

Main points of the university reform

<p>Legal capacity (section 5) the core to the reforms</p> <p>Tasks of the university board (section 14). The new legal status brings full financial responsibility emphasising the importance of strategic management. The university board will, inter alia (section 14):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decide on the objectives, the strategy and the steering of the activities and finances • decide on the plan of action • prepare the financial statements • be responsible for the management and use of assets • be responsible for the accounting and controls • appoint the Rector (section 18)
<p>Composition of the board (section 15). The aim is to strengthen community relations, opportunities to influence and financial competence of universities operating as public corporations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 6, maximum of 14 members • University community represented: professors, other staff and students • Half, including the chair, members external to the university community, but appointed by the university's collegial body • Clarification of powers: Rector, Vice-Rector, heads of Faculties or other units/institutes under the authority of the board, the members of the university's collegial body and the discharge agents cannot be members of the board • Members can be released from their tasks if they are unable to undertake them, commit activities that damage the interests of the university or for some other significant reason (section 16)
<p>Rector (section 17). The Rector manages the operations of the university. He/She is responsible for the accounting, for preparing the matters to be discussed by the board and for implementing the board's decisions. The Rector must enjoy the confidence of the board.</p>
<p>Collegial body of the university (section 22). The boards of universities operating as public corporations are appointed by university collegiates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of 50 members in accordance with the traditional tripartite system • Appoints the members of the university board external to the university community • Decides on the number of board members and the length of the term of office • Appoints the university's auditors • Decides on bringing possible action for damages against the university's board, members of the board or Rector
<p>Personnel (sections 28-39). Universities take the place of the State as employers and civil-service employment relationships become contractual employment relationships. Personnel structure remains unchanged including professors, other research and teaching staff, other personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment/giving notice centralised with the Rector or for him to delegate • Appointment of professors through open application (main rule) or by invitation • System of external examination remains unchanged • Qualification requirements of other staff within the authority of the universities • Due to the statutory public task of the universities, language proficiency requirements will continue to be regulated by a Government statute
<p>Student selection (section 32) and eligibility for application (section 33). To facilitate student selections, main selections are carried out through a joint application process. The National Board of Education maintains the student selection register, but universities are responsible for selections. Study rights may be admitted to an applicant only for one programme per term, whereas previously it was one per a whole academic year.</p>
<p>Tuition fees (section 10) on a trial basis. Degree education will still be provided free of charge. The legislative reforms will, however, make it possible to charge tuition fees on a trial basis to students from outside EU/EEA countries who are taking part in separate master's programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for tuition fees should include a scholarship scheme • The aim is to strengthen the internationalisation of universities • The criteria for master's programmes must be satisfied • Piloting in place until the end of 2014
<p>Steering and funding (sections 44-48). The State will guarantee core funding by monthly payments, taking into account the development of costs. External financing will not decrease State funding. The Ministry of Education can finance joint operations of all the universities (e.g., information networks).</p>
<p>Finances (section 56-61). The new independent legal status will make universities fully responsible for their finances. Therefore the draft act includes sections on own capital, accounting, auditing, financial statements and granting discharge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities' own capital made up of basic capital, other equity and revaluation reserves. (section 56) • The return on basic capital is available for the university's use • The government may also make financial investments for the universities • Accounting obligation in line with the Accounting Act • The accounting of business activities must be separate from the basic functions under public law • Auditors must be approved by the Central Chamber of Commerce • The authorised agents appointed by the university's collegial body verifies the financial statements and makes the decision on granting discharge