allowed by the HEA and the decision for limiting the entrance quota has to be approved by the Government. Annually the senate of an university decides on the number of study places, but the approval of the government is needed.

Universities are not legally obliged to produce a strategic plan, but there are different documents and regulations that have an important impact on the strategic development of the university - they need to realize the national HE goals. Detailed plans and reporting are necessary to be entitled to public funding to support academic activities, quality and progress of academic staff.

Universities enjoy full autonomy to enter partnerships with other HEIs or organizations to collaborate in teaching and research. Important is also that they can

cooperate with other organizations to gather additional funds. The Government does not directly stimulate such partnerships but new study programs or institutions (faculties) get easier accredited if university can provide additional external funds.

Internal QA systems are required both for teaching and research but the university can decide on the methods it wants to use. According to the HEA from 2004 the rector is responsible for QA at the level of university and deans are responsible at faculty level. Universities are required to take part in external quality assessment of teaching as part of the external institutional evaluation, but the policy is still in the implementation process. For this reasons universities are at this moment free to decide if they want to be externally evaluated. For the time being external research evaluations only apply to small parts of fundamental research with QA linked to project funding by the national research agency.

Research programs and major research themes have for a long time been an internal matter of universities but national research priorities have a major impact. Universities are free to start new Bachelors but they are subject to the accreditation of the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia. Accreditation also includes the teaching contents and methods and the obligatory components of the study programmes.

Universities are autonomous in internal allocation of public and private funds; they can borrow funds on the capital market, but need to follow government regulations in this respect. They are completely free to build up reserves and carry over unspent financial resources.

Part 2: Changes in external governance from 1995 to 2008

Internal governance structures at Slovenian public universities have not changed since 1995. The only change in this respect was implemented in 1999, when the amendments of the HEA determined that faculties had to set up a new internal body, the academic assembly, which has to be composed by all faculty staff and having at least one fifth of its members consisting of student representatives. The assembly elects the Senate of the faculty and prepares proposals for the election of a faculty dean to its Senate.

Public universities have been autonomous in selecting senior staff. There were no major changes since 1995 except in the salary system. In 1995 the senior staff was paid directly by the government, now salaries are included in the lump-sum system and further follow legislation as discussed before. Habilitation for the title of full-professor is permanent since the late 90's. Before it was given for a limited period of 5 years.

No changes were introduced in terms of BA student selection.

Regarding accountability, universities slightly dropped down the autonomy scale. There is a greater annual reporting requirement to the government. The

implementation of the new funding system in 2004 had a major impact on the number and content of reportings to be made for different activities.

The social climate has become much more favourable for cooperation between universities and other organizations. Cooperation with other organizations (private and public) is stressed in the Master Plan for HE. Increased institutional autonomy, the increase in the number of higher education institutions and the changes in the funding system contributed to this development.

There was no QA system at place in 1995. In 1997 an independent consultant body – the National Commission for Quality Assurance in HE was established and developed Criteria for quality for HE study programs, research and art. Some external evaluations took place at HEIs but they were not obliged to follow the commission's decisions. In 2008 the Senate for Evaluation was established at the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia to finally implement the QA system and to become a member of ENQA.

There were no changes in universities' autonomy with regard to programming teaching and research.

Universities can gather more funding from different sources than in the past and they are almost free to use it for whatever purpose they regard necessary. However, a significant part of public funding is usually still given by the ministry for specific targeted purposes.