Center for
Higher Education
Policy Studies

Continuing Higher Education

Part two: Five Countries

International Higher Education Monitor
Thematic report

Harry de Boer
Elisabeth Epping
Marike Faber
Frans Kaiser
Elke Weyer

March 2013

Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS)
Universiteit Twente
Postbus 217
7500 AE Enschede
tel. 053 – 4893809 / 4893263
fax. 053 – 4340392

0 CONTENTS

1 Continuing higher education in Australia

1.1 Context, provisions and participation

1.1.1 Context Continuing Higher Education

Australia (in official language the Commonwealth of Australia) is a federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy with six federal states (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia) and two mainland territories (Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory). There are three levels of government: the federal level, the state and territory level and the local level. The states are in principle sovereign and the mainland territories have an equal status of these of the states. The Commonwealth parliament has certain powers connected to areas deemed to be of national importance (set out in the Australian constitution, section 51). The federal level and the state and territory are responsible for education and share funding responsibilities. While higher education is mostly funded by the federal government, funding responsibility for vocational education and training (VET) is shared with the states and the territories. Due to the fact that the individual states are responsible for VET, the system looks quite different from state to state. In the following selected demographic data are presenting based on OECD statistics (OECD, 2011).

Table 1: Population statistics Australia

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Population (in '000)	20 395	20 698	21 015	21 499	21 955	22 342
Population Growth rate (%)	1.3	1.5	1.5	2.3	2.1	1.8
Youth population aged less than 15 (% of population)	19.7	19.6	19.4	19.2	19.1	18.9
Elderly population aged 65 and over (% of population)	12.9	13.0	13.2	13.2	13.3	13.5
Foreign-born population (% of population)	24.2	24.6	25.1	25.8	26.5	…

Most of the 22.342.000 Australians live in the coastal cities and regional areas and Sydney and Melbourne are the largest populated areas (4.6 million and 4.1 million inhabitants). The annual population growth rate increased steadily over the last years and was 1.8% in 2010. The Australian society is affected by the demographic change, as displayed in the table above: the percentage of the population aged less than 15 declined from 19.7% in 2005 to 18.9% in 2010; in 2005, 12.9% of the population was aged 65 or older, increasing to 13.5% in 2010. Nearly 27% of the population is foreign born and the net migration rate was calculated in 2009 to be 12.7%.

Table 2: Economic data

Economic framework	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
GDP (in USD current PPPs)	721.3	774.5	831.0	848.7	884.7	915.7
Real GDP growth (annual growth %)	3.1	3.6	3.8	1.4	2.3	2.6
Inflation rate: all items (annual growth %)	2.7	3.5	2.3	4.4	1.8	2.8
Economic Structure						
Real value added: agriculture, forestry, fishing (annual growth %)	2.8	-15.3	6.9	17.6	-1.2	…
Real value added: industry (annual growth %)	0.6	4.1	2.8	-1.6	3.8	…
Real value added: services (annual growth %)	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.6	1.7	…

Historically, the nation's economic structure and wealth is based primarily on agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by industry and services. Currently, trade, manufacturing, services and finance are the main components. Another important share to the Australian economy is the high proportion of overseas fee paying students (both in the higher education and VET sector), accounting for around $3.7 billion in 2010 (Norton, 2012). Also Australia is impacted by the worldwide economic crisis. The annual economic growth as percentage of GDP, stagnated heavily in from 3.8 (2007) to 1.4 (2008) and the inflation rate increased from 2.3% to 4.4%. In the late 00s the economic situation recovered.

Table 3: Employment data

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Unemployment rate: total civilian labour force (%)	5.0	4.8	4.4	4.2	5.6	5.2
Long-term unemployment: total unemployed (%)	18.3	18.1	15.4	14.9	14.7	18.5
Employment rate in population aged 15-24 (%)	63.3	63.7	64.2	64.5	01.2	60.7
Employment rate in population aged 25-54 (%)	78.8	79.2	80.0	80.3	79.1	79.5
Employment rate in population aged 55-64 (%)	53.5	55.5	56.6	57.4	59.0	60.6
Incidence of part-time employment (%)	24.0	23.9	23.8	23.8	24.7	24.9
Self-employment rate: total civilian employment (%)	12.7	12.2	11.8	11.6	11.6	11.6

This downturn is mirrored in both unemployment and employment figures. In 2005, unemployment of the workforce accounted for 5% and decreased to 4.2% in 2008. In 2009 and 2010 the unemployment rate increased to 5.6% and 5.2% respectively. The employment rates for the different age populations show a diverse picture. Whereas among age group 15-24, the employment rate was 63.3% in 2005, it increased until 2008 up to nearly 65% and decreased to 60.7% in 2010, mirroring the difficult economic situation. Related to this, the percentage of youth between 20-24 not in employment accounted for 2010 8.3% and for the youth between 15-19, the rate was even higher with 11.6%. The picture of age group 24-50 is more stable, having a rate of 78.8% increasing slightly until 2008 (80,3%), and declining by 2010 to 79.5%. As for the

population group age 55-64, the employment rate steadily increased from 53.5% (2005) to 60.6% (2010), reflecting the ageing population. In 2010, nearly 25% of the population was part-time employed and 11.6% were self-employed. The average working time per person in employment accounts for 1686 hours per year, continuously decreasing since 2003. The level of educational attainment is high. In 2009, around 40% of the population aged 25-64 had a tertiary degree.

1.1.2 Provisions continuing higher education

The concept of lifelong learning and continuing education is deeply rooted in the Australian system. Already in the 1980's the federal government strived to establish a national tertiary education system which is composed of the higher education sector and the VET (in other countries VET is also known as further education). Australia is known to be leading in the delivery of distance education programs, tailored to individual needs. The VET system and post-graduate system enable a range of modes of delivery: traditional classroom, workplace, internet or community venues (BMBF). The different training paths involve also a diverse group of students[1]: students living in more urbanised and rural areas, students with disabilities, employed students, students for whom English is a second language as well as international students. Although the higher education system and the VET system should strongly collaborate and enable coherent learning pathways, as anticipated and foreseen with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), the systems are still not that far. In the following the higher education and VET will be briefly introduced and subsequently the connecting aspects will be presented.

1.1.2.1 Higher Education

The higher education system consists of three types of higher education institutions: universities, self-accrediting providers and non-self-accrediting higher education institutions. Typically, universities are significantly funded by the federal government. Entry requirements of post-secondary education are next to English language skills, the completion of 'senior secondary school' and sometimes prior work experience and research abilities. Since 2012 university entrance has gotten less competitive as the government uncapped student places.

1.1.2.2 Vocational education and Training

Vocational education and training developed in Australia since the 1800s and is politically and funding wise in the hands of the states. The Federal government also provides funding, for example trough VET FEE-HELP. The sector developed differently in each state in line with its particular needs and priorities, yet a common feature is the strong connection with the industry, which contributes by means of articulating training needs and priorities. The VET sector is shaped by its close connection with industry and serves different training purposes: entry/reintegration into the labour

[1] Hereby all persons following VET are called students, independent of whether they follow courses next to their work.

market, skills upgrade and development, job training etc. A range of study fields are covered by VET, among others Art& Design, Engineering, Education, Business & Management to Architecture[2] (compare also figure 2). Access requirements to VET vary: one of them is having obtained 'year 10 certificate'; no subject or work related experience are a prerequisite[3]. VET must be delivered by registered and accredited training organisations' (RTOs). Some higher education providers also register as RTOs and deliver education in both sectors.
The system is underpinned by the National Skills Framework (NSF), which serves as the basis for this flexible approach and consists of three components:

- The VET Quality Framework
- the Australian Qualifications Framework
- Training packages: set out a number of skills to be awarded and co-developed with the industry, yet they are not undisputed and attracted much criticism.

Accredited Courses
In those areas, where training packages (set of skills/competences co-developed with industry) do not exist, accredited courses are offered, which are accredited by the Australian Skills Quality Authority **(ASQA).** The courses can lead to an AQF qualification and aim at skills development both practically and theoretical (the balance depends strongly on the sector the training is meant for). The courses are offered by RTOs (including universities which are registered as RTOs). Practical trainings thereby might be undertaken either at the RTO or at the workplace. These courses are based on units of competency and assessed against specified competency standards.

Traineeships and Apprenticeships
Another notable feature of the Australian VET system are traineeships and apprenticeships. They are not included in figure 1, yet bring together training and employment in form of a legal contract. Traineeships and apprenticeships are available to all age groups and may be taken part-time and full-time and are based on training packages. A broad range of occupations are available for traineeships/apprenticeships, like traditional occupation such as plumbing, hairdressing and construction. The programs can lead to AQF qualifications and are registered within the respective state/territory authority.

1.1.2.3 Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) also termed continuing professional education (CPE) is understood as activities that systematically enhance the professional knowledge and personal skills for the advancements of a certain job/job sector. Most of the professions like architects, designers, pharmacists, health practitioners and engineers have CPD obligations. The requirements and forms of CPD

[2] An overview about the VET sector is available via Training.gov.au.
[3] For more information see: http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/

can vary among the professions. To give an example, subsequently, information is presented for CPD for Architects as well as for Accountants.

In the case of Architects, the Australian Institute of Architects expresses that all A+ members and architects which are registered and living the New South Wales, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland need to do CPD. The CPD activities for Architects address all aspects of the profession: design, documentation, project and practice management. Every year, a member needs to obtain 20 CPD points (whereas 1 hour of CPD activities equals 1 CPD point), also for re-registration. The 20 points are made up by 10 formal and 10 informal points and can be collected through facilities of the Australian Institute of Architects, where CPD opportunities are offered, called Refuel. The activities which lead to CPD points, include national seminar series, events in state/territory offices, continuum etc. Also a number of external providers are suitable for collecting the points (Australian Institute of Architects, 2011). The CPD/CPE policy is developed in accordance with the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) and endorsed by the National Council.

For Accountants, Certified Practising Accountant (CPA) Australia is one of the largest bodies for professionals. Every member of CPA Australia must undertake CPD activities every year, accounting for 20 CPD hours, and 120 CPD hours every three years. In addition, member must keep track of their activities. This policy also applies for members living and working outside of Australia. Activities which are considered CPD are among others attendance of workshops and lectures, participating in Online Learning webinars or attending CPD events organised by CPA. Every year CPA randomly checks members whether the fulfilled their CPD duties. (for more information compare: www.cpaaustralia.com.au)

1.1.3 Learning Pathways

The higher education and VET sector form the tertiary education sector. The learning pathways are captured in figure 1. Central elements are the learning outcomes, measured in qualifications. Following secondary school, higher education institutions and registered training organisations (RTOs) are providers of trainings and issue qualifications. The figure contains a number of bold boxes which refer to major qualifications of the Australian tertiary education system. These qualifications encompass secondary education, vocational education and training and higher education qualifications. They are manifested in the AQF and set out common levels of educational achievements in form of qualifications (AQF qualification[4]) and attainments (AQF statement of attainment[5]). In total there are 14 qualification types:[6]

- VET qualifications: advanced diploma, diploma, certificate I, II, III and IV, vocational graduate certificate and graduate diploma.
- Higher education qualifications: bachelor degree, bachelor honours degree, associate degree, advanced diploma graduate certificate/diploma, master degree and doctoral degree.

A selection of post-graduate degrees are research degrees whereas others can be completed by coursework. The exact structure varies by discipline and also the time needed to accomplish the degree is shaped by a flexible and individual learning approach. Diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma can be offered by both higher education and vocational education and training institutions.

The figure suggests that the boundaries between VET and higher education are smooth and that the two sectors work 'seamlessly' together. Links should be built between both sectors, and a few policy initiatives are addressing this but practice shows that the sectors act rather independent (the AFQ is an attempt accommodating both). One of the key objectives of the AQF is to facilitate pathways to, and through, formal qualifications. Many universities and VET institutions have arrangements in place that enable them to recognise qualifications in a way that leads to pathways between the two sectors. The AQF includes the **AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy**. The policy assists institution by providing guidelines for articulation and credit transfer arrangements. The AQF provides for flexible, transparent and systematic learning pathways and the removal of boundaries between educational sectors through a levels framework that is non-sector specific and contains an increasing complexity of learning outcomes at each successive level. In addition, the **Threshold Standards** that TEQSA

[4] Defined as: "An AQF qualification is the result of an accredited complete program of learning that leads to formal certification that a graduate has achieved learning outcomes as described in the AQF" (AQF Glossary of Terminology of the Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2011)). For each qualification type, the AQF specifies the expected knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills which a graduate is expected to possess. These are not specific to any industry or field.

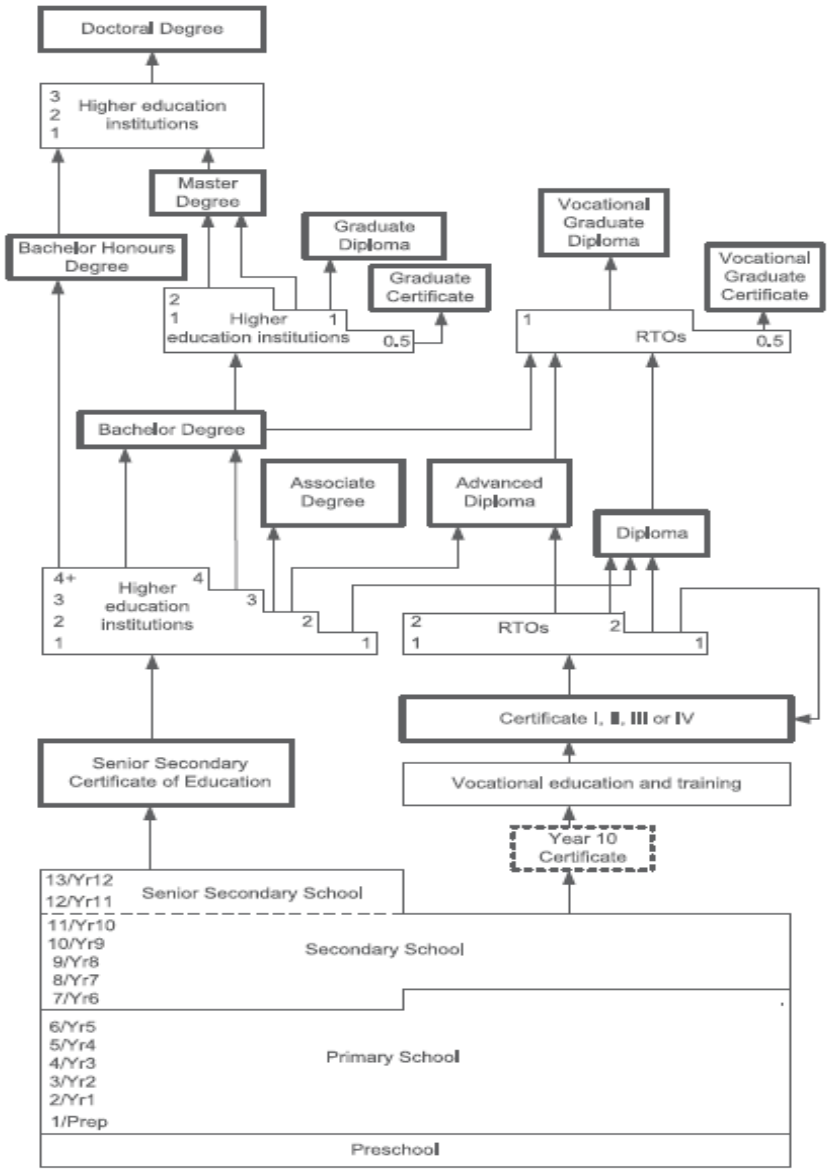
[5] Defined as: "A statement of attainment recognises that one or more accredited units has been achieved" (AQF Glossary of Terminology). Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2011)

6 Following a review in 2012, the vocational graduate certificate and vocational graduate program qualification types have been removed, but retains a graduate certificate and graduate diploma which can be offered in either sector.

regulates higher education providers against also includes, a requirement for providers to support pathways (see Qualification Standards).

One challenge is the involvement of different levels of government: VET is regulated at state level and higher education at federal level. This poses challenging for coordination and planning and does not smoothen the transition and cooperation between the two sectors. Even in states like Victoria, where there are dual sector institutions (universities with a TAFE division), the educational articulation between the two sectors remains challenging.

Figure 1 The Australian Education System



(Source: AEI-NOOSR). Note that the Vocational Graduate Certificate and Diploma have been combined with the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma, and that there is no barrier to graduates with the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education enrolling in VET.

1.1.4 Participation

In 2011, ca. 1.9 Million Australians participated in VET (IBSA, 2008). The number of people participating in VET increased over the last years: in 2006, 1.6 million Australians participated in VET(IBSA, 2008). The majority of participants (42.5%) belongs to the age group 15-24 years, 36.2% age between 25-44 years and 20.2% are 45 years and older (NCVER, 2011). Approximately 82% of the Australians between 15-19 years participate in education and training activities (NCVER, 2012b)). Thereby the participation is distributed as follows: 54.7% at school level, 14.7% in higher education, 6.5% apprenticeship or traineeship and 6% are enrolled in publicly funded VET. The fields of studies that were followed most by students were Management & Commerce and Engineering & related technology. Table 4 shows on overview of the participation of students according to subject field, divided by VET and higher education.

Table 4: Equivalent full-time students by sector of education and field of education, 2010 (Source: NCVER, 2012)

	VET* ('000)	HE** ('000)	Total ('000)	Total %
Natural & physical sciences	4.6	62.4	67.0	4.4
Information technology	17.4	33.9	51.3	3.4
Engineering & related technologies	110.6	65.6	176.2	11.6
Architecture & building	47.4	21.4	68.8	4.5
Agriculture, environmental & related studies	31.2	12.5	43.8	2.9
Health	31.2	126.8	158.0	10.4
Education	15.5	74.6	90.1	5.9
Management & commerce	133.9	228.6	362.5	23.9
Society & culture	103.0	160.3	263.3	17.4
Creative arts	32.6	61.9	94.5	6.2
Food, hospitality & personal services	49.5	0.8	50.2	3.3
Mixed field programs	72.4	4.1	76.5	5.0
Not applicable[44]	6.7	8.4	15.1	1.0
Total equivalent full-time students	**655.8**	**861.5**	**1 517.3**	**100.0**

Comparing the number of total full time equivalent students, the higher education sector has approximately 200.000 more students than the VET sector (keeping in mind that VET is usually part-time). Fields which seem to be very popular in VET compared to higher education are engineering & related technologies, food hospitality & personal services and so called mixed field programs. In the VET system, ca. 55% of all students enrol in certificate III qualifications or higher.

Among the five most popular courses are according to (NCVER, 2011):

- Certificate IV in training and assessment
- Certificate II in Hospitality
- Certificate II in Business
- Certificate III in Children's Services
- Certificate III in Hospitality

There are about 1.2 million domestic and international enrolled in higher education. The share of international students accounts for 30%. A slight decline in the

enrolments of international students in visible since 2009, due to changes in migration policy. Nevertheless, international fee-paying students are a major income source to Australia. Most of the higher education students are enrolled in universities, yet some higher education courses are offered in the VET sector: approximately 6% of the students are enrolled outside of universities as to get their degree.

Table 5 provides insights on the transition of VET graduates as of 2011. A substantial number of graduates is reported to be employed after graduation although this is not surprising, keeping in mind that most students follow courses/modules part time. The number of graduates who were unemployment before training and employed after training is rather high with 44%. The previous section referred already to transition problems between VET and higher education, although in theory the framework enables doing so, yet clear policy initiatives are lacking. Almost 32% of the graduates continue studying: only 6.6% engage in university study, 16.9% continue with a TAFE institute and 8.7% studying with a private/ another registered provider. For module completers, only 3.9% continue with higher education.

Table 5: Employment and further study outcomes of graduates and module completers 2011 (%)

	Graduates	Module completers
Employment outcomes		
After training (as at 27 May 2011)		
Employed	77.4	73.6
Not employed[35]	22.6	26.4
Unemployed	12.7	11.2
Not in the labour force	9.6	14.6
Of those not employed before training		
Employed after training	44.0	28.7
Of those employed before training		
Employed after training at a higher skill level[36]	17.3	7.7
Further study outcomes		
Enrolled in further study after training[37, 38]	32.4	3.9
Studying at university[38]	6.6	3.9
Studying at a TAFE institute[38]	16.9	na
Studying at a private provider or other registered provider[38]	8.7	na

na = not applicable.

Source: (NCVER, 2012a))

1.2 The Legal and Policy Framework

1.2.1 Policy Framework

The national programs and initiatives directed to increase flexibility and improve the VET sector, are set out on the webpage of the Australian Government/ Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. In general, the initiatives include[7]:

- **Adult Learners Week** (ALW): funding is made available to support activities which should increase national/community awareness of the ALW
- **Australia's National Training system:** brings together different stakeholders in VET and aims to develop skills among the population which are responsive to the local needs; in 2008, the 'National agreement for skills and workforce development'[8] was endorsed, identifying long term objects for the state and territory as well as the Commonwealth government with the overall goal to improve quality and transparency. In the beginning of 2012 it was agreed to revise the national agreement and move towards a more demand-driven and client-focused system;
- **Industry Training Strategies Program (ITSP):** funded under the Australian Apprenticeship Workforce Skills Development component of the national VET support program and intended to provide a strategic response to industry-based VET and to fund projects related to industry-based Apprenticeship implementation models
- **National Advisory for Tertiary Education Skills and Employment (NATESE):** provides independent policy advice to key government committees like the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), SCOTESE, National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC), the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)[9], the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG).
- **Productive Ageing through Community Education (PAtCE):** funding for training of senior Australians
- **Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills & Employment (SCOTESE),** established in 2011, has to ensure that Australia's current and future workforce needs are met through increased participation, educational attainment, skills development and skills use to achieve greater productivity.

---

[7] A full overview can be obtained via:
http://www.innovation.gov.au/Skills/National/Pages/default.aspx
See also the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, which set certain targets for tertiary qualification attainment by 2020. The National Agreement is available at http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_agreements.aspx

[8] To read more about the National agreement, see here; the effects of the implementation of the agreement might vary across the sates/territories because the training systems are run differently per state:
http://www.coag.gov.au/sites/default/files/20081129_skills_workforce_development_fact_sheet.pdf

[9] The National Skills Standards Council is currently undertaking a review of the national standards for the regulation of VET; see http://www.nssc.natese.gov.au/standards_review

- **Unique Student Identifier** (**USI**): in 2014 a new national policy instrument will be implemented to make the VET sector more transparent. The USI will be launched enabling students to access their VET achievements in a coherent way and also include their recognition of prior learning (RPL) and credit transfer. This will in turn also be beneficial for training organisations, the government and employers. The instrument is considered to serve as a building block for a range of reforms of the VET system.[10]

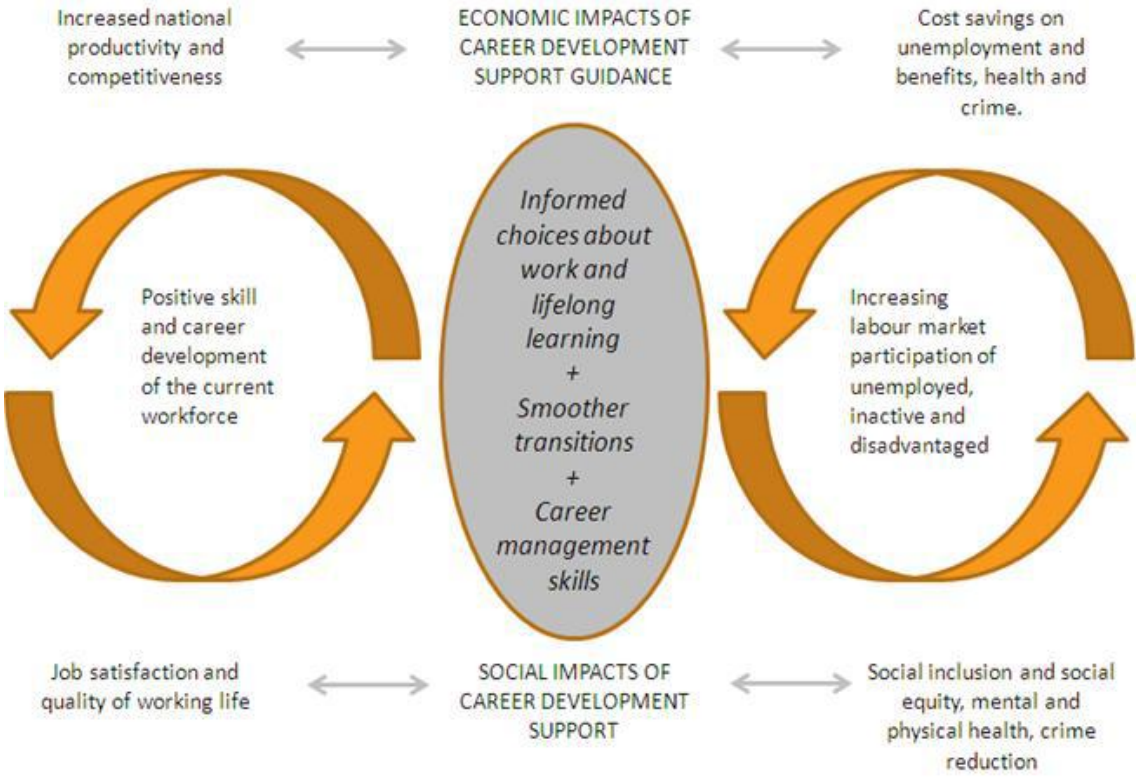
SCOTESE is in charge of ensuring that the Australian workforce is equipped with the right skills and released as one of its first actions in autumn 2012 the 'National Foundation Skills Strategy for adults'. The strategy should serve as a policy direction for the state/jurisdictions and outlines three principal areas: collaboration and coordination, equitable access to, and increased participation in, learning, and a stronger research base in order to have evidence for improving outcomes for learners. As a performance goal it is formulated that 'by 2022, two thirds of the working age Australians will have literacy and numeracy skills at Level 3 or above'[11] (SCOTESE, 2012, p. 10).

Also the national level is concerned with career developments (here defined as "the term that best describes the complex process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan"(National Career Development Strategy Green Paper, 2012). Together with various stakeholders, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) launched the process of developing Australia's first '**national career development strateg**y' enabling a strategic approach for career and professional development for Australians. A green paper was adopted, underlining the lifelong learning perspective on career development in order to be flexible on the labour market. Thereby the government highlights that career development support is beneficial for individuals, but also has a strong contribution to key policy objective like: raising educational attainment and skill level, successful career transitions, raising labour force participation, labour market flexibility and labour mobility, addressing disadvantaged members, responding to the challenges of an ageing population (National Career Development Strategy Green Paper). The connection is also illustrated in the figure below:

[10] Another important initiative is Total VET Activity (TVA), the collection of data about the entire VET sector. Currently, the collection of data is restricted to public providers and publicly-funded training. TVA will make it mandatory for all providers, including private providers, to submit statistical data to a national collection. This will be particularly useful for policy development, and is scheduled to be implemented from January 2014.

[11] Level three is according to the Glossary: "considered by experts as a suitable minimum level for coping with the increasing demands of the emerging knowledge society and information economy".

Figure 2: Lifelong learning perspective on career development



Source: National Career Development Strategy Green Paper (2012)

Career development activities are addressed to a range of stakeholders: high school students, tertiary students, employees, job seekers etc. The support and the instruments which are made available encompass a range of activities like lessons in the curriculum, simulations in classrooms, online services and assessment, information material in form of handbooks, flyers, databases and projects. As priority policy areas, the National Australian government identifies the professionalization of the career industry, the development of a framework to guide effort and access to national career information (i.e. job guide and Australian job publications, myfuture.edu.au). There is no national policy in place to stimulate the much needed transfer of students from higher education to VET. This would, however, be needed to assure a good implementation of the AQF.

1.3 The organisation and governance of the continuing higher education system

1.3.1 Government

Financial and political responsibility for higher education remains with the Australian government, although legislative power retains with the states/territories. The federal level administers policies through the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. Higher education institution are significantly funded

by the federal government, under the condition that the institutions meet quality and accountability standards as laid out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003.
The decision making body having overall responsibility of VET is SCOTESE, established in 2011. The states and territories are in charge of administering VET within their jurisdiction, that is: allocation of funding, setting students fees[12], managing the TAFE institute, regulation of training providers[13] etc. About 1/3 is of VET funding is provided by the federal government and 2/3 by the states/territories. Individuals and industry have a share as well. Companies can purchase trainings for their employees and students make their contribution by paying tuition/ sharing the costs of education. Students can apply for governmental subsidies. The national government launched a number of initiatives and programs to stimulate continuous education of the Australian workforce.
There is no public national umbrella organising 'continuing higher education', yet many private institutions are united by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), being a professional organisation. Not all private providers are members of ACPET. There are about 5000 RTOs in total, most of which are private. Only 1100 are ACPET members. Other important peak body organisations include the TAFE Directors Association (TDA), and the Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOA). Enterprise RTOs are those which deliver training primarily within their own or their parent organisation.

1.3.2 Employers /Industry

Employers can actively contribute to the continuing education of its staff, by for instance purchasing training units or having training institutes incorporated in their system. On a national basis, employers/industry can articulate their needs in form of training packages. In addition, professional associations might formulate requirements for the professional development of its members (explained previously).

1.3.2.1 Training packages

The Australian VET sector is strongly influenced by the close industry partnership. Together with the industry and employer groups, so called 'training packages' are developed which guide the VET. Both public and private providers musts use them in order to receive public funding for their programs. Training packages endorse a set of national standards and qualifications for a particular job sector and point to skill developments and priorities in the sector. Almost every major job sector has a training package, that guides the competency development of graduates, at each level of

[12] Private providers set their own fees, and public providers such as TAFEs generally act autonomously.
[13] Most of the states have agreed to refer their powers for regulation to the federal government. As a result, the **Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)** was established in 2011. Victoria and Western Australia did not refer their powers. As a result, they maintain their own regulators which cover providers that only operate in those states and which do not offer courses to overseas students. ASQA covers RTOs in all other states and territories, as well as providers in Victoria/Western Australia which operate outside Victoria and Western Australia, and all providers which offer courses to overseas students.

vocational education. Training packages are developed by the ten Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) and endorsed by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC).[14] The training packages consist of three components:

- the qualifications,
- the units of competency (skills and knowledge)
- and the assessment guidelines.

Because of the strong focus on skills, this approach is also known as 'competency-based' training. Training packages do not set out the way how the training should be delivered and the time needed to deliver it: this is the responsibility of the RTOs. Training Packages can specify that particular modes of delivery and assessment are required – for example, a requirement that the student must be assessed in a workplace environment, or that certain units of competency may not be delivered online. RTOs must demonstrate that the delivery time is sufficient to allow the student to acquire the skills and knowledge. Training Packages may give guidelines as to the expected delivery time.
In total there are more than 70 training packages across Australia, which can be found on training.gov.au. The training packages draw on the AQF qualifications and usually include more than one qualification (Certificate I, II, III and IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Certificate and Graduate Diploma). Individuals can have their skills recognised either by a qualification (the individual is competent in all fields of competency required) or by a statement of attainment (showing that the individual masters some competencies). Also prior learning achievements are taken into account. This can be formal learning, or experience gained through other means (such as work experience). The process of recognising this is known as Recognition of Prior Learning, and involves a qualified assessor looking at the evidence provided by the student.

The packages are intended to enable a better connection between the VET system and industry, match demand and supply, create a flexible and relevant workforce and support individuals in their training choice. A training package is renewed every three years. One of the bodies, that oversees a selection of training packages and collects feedback for a continuous improvement is 'Government Skills Australia (GSA)[15,16]. GSA manages the following training packages: correctional services, local government, public safety, public sector and water. Among the most popular training packages in 2009 where: Business Services, Tourism, Hospitality and Events, Community Services, Construction and Plumbing, Health, Metal and Engineering, Information and Communications, Retail, Electro technology and Financial Services (NCVER, 2011).
Although the training packages are considered to be advantageous as they connect the VET system and industry in a good way, they attracted a lot of criticism over the last years. The main aspects refer to the different learning process and the threat of ineffective credit transfer between VET and higher education (though being a major

[14] The NSSC commenced on 1 July 2011, replacing the NQC
[15] http://www.governmentskills.com.au
[16] The GSA replaced the national Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITAB)

policy goal). The transition problems are seen in the fact that training packages have a (too) strong focus on industry training/ and industry needed skills, and do not stipulate learning outcomes or curriculum, but only competences (For a list of arguments pro and contra compare Wheelahan & Carter, 2001).

1.3.3 Providers

1.3.3.1 Higher Education

Universities

Under the 'Higher Education Standards Framework', universities must self-accredit and offer undergraduate and postgraduate education. The Australian higher education system comprises 41 universities, 37 public and 3 private ones, and 1 university of specialisation, which are recognised and established under Commonwealth or state/territory legislation. A well-known distinction between the public universities is:

- The Go8: The group of eight traditional research intensive universities (typically less industry interaction)
- The five technical Universities: represented by the Australian Technology Network (ATN)
- The other pre- 1987 universities, represented by the Coalition of Australian Innovative Research Universities
- The new research universities (post-1987)
- Regional University Network (RUN) representing six regional universities.

This grouping is however not a formal categorization nor included in government policies. The universities are all comprehensive and differ in size; enrolments range from 2.000 to more than 40.000.

Self-accrediting providers

There are four self-accrediting providers which are no universities, yet are also authorised by the government and accredit their own qualifications.

Non-self-accrediting providers

There are around 125 non-self-accrediting providers in Australia, which offer particular higher education courses (also registered by state/territory). The courses which are typically offered include areas like business and information technology, design and health related studies. These higher education providers must offer, next to certain registration standards and commitments to educational quality, at least one accredited higher education course.

Open Universities Australia

Open Universities Australia (OUA) was established in 1993 and comprises seven leading Australian universities: Curtin University, Griffith University, Macquarie University, Monash University, RMIT University, Swinburne University of Technology and University of South Australia. The OUA does not deliver education or award degrees, instead it is selling online units by the previous listed institutions. In 2011,

the OUA had about 167.000 unit enrolments, being an increase by 28% compared to the previous year (Open Universities Australia, 2011). Especially the online delivery as a mode of education has grown tremendously as illustrated by the website traffic growths (87% increase as compared to 2008). At the OUA, students can follow various undergraduate and postgraduate courses .

1.3.3.2 Vocational education and training

Registered Training Organisations
Only registered training organisations (RTOs) can issue AQF qualifications in the framework of continuing higher education/ VET and higher education. There are approximately 5000 public and private RTOs **(**NCVER, 2011**)**.

Public/government funded RTOs include:

- the colleges of technical and further education (TAFE);
- secondary schools and colleges;
- RTOs within universities (being a commercial venture/not formally part of the university)
- specialized institutions and universities like agricultural and technical colleges.

Private RTOs offer a range of accredited and non-accredited courses for further training. Included here are:

- enterprises offering trainings for the employees (enterprises RTOs), tailor-made to individual needs and yet provide a pathway to national AQF qualifications;
- private training and business colleges, which usually exist in the fields of business, hospitality and tourism, and computing;
- specialist bodies providing training within their industry and adult and community based RTOs, which include public service organisations (fire service or hospitals), community service organisations and organisations traditionally offering Adult Community Education (ACE), migration education centres, evening and community centres etc. ACE offer a range of non-formal learning opportunities[17].
- Private RTOs might also offer skill assessment services for employers[18].

TAFE Colleges
The state funded colleges that offer vocational education and training are the colleges of technical and further education (TAFE). TAFE colleges are Australia's leading provider in VET and are located all-over the country. There is no national structure of a TAFE institutions. Instead they are closely tied to the priorities and needs of each

[17] The national peak body for Ace is Adult Learning Australia: https://ala.asn.au/.
[18] Schools might also offer VET as part of their senior secondary education, either by registering as an RTO and meeting the standards for RTOs, or by establishing a partnership with an external RTO.

state and also differently organised: New South Wales for instance has a centralised system, whereas TAFE institutions in Victoria are more independent with their own governing bodies. A broad range of trainings and courses is offered to meet the needs of customers, the local community and industry partners. The courses and trainings are tailor-made to suit individuals needs and can be taken full-time, part-time, through distance learning or online learning. The qualification and trainings aim at different professional stages: labour market entry, professional development or retraining. More than 1.200 nationally recognised qualifications are offered: Certificate I –Advanced Diploma level, Graduate Certificates, Graduate diplomas, Statements of Attainment, and options for professional development and career acceleration. In theory, TAFE colleges may also offer higher education qualifications at degree level, but that in practice this does not occur very often. In Victoria, however, a number of TAFE colleges are adding degrees to their course program in the last years (compare Norton, 2012).

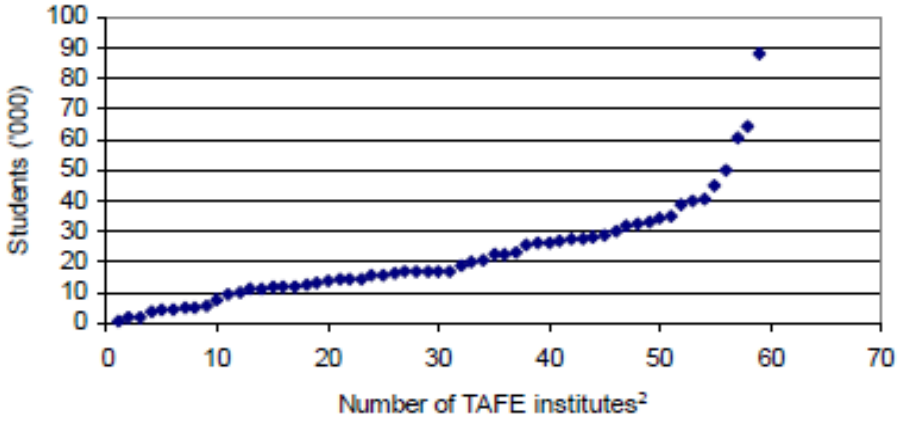
In Australia, vocational education and training, including the work of RTOs, is currently regulated by two sets of national standards:

- The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF)
- The legislative instruments established under the *National VET Regulator (NVR) ct 2011*.

A review of VET standards is currently underway, it is anticipated the outcome of the project will be one national set of standards for the regulation of VET (see further comments in 1.4.2).

The tuition fees for the TAFE trainings depend on the level of qualification and range between 5.000-20.000 AUS-$ per year. The TAFE institutions have a strong international reputation and welcome a number of international students following vocational trainings and English language courses. The courses offered at TAFE colleges are based on the training packages or accredited courses by the ASQA/the respective accrediting body. The graph below provides an overview about the total number of students per TAFE institute.

Figure 3: Total number of students per institute, TAFE institutes (all funding sources), 2006



Source: NCVER (2006)

1.4 Policy Instruments

1.4.1 Qualification framework

1.4.1.1 Australian Qualifications Framework

One of the essential elements for enhancing flexibility in the area of 'continuing higher education' in Australia, is the Australian Qualifications Framework. The AQF was established as a response to the need of establishing a national training market. By means of doing so, the AQF was implemented, defining common educational standards and training for regulated qualifications and integrating them into a coherent national framework. The AQF aims to create transparency and a set of national comparable qualifications measured in learning outcomes.
First introduced in 1995 as a pilot project, it was in 2000 fully implemented and developed on request of a combination of stakeholders (State, Territory and Commonwealth Education and Training Ministers and Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs). In response to significant developments in education delivery methods and course design in 2011, a new strengthened AQF was agreed, and all requirements of the strengthened AQF will need to be met from 1 January 2015.

The AQF is referenced in new national legislation setting out the standards and regulatory arrangements for higher education and for vocational education and training. Qualification developers must adhere to these standards. The new national regulators, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) for the higher education sector, and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for the vocational education and training sector, assess compliance against the qualification standards as part of the course accreditation process.

14 qualification types are identified, (ranging from secondary education to vocational education and to the tertiary education sector) connected to one of the 10 levels (see Figure 4), with the exception of secondary certificate of education. The qualifications related to the VET are advanced diploma, diploma, certificate I, II, III and IV, graduate certificate and graduate diploma. The higher education qualifications include the following: diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree, bachelor honours degree, graduate certificate (typically 1-2 years)[19], graduate diploma (typically 1-2 years), masters degree[20] and doctoral degree (typically 3-4 years). Master degrees and professional doctoral degrees can be done by coursework as well. Figure 4 describes both, the qualification levels in the vocational and training sector and the higher education sector/post-graduate sector. The qualifications are defined in terms of particular knowledge, skills (i.e.: cognitive and creative, technical, communication, oral, interpersonal) and the application of knowledge and skills. The AQF qualifications are issued by RTOs and higher education institutions.

Additionally, there are Statements of Attainment, which document learning achievements and identify units of competency/modules from a training package or accredited course. The units of competences, though not an AQF qualification on their own, can be accumulated and certified and gain equal status with that of a national short course and can be used for employment purposes or admission in a program. This flexible and transparent character shows that the boundaries between vocational initial training and advanced vocational training are not clear cut and that the individual learning path is central. The qualifications can be issued by one of the RTOs or by higher education institutions, as explained previously. The time to accomplish the different qualifications varies according to the prior knowledge in form of for instance statements of attainment.

Critique

The AQF has been implemented in order to provide a comprehensive framework for post-compulsory education and training. Thereby the assumption is that the pathways between the sectors are central elements if the system works. A critique to the current framework is the different nature of the two sectors: whereas school education and higher education are centred around curriculum input models, VET is shaped by competences based training (based on the training packages). These two distinct approaches on how to design qualifications are considered to be challenging and conflicting (Wheelahan, 2011)) .

[19] Volume of learning is expressed in equivalent full time years

[20] There are three main forms of Masters degree qualification type:

- Masters Degree (research) (typically 1-2 years)
- Masters Degree (coursework) (typically 1-2 years)
- Masters Degree (extended) (typically 3-4 years)

Figure 4 Australian Qualifications Framework[21]

Source: Australian Qualifications Framework Council (2011)[22]

The AQF was introduced in 1995, (with implementation phased in until it was fully implemented in 2000), creating a single comprehensive national qualifications framework. Qualifications awarded under the framework are recognised around Australia, across state and territory borders.

1.4.2 Quality Assurance

The AQF provides a comprehensive and consistent framework for formal education and training qualifications. Authorised issuing organisations for AQF qualifications are:

- State and territory government authorised statutory bodies responsible for issuing the *Senior Secondary Certificate of Education* in their own state or territory.
- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) authorised by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the government accrediting authorities in Victoria and Western Australia to issue AQF qualifications in *vocational education and training*.

[21] For a detailed description of the 10 levels and 16 qualification types, read: Australian Qualifications Framework (2011): http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AustQuals%20FrmwrkFirstEditionJuly2011_FINAL.pdf

[22] The second edition of the AQF was published in January 2013. An updated AQF wheel has been included. See http://www.aqf.edu.au.

- Non-self-accrediting higher education providers authorised by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to issue AQF qualifications in *higher education.*

Self-accrediting universities and higher education providers authorised by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) to issue AQF qualifications in *higher education.*

Universities are by law allowed to accredit own qualifications and diplomas. The quality of the AQF qualifications is accredited and inspected by:

- the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA),
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) or
- state/territory accreditation bodies (sector-dependent).

TESQA was established in 2011 (following the Bradley Review) and is fully operational since the beginning in of 2012. TESQA's main tasks comprise the regulation and assurance of quality in higher education by means of registration/re-registration of institutions and accreditation/ re-accreditation of courses. All institutions which award AQF qualifications are listed and verified via the AQF register[23].

The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) was established as the national regulator in 2011. ASQA regulates providers against the national standards set out in legislative instruments to the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act (2011).*

ASQA has regulatory powers over:

- all registered training providers in NSW, QLD, SA, TAS, ACT and NT
- RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia which offer VET courses in a referring state or territory and/or offer VET courses to overseas students.

In WA and Victoria, the state regulator regulates RTOs they are responsible for against the national standards in the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). There is no substantial difference in effect or intent between these standards.

A current review of VET standards is looking at creating one national set of standards for the regulation of VET.

The national standards which ASQA uses are known as the VET Quality Framework. Neither the VET Quality Framework nor the AQTF is a curriculum; they are standards which providers must meet to ensure that the quality of their training and assessment is sufficient to equip students with the relevant skills. Industry-specific curricula are developed by industry and approved by the National Skills Standards Council.

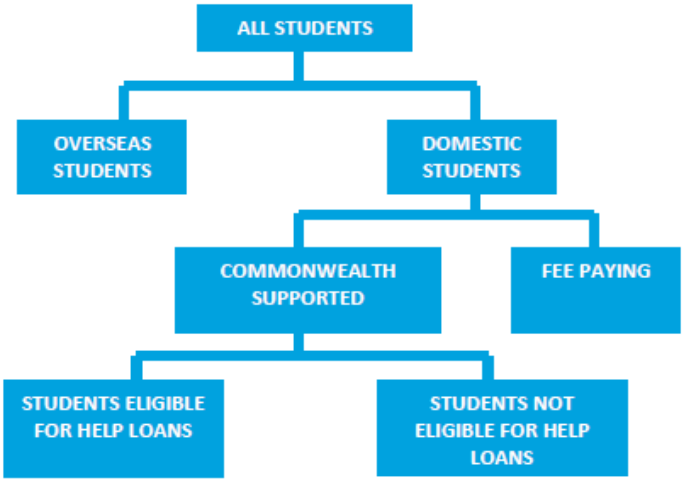
[23] http://www.aqf.edu.au/

1.4.3 Measures regarding financial support for continuing higher education

Tuition fee and student support

Students wishing to participate in higher education are subject to financial duties. The exact amount and the payback schedule depends on the status of the student: domestic or overseas student, commonwealth-supported or fee paying.

Figure 5: Types of students of Australian universities



Source: (Australian Government, 2010, p.10)

To start with the first, an commonwealth supported undergraduate place is subsidised by the government and students have to make a contribution to the costs of the education. This contribution can either be paid directly to the higher education institution or students can take a loan (HECS-HELP) for financing. The loan is paid back by students through the taxation system, only after income exceeds the minimum income wage. These places are limited and public universities can decide how many places they will offer.

Public universities may also offer undergraduate fee-paying places, yet only to overseas students. Also most of the postgraduate level coursework are fee-paying, as well as private higher education. There are financing opportunities available for students. One of them is the loan program FEE-HELP, also requiring a pay back when the income exceeds the minimum income threshold. In general terms, university students pay on average around 40% of their overall costs of a course.

The government administers a student loan scheme for the VET sector as well. VET FEE-HELP is available to assist students following VET qualifications to pay their tuition fees. VET FEE-HELP is not available for certificate courses. In spring 2012 it was agreed to implement the VET scheme nationwide with a close connection between the commonwealth, states and territories. For RTOs, this means that because of the removal of financial barriers, more students could enrol to take diplomas/ get advanced qualifications.

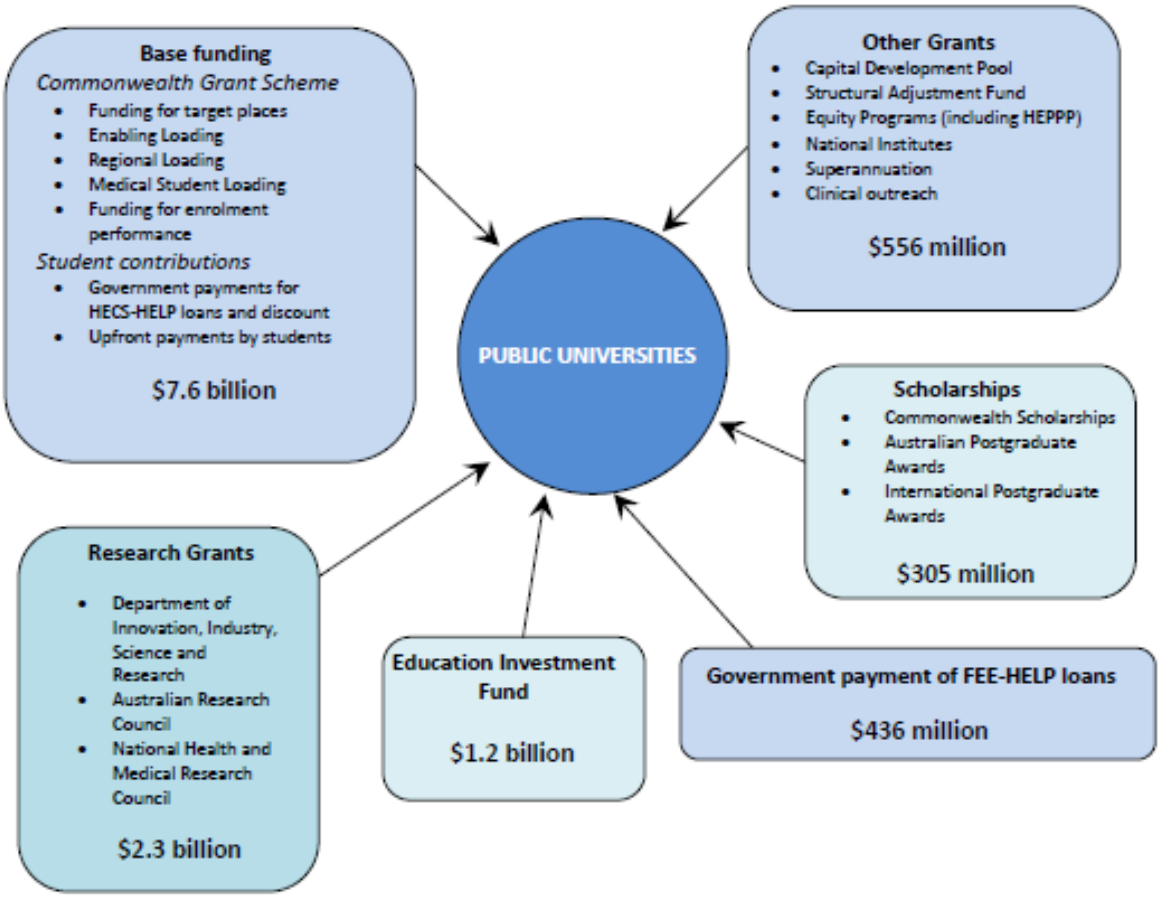
Other support mechanisms include:

- the scholarships of the Australian Postgraduate Awards
- Austudy, Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY
- Student Start-up Scholarships and Relocation Scholarships
- Cooperative Research Centres Program,
- Joint Academic Scholarship Online Network.

Higher education funding

With regard to higher education, the tuition fees for international students and for fee-paying master course work can be set by institutions. Usually most of the continuing education takes place at the master's course work level. The figure below provides an overview of the elements of governmental funding for public universities.

Figure 6: Australian government funding of public universities, 2010

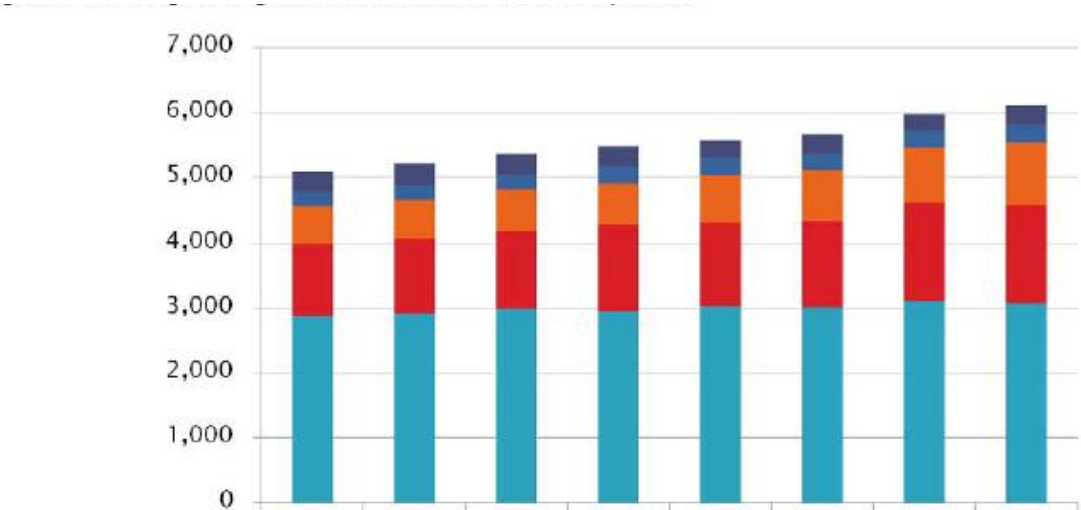


Source: (Australian Government, 2010, p.16)

VET funding

Although there is a high degree of similarity among the states with respect to key features of funding in VET, there are detailed differences[24]. A three year national skills and workforce agreement between the commonwealth and the states governs VET funding. The states/territories set the fees for those VET programs which are publicly funded. Typically the fees account for 10-20% of the real costs (course costs, services, costs of consumables). The amount of the fees depends on the jurisdiction, unit, student contact hour and course level (that is higher certificate levels are usually more expensive). Especially in private RTO, students and employers pay full fees for VET programs, ranging between $8.000 - $ 15.000 annually (Peter Noonan Consulting, 2010). Due to the variety of schemes/ differences within the jurisdictions there is no overview of the different shares paid by individuals, employers and government. There is 'Employer Assistance' in place. According to 'Graduate Careers Online' (2008), around 32% of postgraduate students, currently working, would receive some sort of financial support from their employer or time off as to assist their studies (most of these would be doing course work degrees, like MBAs). The figure below shows on overview of the operating revenues in VET between 2001-2008, broken down by source of income.

Figure 7: VET Operating revenues 2001-2008 (CPI Adjusted)



	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Ancillary trading and other	310	322	318	308	271	295	261	295
Student fees and charges	224	235	229	266	261	261	261	275
Fee-for-service	547	570	615	609	707	782	857	978
Australian Government	1,123	1,149	1,207	1,351	1,301	1,315	1,496	1,485
State/territory government	2,887	2,935	2,994	2,950	3,031	3,019	3,112	3,089

Source: NCVER, 2009, note 9

[24] To get to know more about how the funding system evolved read: Peter Noonan Consulting (2010)

1.4.3.1 List of Abbreviations

AACA	Architects Accreditation Council of Australia
ACE	Adult Community Education
ACPET	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
ALW	Adult Learners Week
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPA	Certified Practising Accountant
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPE	Continuing professional education
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIISRTE	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
FLAG	Flexible Learning Advisory Group
GSA	Government Skills Australia
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program
HESA	Higher Education Support Act
ISC	Industry Skills Councils
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Bodies
NQC	National Quality Council
NSF	National Skills Framework
NSOC	National Senior Officials Committee
NSSC	National Skills Standards Council
NSW	New South Wales
NVEAC	National VET Equity Advisory Council
OUA	Open Universities Australia
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SCOTESE	Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills & Employment
TAFE	Colleges of technical and further education
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
USI	Unique Student Identifier
VET	Vocational Education and Training

References

AEI-NOOSR. Australia Country Education Profiles.

Australian Government. (2012). National career development strategy green paper.

Australian Institute of Architects. (2011). Continuing Professional Development (CPD) For Architects.

Australian Qualifications Framework Council. (2011). AQF Glossary of Terminology.

Australian Qualifications Framework Council. (2011). Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

BMBF. *Länderberichte Band 1 Australien.*

Graduate Careers Australia. (2008). Enhancing Careers Through Postgraduate Study. Retrieved from http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/enhancing_careers_through_pos.pdf

IBSA. (2008). General Information on Training Packages: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Retrieved from http://www.ibsa.org.au/Portals/ibsa.org.au/docs/Training%20Packages/FAQs/FAQs_General_Info_on_TP.pdf

Marginson, S. Competition and contestability in Australian higher education, 1987–1997. In Australian Universities Review .

NCVER. (2006). A profile of VET providers.

NCVER. (2011). A guide to vocational education and training in Australia.

NCVER. (2012a). Pocket guide.

NCVER. (2012b). Young people in education and training 2011.

Norton, A. (2012). Mapping Australian higher education.

OECD. (2011). Country statistical profile: Australia 2011-2012. Retrieved from http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/191100011e1t003.pdf?expires=1354021680&id=id&accname=freeContent&checksum=DFE213999620C1662E3CD67E60A80F90

Open Universities Australia. (2011). Annual Report.

SCOTESE. (2012). National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults.

Wheelahan, L. (2011). From old to new: the Australian qualifications framework. Journal of Education and Work, 24, 323–342. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13639080.2011.584689

Wheelahan, L. & Carter, R. (2001). National training packages: a new curriculum framework for vocational education and training in Australia.

Interviewees:

- Professor Dr. Lynn Meek, University of Melbourne, Australia

2 Continuing higher education in California

2.1 Context, provision and providers

2.1.1 Context continuing Higher Education

With over 36,960,000 inhabitants in 2010, California is one of the largest and most populated states of the United States. 12% of people living in the U.S. live here. There has been a 9% population increase between 2000 and 2009 (same nationally), and the population is very ethnically diverse, including 42% of Caucasians, 37% of Hispanic Americans, 13% of Asian-Americans and 8% of African Americans, as well as other minority groups including Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, American Indian and Alaska Native persons (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In terms of GDP California is the fifth economy of the world. With its 454 degree-granting institutions in 2010-2011 California tops the list for purely degree-granting institutions[25] in the United States (NCES).[26]

2.1.2 More higher education graduates needed

There is a number of key shifts in California's demographics and economy that are driving forces for reforms and alternative modes of delivery (such as adult education):

- The California population is aging and becoming more diverse. The highly educated "baby boom" cohort will begin exiting the workforce in 2011 as they reach retirement age. The growth in the population of those over 65 years old is projected to grow by 2.3 million — a greater number than any other group. By 2030, 20 % of Californians will be over 65 years of age. This has several implications for the redistribution of skills and experience. The boomers have more people with some college, associates and graduate degrees, on a percentage basis, while the younger cohort holds more bachelor's degrees and fewer graduate degrees. 20 % of the younger generation lack high school degrees/GEDs versus 17 % of boomers. This means more than half a million people without a secondary credential would move into the 45-64 group.
- The economy is continuing its long-term transition to one dominated by knowledge-based industries that require a workforce with specialized skills and advanced knowledge. Changing workplace needs are requiring increasing levels of education, technical skill, and other workplace skills. The Public Policy Institute of California projects that California will "under-produce" college graduates and people with some level of postsecondary training to meet growing workforce training demands. It projects that 75 % of occupations will require at least some college (some college plus college graduate), whereas only 61 % of the population will have this level of education. In addition to the need for high levels of education, industry seeks technical skills. Yet gaps in critical technical

[25] A degree granting institution refers to any institution that offers an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's, or first-professional degree. Institutions that grant only certificates or awards of any length program (less-than-2-years or 2-years or more) are categorized as non-degree-granting institutions.

[26] http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_280.asp

skills are apparent. Skilled trades have difficulty recruiting workers with technical proficiency. California businesses are now experiencing and foresee future critical shortages in technically-skilled workers. As the shortage of technically capable workers grows, businesses will find it difficult to remain competitive in California and the state will have difficulty sustaining its historical leadership role in innovative technologies and other vital areas. A number of respondents to the California Research Bureau's 2009 survey of representatives of business and industry identified job shortages in their industries, mainly due to workers leaving the industry and the lack of replacement workers with the necessary skills and training.[27] Almost two-thirds indicated that workers do not have the necessary skills to perform the jobs. This skills deficit was echoed in the Coalition for 21st Century Skills' seminal 2006 report, "Are They Really Ready To Work?" which surveyed over four hundred employers nationally, representing a combined U.S.-based workforce of over 2 million individuals, to determine their workforce training needs and priorities.[28] Respondents rated the preparation level of workforce entrants by educational attainment bracket.

- The educational attainment of the population is declining. High school completion is low.[29] In California, almost one-third of all students fail to graduate from public high schools within four years. About one-fifth of California's adult population, or 5.3 million people, lacks a high school diploma. The share of California's population with less than 9th grade education (9.7 %) is more than twice the national average (4.5 %). In addition to low completion rates, there has been a steady decline in students taking career technical education (CTE) courses in high school — courses that could both motivate students academically and prepare them for both transition to postsecondary education and future careers.
- While demographics are shifting and financial pressures are mounting, among others the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) argues that policymakers as well as business and private foundations "are underscoring the need to boost degree attainment to meet the demands of the changing global economy".[30] One strategy to increase attainment is reaching out for adult students, particularly those who already have some college experience. Notably, those with some college but no degree comprise over 20 % of the US adult population (25 years and older). Successfully reaching and serving these potential students – known as "ready adults," "near completers," or "stopouts" – is one important component of an effective strategy for increasing degree attainment.

---

[27] Jenkins, D. (2006). Career Pathways: Aligning Public Resources to Support Individual and Regional Economic Advancement in the Knowledge Economy. Brooklyn, NY: Workforce Strategy Center.
http://legacy.kctcs.edu/student/careerpathways/WSC_pathways8.17.06.pdf

[28] http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/FINAL_REPORT_PDF09-29-06.pdf

[29] http://www.higheredinfo.org/

[30] http://www.wiche.edu/info/publications/ntnmConciergeBrief.pdf

Thus, there is a growing concern and awareness of an imbalance between postsecondary output in terms of both quantity and quality and (future) labour market needs. In the next decade demand for college-educated workers will rise. In the years to come California (and US) jobs will require (at least some) postsecondary education or training. Several studies point at the gap between the skills and competences of graduates and the needs of the Californian economy.

As president Obama made clear in one of his speeches: "countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow" (in Delbanco 2012, 11), higher education is for economic competiveness (at both state and individual level), for establishing and maintaining democratic citizenship, and for personal fulfillment (liberal learning).

The economic rationale dominates the discourse, also in California that has one of the biggest economies in the world. It is clear that a college degree supplanted the high school diploma as the minimum qualification for entry into the skilled labor market, and there is abundant evidence that people with a college degree earn more money over the course of their lives than people without one (see table below). There is little dispute that one reason to go to college is to increase one's income as well as to reduce the chances of getting unemployed (see table below).

Table 6: Unemployment rates California per degree and by year

year	Statewide	Graduate / professional degree	Baccalaureate degree	Some college / associate degree	High school graduate	Less than high school graduate
2004	6.7%	3.2%	4.3%	5.4%	8.2%	12.4%
2005	5.7%	2.6%	3.2%	5.4%	6.7%	10.0%
2006	5.1%	2.4%	3.0%	4.3%	6.0%	9.5%
2007	5.0%	2.4%	2.9%	4.1%	5.8%	9.6%
2008	6.2%	2.4%	3.3%	5.5%	7.9%	11.4%
2009	9.8%	3.8%	6.1%	8.8%	12.2%	17.3%

Table 7: Median annual income California per degree and by year

year	Statewide	Graduate / professional degree	Baccalaureate degree	Some college / associate degree	High school graduate	Less than high school graduate
2004	$ 33,266	$ 65,728	$ 48,507	$ 35,004	$ 26,541	$ 17,255
2005	$ 35,164	$ 67,740	$ 50,388	$ 35,861	$ 27,217	$ 18,163
2006	$ 35,297	$ 71,060	$ 50,941	$ 36,015	$ 27,461	$ 18,487
2007	$ 36,384	$ 71,938	$ 52,370	$ 36,958	$ 29,199	$ 19,173
2008	$ 36,855	$ 74,664	$ 52,111	$ 37,134	$ 29,473	$ 20,109
2009	$ 35,366	$ 73,078	$ 51,938	$ 35,643	$ 26,950	$ 18,451

2.1.3 The structure of the higher education system

The Californian higher education system has two parts: a public and a private one. The public part consists of three public systems. The mandates of the three public systems, set down in the Master Plan for California effectuated in 1960, are meant to complement each other in order to offer a broad range of postsecondary education services. The three public postsecondary systems are the University of California (UC) system, the California State University (CSU) system and the California Community

Colleges (CCC) system. The private system consists of colleges and universities that largely are independent from the state. Private institutions can be for profit or not-for profit.

University of California (UC), governed by a Board of Regents appointed by the Governor of the state, is the primary state-supported academic research institution and offers four-year undergraduate programs (baccalaureate) and graduate programs in a wide variety of fields (master's, doctoral, professional degrees). The UC system includes more than 220,000 students annually. Based on the Master Plan, the UC has exclusive jurisdiction in public education for doctoral degrees (with the exception that CSU can award joint doctorates) and for graduate instruction in dentistry, law, medicine, and veterinary science. The UC has ten campuses (e.g. Berkeley, Los Angeles), one health science campus, and numerous special research facilities. UC also operates five medical centers which support the clinical teaching programs of the University's medical and health sciences schools.
Main admission requirements are set according to the 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education and its subsequent modifications. In-state applicants in the top one-eighth (12.5%) of their high school graduating classes must be offered a place in the University of California system.

The California State University (CSU) system includes 23 campuses. They award bachelor's (two-years), master's (four-years) and education doctoral degrees, plus joint doctoral with other universities. The CSU draws its students from the top third of California's high school graduates and is the state's primary undergraduate teaching system. Admission priority is given to students who have successfully completed their first two years at a California Community College campus.
These multipurpose institutions serve more than 400,000 students annually and offer undergraduate and graduate instruction in a variety of professional and occupational fields as well as broad liberal education. in the last two years CSU student number have declined (while the UC system continued to grow).
Each CSU campus retains its own unique academic and demographic character. These campuses include comprehensive and polytechnic universities, and the California Maritime Academy, a specialized campus.
As of 2009, the CSU conferred bachelor's and master's degrees that spanned 384 different degree programs, as well as teaching credential programs. Many programs and courses are available online. CSU campuses support a variety of technology-delivered courses and programs. Some technology delivered programs require campus attendance or are subject to campus residency provisions. Other technology-delivered programs may be completed in a remote setting.
The percentage of full time CSU students[31] stabilized the last years around 75 % (and thus 25 % part-timers).

[31] Full time student: taking 12 or more student credit units per term at undergrad level and 9 or more CSU per term at graduate level.

The California Community Colleges (CCC) comprises 112 institutions. These are open-access public institutions that offer two-year academic degrees, vocational training, and adult education.[32] Community colleges provide instruction leading to associate degrees in many disciplines, basic skills education, English as a Second Language, remedial education, workforce training and courses that prepare students for transfer to four-year universities. The colleges also offer opportunities for personal enrichment and lifelong learning as well as student services and special programs to ensure that all students have equal access to, and support in, college courses needed to achieve their educational objectives.
Community Colleges have neither subject requirements nor additional testing for admissions whilst universities do. Community Colleges admit any student capable of benefiting from instruction.

The private system includes 117 Independent Colleges and Universities. These are non-state-supported institutions that are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC, the regional accreditation agency for California). They cover the full range of higher education offerings, serve nearly 300,000 California students each year, and have very different characteristics. They include large campuses that are recognized worldwide for their traditional undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs and smaller institutions that focus on a limited course of study or profession. Most WASC-accredited independent institutions are four year colleges and universities. Some offer associate (two-year) degrees in specialized majors for specific vocations. Some have a religious affiliation. Some institutions mainly serve commuters and others are residential campuses.
Seventy-five non-profit, degree granting colleges and universities accredited by WASC form the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU).

[32] CCC would not fully be part of higher education in the Netherlands, at least not the CCC vocational training programmes.

Table 8: Total postsecondary enrolments 2006-2010 (undergrad and graduate by type of institution

System	**number institutions**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
University of California	10	214,298	220,034	226,04	230,528	234,464
California State University	23	417,156	433,017	437,008	433,054	412,372
California Community Colleges	112	1,547,742	1,628,380	1,727,799	1,764,414	1,696,313
CCC District Office		90,025	94,845	66,002	28,53	50,373
Other Public Colleges and Universities	2	3,899	3,831	3,615	NA	NA
WASC-Accredited Non-public 4-Year Institutions	108	271,194	276,015	267,131	NA	NA
WASC-Accredited Non-public 2-Year Institutions	11	18,455	18,077	21,781	NA	NA
State-Approved Institutions	180	59,838	53,643	63,991	NA	NA
Institutions Exempt from State Approval	27	4,193	4,224	4,903	NA	NA
Closed and Other Institutions		6,46	6,64	6,409	NA	NA
Total	473	1,085,518	1,110,326	1,096,88	692,112	697,209

Source: California Postsecondary Education Committee (www.cpec.ca.gov)

Legend:

Other Public Colleges and Universities: Two additional public institutions operate in California, Hastings College of the Law and Naval Postgraduate School. Both are supported with monies appropriated by either the State or Federal governments and each has its own governing body.

WASC-Accredited Non-public 2-Year Institutions: Private postsecondary institutions that offer two-year education programs accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In California, non-public WASC-accredited institutions generally belong to the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities: the AICCU. WASC accredits private (independent) schools throughout the region. WASC also works collaboratively with a variety of private school associations. Separate agreements exist with respect to the use of protocols and the procedures. The schools utilize the WASC Focus on Learning protocol a jointly developed modification of the WASC Focus on Learning document or a nationally or locally developed protocol that has been approved by the WASC Commission. However, all jointly accredited schools follow the same overall processes with respect to the following: initial visits, full action-up and action plan, reviews, mid-term reviews, written progress reports, special visits, and substantive change visits.

WASC-Accredited Non-public 4-Year Institutions: Private postsecondary institutions that offer four-year education programs accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC – see above). *State-Approved Institutions*: A college or university approved to operate in the State of California by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE).

Institutions Exempt from State Approval: To qualify for an exemption there are requirements that must be met as listed in the California Education Code, Title 3, Division 10, Part 59, Chapter 7, Private Postsecondary and Vocational Institutions. Generally, institutions that are exempt from state approval are exempt for the following reasons: a) the institution is accredited by a national accrediting agency such as the American Bar Association (ABA), b) the institution is accredited by a regional accrediting agency such as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), or c) the institution teaches religion and meets all the requirements for a religious exemption.

The California Association of Private Postsecondary Schools [33] sees the Private Postsecondary School Sector (PPSS) as another system of higher education in California and is the most diverse and least well known systems of Higher Education. A number of PPSS schools are designed to provide an alternative to a long-term degree program at a traditional university that may take four to six years. These PPSS schools offer more focused educational training at a faster pace, often without the optional general education courses that may not be occupationally related to the career goal of the student.

Some PPSS schools appeal to those students who know what specific career field they are interested in and want dedicated training in a specialized area in a condensed time frame. PPSS schools appeal to adults that are often supporting families or are starting second careers and wish to spend the least amount of time required in an educational setting. PPSS schools, in order to cater to their student's needs, often offer the same classes in the evening that they offer during the day. Flexible class scheduling helps students who work or take care of family complete their education. PPSS schools have also led the way utilizing distance education programs as a way to offer quality training to students who are at home or in the workplace and may not be able to attend a "brick and mortar" type educational institution.

There are approximately 2,000 degree, non-degree and registered institutions (schools) offering educational programs to students in California. Many of these programs are offered by schools that are accredited by Institutional Accrediting National and Regional Accrediting organizations and others are state approved schools. All PPSS schools must adhere to strict state standards and are expected to graduate students who will be able to be employed or meet the academic requirements of their College or University.

PPSS schools have approximately 400,000 students enrolled at any one time. PPSS schools graduate almost 200,000 students every year. About 300,000 students are enrolled in non-degree programs that are diploma and certificate based and around 100,000 students are enrolled in two and four year degree granting programs. Over 40 % of all our students are minority students and less than one % of all students ever file a complaint with the state. Yet comparatively, PPSS students are inclined to be living as independent adults, have lower incomes than "traditional" students attending non-profit or public higher education institutions and have parents who do not have a high school education. Despite the obvious barriers that confront many PPSS students, the graduation and placement rates as tracked by National Accrediting agencies for their California schools are typically around 70-80%.

The business/employer community plays a unique role in how PPSS schools operate. Not only do they hire the vast majority of our students, they are instrumental in providing critical feedback in the design and creation of our educational offerings. Our employer community is asked to participate in PPSS program advisory boards which provide critical input in the development and modification of school curriculum. In turn the PPSS use their employer advisors as source for their graduate hiring referrals and

[33] http://www.cappsonline.org/

networking opportunities. This continuous interaction also allows the PPSS to meet the needs of the changing workplace and provides graduates an opportunity to earn top dollars as they enter their chosen occupation.

Private postsecondary education provides adults an alternative to attending traditional community and four-year colleges. Private postsecondary institutions can offer both formal degree programs and vocational certificates for students looking for training in a particular field. Many degree schools cater to working adults. Often these schools offer class schedules and program times that allow students to work full-time and take college classes at night.

The Bureau for Private Secondary Education gives the nearly 1,500 private postsecondary educational institutions in California the approval to operate. Approval means that the Bureau has determined and certified that the institution has met minimum standards as established in state law for integrity, financial stability, and educational quality. To qualify for approval, an institution must meet standards with regard to course objectives, and content of courses; physical space; equipment and instructional materials. Other approval criteria include the education, experience and qualifications of instructors and administrators; maintenance of student records; compliance with health and safety codes; and policies for refunding unused tuition and fees. Approval is not the same as accreditation. In order for an institution to become accredited, they first must have state approval. If an institution wishes to go through a more rigorous process they can obtain accreditation through a private, non-governmental body. There are many types of accrediting bodies in existence.

Table 9: Fact sheet postsecondary education in California

Population	37,253,956
Educational attainment of adults (highest level):	
8th grade or less	10.4%
Some high school, no diploma	8.8%
High-school diploma	21.5%
Some college, no degree	21.5%
Associate degree	7.7%
Bachelor's degree	19.2%
Master's degree	7.2%
Doctoral degree	1.4%
Professional degree	2,3%
High school graduates	
Estimated for 2012-13	375,370
Projected change from 2007-8 to 2020-21	-2.8%
Average tuition and fees:	
At public 4-year institutions	$7,357
At public 2-year institutions	$723
At private 4-year institutions	$26,519
State funds for higher-education operating expenses	$9,663,254,000
***One-year change*:**	-13.5%
State spending on student aid:	
Need-based grants	$1,269,917,000
Non-need-based grants	$2,549,000
Nongrant aid	$488,000
Total	$1,272,954,000
Enrollment	
Undergraduate	2,443,985
Graduate and professional	270,187
At public 4-year institutions	641,539
At public 2-year institutions	1,582,109
At private 4-year institutions, nonprofit	284,600
At private 2-year institutions, nonprofit	1,239
At private 4-year institutions, for-profit	122,233
At private 2-year institutions, for-profit	82,452
Total	2,714,172
Public institutions	82%
4-year institutions	39%
2-year institutions	61%
Degrees awarded	
Associate	102,018
Bachelor's	164,234
Master's	65,050
Doctorate	16,382
Institutions:	
Public 4-year institutions	35
Public 2-year institutions	113
Private 4-year institutions, nonprofit	141
Private 2-year institutions, nonprofit	5
Private 4-year institutions, for-profit	73
Private 2-year institutions, for-profit	87
Total	454

Source: The Chronicle of Higher Education, Almanac of Higher Education 2012

2.2 Provisions Continuing Higher Education

Adult education (in the US)

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines adult education activities as formal activities including basic skills training, apprenticeships, work-related courses, personal interest courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and part-time college or university degree programs. Overall participation in adult education in the US[34] among *individuals age 16 or older and who are not enrolled in high school* increased from 40 % in 1995 to 46 % in 2001 and then declined to 44 % in 2005. In 2005, among the various types of adult education activities, individuals age 16 or older participated most in work-related courses (27 %), followed by personal interest courses (21 %), part-time college or university degree programs (5 %), and other activities (3 %).

Participation rates varied by sex, age, race/ethnicity, employment/occupation, and education in 2005. For example, a greater percentage of females than males participated in personal interest courses (24 vs. 18 %) and work-related activities (29 vs. 25 %). Individuals ages 16–24 had a higher overall participation rate in adult education activities than their counterparts age 55 or older. Blacks and Whites had higher rates of overall participation in adult education than their Hispanic peers. Among those employed in the past 12 months, the overall participation rate in adult education was higher for those in a professional or managerial occupation (70 %) than for those employed in service, sales, or support jobs (48 %) or those in trade occupations (34 %). In addition, the overall participation rate in adult education for bachelor's degree recipients or higher was greater than for those individuals who had some college or less education.

In California, global economic conditions, an aging and increasingly diverse population, and critical challenges in the state's K-12 education system have created unprecedented pressures to focus on the education of adults as a means to strengthen the economy. California relies primarily on two systems for adult education — the CDE's Adult Education system and the community colleges. California's K-12-based Adult Education system is positioned to reach a population group that is becoming increasingly important in the context of these intersecting challenges: adults with gaps in critical skills who are no longer school-age, and yet not ready for traditional postsecondary education and training or sustainable wage employment.

For a large part, also in terms of state policies, adult education concerns basic skills training. Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, as well as ASE and ESL courses, are designed to help adults achieve crucial basic literacy, language and numeracy skills they need to succeed in work and life.

The California Department of Education's Adult Education system is part of a larger network of providers who receive federal and/or state funding to provide educational services to adults. In many cases, the mandates of other providers are completely separate from that of Adult Education; the CSU and University of California (UC)

[34] Data about adult education in California were not found.

systems provide services that are essentially different from those provided through Adult Education programs. However, the community colleges, which serve nearly three million students, do have programs that overlap with Adult Education programs, although (as with the UC and CSU) the overall missions of the two organizations are distinct.

Distance learning

Distance education courses and programs provide flexible learning opportunities to both undergraduate and post baccalaureate students. The NCES distance education courses indicator include live, interactive audio- or videoconferencing; pre-recorded instructional videos; webcasts; CD-ROMs or DVDs; or computer-based systems accessed over the Internet. It does not include correspondence courses.

In 2007–08, about 4.3 million undergraduate students, or 20 % of all US undergraduates, took at least one distance education course.[35] This is an increase of 5% since 2003/04. About 769,000 undergraduates, or 3.7% of all US undergraduates, took their entire program through distance education. This percentage of those who took their entire program through distance education decreased from 5.1% to 3.7% in the period 2003/04 – 2007/08. Of the undergraduates taking any distance course 34% is older than 30 years, and of those taking an entire distance program 53% is over 30. The percentage of full-time distance learners is 39%. Business/management, health studies and to a lesser extent humanities are the most popular subjects for the undergraduates. Most of the distance learning courses and entire programs are taken at public institutions (resp. 80% and 57%). The share of the privates is significantly smaller, though 32% of the graduates follow an entire distance program at private-for-profit institutions. The latter is a substantial growth; in 2003/04 this market share was 13% (the publics' market share for entire distance programs dropped from 74% to 57%).

[35] The last two years the numbers have increased substantially (actual numbers unknown though)

Table 10: Number and percentage of undergraduate students in postsecondary institutions taking distance education courses, by selected characteristics: 2003–04 and 2007–08 (National Center for Education Statistics)

	2003–04						2007–08					
	Taking any distance education courses			Taking their entire program through distance education			Taking any distance education courses			Taking their entire program through distance education		
	Stud. (x 1000)	% of all stud.		Stud. (X 1000)	% of all stud.		stud. (x 1000)	% of all stud.		Stud. (x 1000)	% of all stud.	
Total	2.961	15,5		973	5,1		4.277	20,4		769	3,7	
Sex												
Male	1.099	13,6		365	4,5		1.679	18,6		297	3,3	
Female	1.862	17,0		609	5,5		2.598	21,8		472	4,0	
Race/ethnicity												
White	1.944	16,2		630	5,3		2.803	21,7		489	3,8	
Black	400	14,9		131	4,9		592	20,2		145	5,0	
Hispanic	329	13,4		109	4,5		484	16,4		74	2,5	
Asian	145	14,0		55	5,4		225	18,2		37	3,0	
Age												
15 through 23	1.283	11,7		353	3,2		1.891	15,1		169	1,4	
24 through 29	592	18,4		213	6,6		938	25,9		192	5,3	
30 or older	1.086	22,4		408	8,4		1.448	30,1		408	8,5	
Attendance status												
Exclusively full-time	1.179	12,7		360	3,9		1.648	16,5		299	3,0	
Exclusively part-time	1.251	18,7		470	7,0		1.839	24,8		373	5,0	
Mixed full-time and part-time	531	17,3		143	4,7		791	22,3		97	2,7	
Type of job student had												
No job	533	12,4		158	3,7		708	16,1		121	2,8	
Regular job only	2.282	17,2		768	5,8		3.259	22,3		607	4,2	
Work-study/assistantship job only	60	8,8		18	2,6		112	12,9		13	1,5	
Both regular job and work-study/assistantship job	86	11,1		29	3,7		198	18,7		27	2,5	
Field of study												
Business/management	550	18,7		206	7,0		811	23,9		203	6,0	
Computer science	177	19,4		65	7,2		190	27,1		56	8,0	
Education	218	17,1		58	4,6		272	22,3		38	3,1	
Engineering	96	12,1		26	3,3		166	15,8		24	2,3	
Health	427	17,4		138	5,6		667	22,2		122	4,1	
Humanities	276	14,0		76	3,9		620	19,5		77	2,4	
Life sciences	81	11,0		20	2,8		174	15,5		20	1,8	
Mathematics	12	12,7		‡	3,8	!	16	15,0		‡	‡	
Physical sciences	12	10,1		‡	1,1	!	22	12,5		‡	0,3	!
Social/behavioral sciences	165	12,4		46	3,5		226	16,9		30	2,2	
Vocational/technical	62	13,1		20	4,3		94	18,5		18	3,4	
Undeclared/no major	622	15,0		233	5,6		605	20,6		101	3,4	
Other	265	14,4		79	4,3		414	18,9		81	3,7	
Control and level of institution												
Public	2.373	16,2		723	4,9		3.423	21,5		436	2,7	
4-year	823	13,5		245	4,0		1.210	18,1		146	2,2	
2-year	1.540	18,2		475	5,6		2.206	24,2		288	3,2	
Less-than-2-year	11	11,8		3	3,0		8	8,2		‡	2,2	!
Private not-for-profit	353	12,4		122	4,3		429	14,1		88	2,9	
4-year	340	12,4		118	4,3		412	14,0		84	2,8	
2-year	10	11,3		3	3,3		12	20,2		4	6,1	
Less-than-2-year	4	17,3		1	6,8		5	16,3		‡	2,5	

Private for-profit	235	15,3		128	8,4		425	21,3		245	12,3	
4-year	155	26,2		91	15,4		301	29,7		193	19,0	
2-year	52	12,1		26	6,1		97	18,0		44	8,3	
Less-than-2-year	27	5,4		11	2,1		28	6,2		7	1,6	
! Interpret data with caution. Estimate is unstable because the standard error represents more than 30 % of the estimate.												
‡ Reporting standards not met.												
[1]Includes separated.												
NOTE: Estimates pertain to all postsecondary students who enrolled at any time during the school year at an institution participating in Title IV programs. Distance education participation includes participation at any institution for students attending more than one institution during the school year. Data include Puerto Rico. Detail may not sum to totals because of survey item nonresponse and rounding. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, please see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the classification of postsecondary education institutions, see *supplemental note 8*.												

In addition to these undergraduate students, 763 million, or 22 %, of all post baccalaureate students took at least one distance education course in 2007–08. The percentage of post baccalaureate students who took their entire program through distance education (8.7%) was higher than the percentage at the undergraduate level (3.7%). Of the post baccalaureate students taking any distance learning course 63% is over 30 years; for those taking an entire distance program this is 73%. Most of the students are part-timers (58% and 63%). Business/management and education courses are the most popular distance learning courses among the post baccalaureates. The public institutions have the largest market share: they have about half of the distance learners, while the shares of the private non-for-profit are 35% and 29% and for the private-for-profit 13% and 21%.

Table 11: Number and percentage of post baccalaureate students in postsecondary institutions taking distance education courses, by selected characteristics: 2007–08 (National Center for Education Statistics)

	Taking any distance education courses			Taking their entire program through distance education		
	students (in thousands)	% of total enrollment		students (in thousands)	%of total enrollment	
Total	763	22,1		302	8,7	
Sex						
Male	268	19,3		104	7,5	
Female	495	23,9		199	9,6	
Race/ethnicity						
White	532	23,1		211	9,2	
Black	102	25,1		42	10,4	
Hispanic	60	21,8		20	7,4	
Asian	47	12,7		16	4,3	
Age						
15 through 23	59	14,9		‡	1,6	
24 through 29	220	16,0		75	5,4	
30 or older	484	28,8		221	13,1	
Attendance status						
Exclusively full-time	213	15,2		74	5,3	
Exclusively part-time	441	28,4		192	12,3	
Mixed full-time and part-time	110	21,7		36	7,2	
Type of job student had						
No job	55	12,3		21	4,8	!
Regular job only	613	28,1		260	11,9	
Work-study/assistantship job only	38	8,0		‡	1,2	
Both regular job and work-study/assistantship job	58	16,0		16	4,3	
Field of study						
Business/management	156	26,1		76	12,8	
Education	229	27,7		80	9,7	
Computer science, mathematics and engineering	60	19,5		28	9,3	
Health	90	22,3		37	9,1	
Humanities	36	15,5		7	3,1	
Law	10	6,0		‡	1,7	
Life sciences	23	13,7		‡	4,2	
Social/behavioral sciences	44	18,7		21	9,1	
Other[2]	116	22,3		43	8,2	
Control of institution						
Public	401	22,9		150	8,6	
Private not-for-profit	267	18,3		88	6,0	
Private for-profit	95	37,7		64	25,4	
‡ Reporting standards not met.						
[2]Includes physical sciences, other programs, and students with no major.						
NOTE: Estimates pertain to all postsecondary students who enrolled at any time during the school year at an institution participating in Title IV programs. Distance education participation includes participation at any institution for students attending more than one institution during the school year. Data include Puerto Rico. Detail may not sum to totals because of survey item nonresponse and rounding. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. For more information on race/ethnicity, please see *supplemental note 1*. For more information on the classification of postsecondary education institutions, see *supplemental note 8*.						

Hybrid offerings

Hybrid offerings are underdeveloped in higher education. This is unusual given the evidence of demand for and interest in this model, acceptance among students and

employers, and growing documentation of the pedagogical benefits. Where online education was once a distance-focused market, the world is becoming more blended and diverse, with a spectrum for all contexts and student types. There is some evidence continues to emerge that hybrid modes deliver high quality outcomes—from the 2009 US Department of Education meta-study on online education to the more recent, 2012 ITHAKA S+R report on randomized trials of interactive learning online.[36] The emphasis is increasingly on student learning over faculty teaching, and new opportunities are continually emerging to experiment with "flipped classrooms" and peer-to-peer learning.

MOOCs

MOOC – Massive Open Online Courses – is one of the latest developments in online education in the US (including California). In 2012 several initiatives have been taken to further develop online education in the form of open courses meant for large audiences. MOOCs are regarded as setting the stage for a new context for higher education—the delivery and certification of learning through massive means, though skepticism remains by many. The initiatives have taken many paths, including collaborations among existing universities, stand-alone open initiatives creating entirely new universities, and a host of alternatives in between.

In the Fall of 2011, Sebastian Thrun from Stanford University gave up tenure after 160,000 students signed up for his free online version of the course 'Introduction to artificial science' and started Udacity which offers online courses for profit. Udacity sings contracts with professors from well-respected universities (as Princeton for example). According to the website Udacity offers a range of certification options that are recognized by major technology companies who are actively recruiting from the Udacity student body.[37] The business model is that revenues from the placement service, which will charge the employer 20 % of the first-year salary that is awarded top students, will fund the operating expenses of making the classes open to everyone (Schroeder 2012).[38]

Two month later Coursera was born. MIT, which started the OpenCourseWare project ten years earlier, presented its first course offering a certificate for completion. This was part of the new project: MITx. In the same period, Harvard University established edX. The collaboration between the two has now led to a collaborative online learning effort among five universities: Princeton University, Stanford University, University of California Berkeley, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and the University of Pennsylvania. High quality online courses taught by faculty members from those institutions are freely available on a published schedule. The first classes are attracting tens of thousands of students. Academic credit was not offered for the first classes; however certificates are awarded to those who take all of the quizzes and exams in classes (Coursera, 2012).

[36] http://www.cps.neu.edu/news/Dean-LaBrie-online-education.php
[37] http://www.udacity.com/udacity
[38] Schroeder (2012) "Emerging open online distance education environment"

Other institutions and individual professors are following the same path and are offering MOOCs by their own. Some of them have signed on for Udemy, a for-profit organization.

To what extent MOOCs will be sustainable and successful in the future is hard to say. Opinions differ. Advocates stress the advantages of open access and (relatively) free education. One reason for traditional online models to fail, they argue, is that they offer(ed) a one-size-fits-all curriculum through ICT. Moreover, MOOC could provide an alternative and promising income stream for institutions, particularly welcome or even necessary in times of declining traditional funding streams, and they could meet the still growing demand for (higher) education. However, past online education experiments have frequently been unsuccessful. Opponents argue that it is just another fad ('MOOC mania', the 'MOOC hype'). Potential problems are a financial drain instead of gain as 'knowledge' is given away for free. Cheating is another worry, a reason why Coursera has added an honor code to be signed after discovering plagiarism (Mangan, 2012). Huge numbers of students create problems of adequately grading students' work. Drop out numbers are high (which is not necessarily seen as a problem).[39] And of course credentialing calls for serious attention. How will credit be given and recognized to those who successfully completed many of these new initiatives?
Schroeder (2012) mentions several options. One emerging model is to use the long-standing option of "credit for prior learning" that many universities and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) support. This promises to transform MOOC learning and certificates into credit granted at colleges and universities nationwide (Fain, 2012).[40] Another project worth mentioning is Mozilla's Open Badges project, which provides a standard for the display of badges and certifications earned by students taking open online classes (Mozilla, 2012).[41] This project has developed an infrastructure to secure and verify the credibility of badges award by colleges, universities, and other institutions. Possibly learners will soon be able to present to prospective employers credentials that verify their completion of courses from institutions such as MIT, Stanford, Yale, Princeton, and many more (Schroeder 2012). A third possibility is that universities collectively offer full academic credit to students who have completed open online classes and take assessments such as custom final exams offered by the member institutions. The cost of those credits is far lower than traditional tuition and fees. As this model matures, it may become the bridge between traditional degrees and the burgeoning open-learning field.

[39] High drop outs are a matter of degree. Of the more than 94,000 students registered for Udacity's course "Introduction to Computer Science," just over 10% earned certificates for completing the class. A very high percentage, but as Gose (2012, B8) says: "On the other hand, how many professors can boast of shepherding nearly 10,000 students through a challenging course in just one semester?"
[40] In February 2013 the American Council on Education (ACE) announced it had evaluated five Coursera MOOCs and recommended them for credit. Scepticism however remains. Read more: http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/02/14/course-course-approval-moocs-may-not-be-wise-essay#ixzz2KtHarckX
[41] See: http://openbadges.org/en-US/about.html

If MOOCs and other forms of online education really take off, traditional public and private universities no longer will have a virtual monopoly in higher education. Continuing education departments of the universities (the extended universities in California for example) have the opportunity to lead change by offering just-in-time and career-oriented learning opportunities capitalizing on the new badges and certificate initiatives.

It is possible that MOOC will be combined with campus-based instruction, as a form of blended learning. Harvard's edX is preparing an experiment to test the flipped classroom model at a community college, combining MOOC content with campus instruction (Parry 2012).[42]

Workforce Investment Act

States use the Workforce Investment Act to help fund workforce development/job training initiatives, including the One-Stop Career Center system. Unemployed and underemployed workers can go to workforce centers to get help in their job search, and some may qualify for Individual Training Accounts that fund education and training – some of that is non-credit instruction, but some is for-credit at community colleges.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are supervised employment programs that combine classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Generally offered directly by employers or through labor/management partnerships, apprenticeships can be found in such high-demand careers as electrician, aircraft mechanic, or plumber. Both the state and federal governments oversee apprenticeship programs to ensure they meet standards of curriculum and workplace conditions. California has a number of registered apprenticeship programs and could benefit by further expanding this option.[43]

In California there are a number of exemplary middle-skill education and training opportunities.[44] Three examples are:

- Launched in 2008 at Laney College in Oakland with funding from the PG&E Corporation Foundation and East Bay Career Advancement Academy, the Pacific Gas & Electric Company's (PG&E's) PowerPathway Program recruits and trains workers for jobs in the energy sector through several community colleges around the state. The program offers courses for a variety of skill and background levels. The Bridge program provides introduction to the energy industry and customized coursework for participants needing additional attention to literacy and mathematics skills, strengthening their preparation and eligibility for employment at PG&E. Endorsed programs offer longer term training leading to certificates or associate degrees; capstone courses provide additional skills development for those with certificates or associate degrees. Partnerships with local Workforce Investment Boards provide recruitment, support services and resources for trainees.
- The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) construction partnership promotes the inclusion of women and minorities in the construction sector. SETA works with the City of Sacramento Utilities Department, County of Sacramento Public Works, the Sacramento Sierra Building and Construction Trades Council, the North State Building Industry Association, CalTrans, the Teamsters, and others to train low-wage workers,

[42] See for example "MOOCs model moves into community colleges": http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=421905&c=1

[43] California's forgotten middle-skill jobs, 2009, p. 23.

[44] California's forgotten middle-skill jobs, 2009, p. 24.

women, TANF recipients, and dislocated workers for highway construction. These efforts have increased participation by women in the area's construction sector. The Public Works Project more than tripled the number of women working in county public works blue-collar jobs and established a new trainee classification that makes it easier for women to access these jobs.

- The California Transportation and Logistics Institute (CaTLI) is a nonprofit formed in 2007 in partnership with the California Community College (CCC) and the California State University (CSU) systems, and coordinated by the L.A. County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC). CaTLI provides customized training for employers for new and/or incumbent workers. CaTLI also provides industry driven skills training certificate and degree programs from high school to the university level. Working with its partners, CaTLI has helped map out career opportunities and pathways within the industry's diverse modes of transportation (air, rail, road and water) and its sub-sectors: Transportation, Logistics Support, Warehousing and Storage, Supply Chain Management, and Safety and Security. Within each sub-sector, training is needed across entry-, mid-, supervisory and manager levels.

Lifelong learning.

The demand for and growth of lifelong learning programs and institutions is among other things related to an aging population. Also in California the population is aging. In the period 1999-2009, the percentage of 65+ has grown with nearly 14%. In California there are 31 Lifelong Learning Institutes. Many of them located and collaborating with CCC, UCS (e.g. CSU Dominguez Hills) and UC (e.g. UCDavis or UCLA).

In this area, Institutes for Learning in Retirement (ILRs) and programs like Elderhostel have dominated in the United States, especially since the late 1970s. There are now an estimated 500 ILRs operating in North America. Each ILR is the creation of a distinctive group of retirees, hosted by a college or university, with a special culture and sense of mission. Most ILRs try to maintain a manageable size to promote a feeling of community among the members. Educational background and affiliation with the host university or college are two of the most decisive predictors of membership in many ILRs.

The Elderhostel Institute Network (EIN) is a voluntary association of Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs), funded by Elderhostel Inc., a not-for-profit organization dedicated to providing educational opportunities for older adults. EIN exists to promote communication and provide resources to existing LLIs, and to encourage the development of new LLIs. EIN does not prescribe fees or approve curriculum; those decisions are made independently by each LLI. Each institute is sponsored by a host college/university to ensure academic integrity and so members would have access to the many benefits of being located on a campus of higher learning. Older learners are encouraged to take "ownership" of their institute by becoming members and paying dues to support it. Members are encouraged to volunteer participation in their institute, which helps develop a real sense of community among older learners (Road Scholar, 2011).

A major developer of lifelong learning programs in the United States has been the Bernard Osher Foundation, among other things supporting a lifelong learning network for adults under the aegis of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes, a consortium of 130 institutions of higher learning whose campuses house "Osher Lifelong Learning

Institutes." As a rule, grants of $100,000 were made initially, with the understanding that, once an institute was operational, the Foundation would renew the grant for two or more years. Once the institute demonstrated its success and sustainability, an endowment grant of $1 million or more was awarded. The Osher institutes vary considerably among themselves, but all have common qualities: Non-credit educational programs specifically developed for adults who are aged 50 and older; university connection and university support; robust volunteer leadership and sound organizational structure; and a diverse repertoire of intellectually stimulating courses (Osher Foundation, 2011).

2.3 Organization and Governance of Continuing Education

2.3.1 The policy arena

From a European perspective the role of the California state government is rather limited. Within the frame of the Master Plan, the higher education institutions have significant autonomy. With respect to higher education the role of the state concerns financial aid programs and some regulations regarding licensing (see policy instruments). The state has however a welter of economic and labor market programs and policies that especially address primary and secondary education. Good examples can be found in the state's strategic plan, that particularly focuses on Career Technical Education (CTE) for K-12 and high school (addressing literacy and math skills). High dropout rates and the poor academic achievement of high school graduates have led policymakers, business leaders, philanthropists, and educators to seek new ways to "fix" high schools. Educational policies in California are inextricably linked to workforce developments.

Apart from the K-12 and high schools some policies are geared towards the CCC system. Many of these initiatives have a local character, in which several stakeholders such as local communities, colleges, interest groups and corporations participate. The main policy makers in higher education are the universities themselves (see Extended Universities). Apart from the state, through departments and boards, and the universities, there are several other stakeholders engaged in continuing education. In the remainder of this section we refer to some interest groups and employers (in the US).

A number of interest groups is pushing the higher education agenda. One of the them is the California Edge Campaign, a non-partisan coalition of groups including the California Labor Federation, the California Workforce Association, chambers of commerce and the Boeing Company. They argue that may California industries face critical shortages (for example in construction, health care, advanced manufacturing, professional and management services and agriculture) and that this situation may worsen if no action is taken. They want, among other things:

- to provide access for all Californians to high quality postsecondary education and skills training (maintain broad access to colleges and universities, ensure

base funding for multiple roles of community colleges and keep them affordable, align education and needs of the economy, expand access for example though union and other apprenticeships, reduce drop outs (also in high schools) and effectively disseminate information about career opportunities)

- to provide opportunities for working adults to move up the skill ladder. The number of adults entering college and other education and training institutions are growing and companies, unions and the public sector are increasingly investing in work-place based education and training programs. Yet California lacks a coherent policy framework to encourage continuing education. The Edge campaign recommends to give support for community colleges and adult schools to develop programs that meet the needs of adults and workers, the improve access to financial aid, expand support services (e.g. on-site childcare), and expand training options though One Stop Career Centers, community colleges, adult schools, community-based organizations, apprenticeships, ROCPs,[45] labor management partnerships, and employer sponsored training programs.
- To link workforce programs and institutions to create effective career pathways. Link for example the adult education system more effectively to college degree and credential programs.

Another interest group is the National Skills Coalition, a broad-based coalition. They argue that States should support a network of industry or sector partnerships, which organize stakeholders connected to an industry—multiple firms, unions, education and training providers, and local workforce and education system administrators among others. Moreover, States should develop and support career pathway systems that align adult basic education, job training, higher education, and basic support systems to create pathways to postsecondary educational credentials. One key element of a career pathway strategy is integrating basic skills education and occupational training to accelerate learning by allowing students to learn literacy and workplace skills at the same time. This strategy helps move educationally underprepared adults more successfully to certificate or degree completion. And States should establish high-level, cross-agency workgroups to collect, analyze and report on credential attainment rates across all human capital programs. This effort should track, count, measure and publicly report credential completion rates, including for sub-baccalaureate programs offering middle-skill training.

In their report "California's forgotten middle-skill jobs" (2009), part of the Skills2Compete-California campaign, the coalition call for more attention for middle-

[45] California's 74 Regional Occupational Centers and Programs (ROCPs) have been part of California's educational system for over 35 years, providing high school students 16 years of age and older, as well as adult students, with career technical education to prepare students to enter the workforce with skills and competencies to be successful; pursue advanced training in postsecondary educational institutions; or upgrade existing skills and knowledge. Students receive training at a variety of venues from regular classrooms on high school campuses to actual business and industry facilities, such as automotive dealerships and hospitals. In most ROCPs, courses are offered during the regular school day throughout the school year, in the late afternoon and evening and sometimes during the summer months.

skill jobs which require more than high school education but less than a four-year degree. These jobs make up the largest segment of jobs in the economy[46] and will continue to do so for years to come. This is particularly important for adult education. The focus of policymakers is on (traditional) college and university education and is paying insufficient attention to training and education investments aimed at middle-skill jobs requirements.

Policymakers have become increasingly concerned about global competitiveness in recent years, and a broad consensus has developed about the need for a strong science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) workforce to support innovation industries and emerging technologies. In particular, business and political leaders have called for increasing the number of students receiving bachelor or advanced degrees in these fields. However, these highly skilled professionals are not the only STEM workers in short supply. Employers have indicated there is a significant shortage of the technicians and middle-skill workers needed to implement the new technologies developed by highly skilled innovators. In California between 2006 and 2016 among STEM occupations that are expected to have worker shortages, there will be 18,460 job openings annually that will require an associate degree and 3,590 that will require some other level of postsecondary vocational education short of an associate degree.

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities, Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges adopted a comprehensive, state-wide Career Ladders policy focus designed to improve postsecondary career pathway access and completion for underserved populations. In 2007 the community college system launched the Career Advancement Academy initiative, a major demonstration project designed to create pathways for low-skill, underemployed and unemployed workers to attain the basic and technical skills they need to move up into middle-skill jobs in industries including energy, biotechnology, allied health, building and construction trades transportation and logistics, and manufacturing.

The California Department of Education's Adult Education system is part of a larger network of providers who receive federal and/or state funding to provide educational services to adults. In many cases, the mandates of other providers are completely separate from that of Adult Education; the CSU and University of California (UC) systems provide services that are essentially different from those provided through Adult Education programs. However, the community colleges, which serve nearly three million students, do have programs that overlap with Adult Education programs, although (as with the UC and CSU) the overall missions of the two organizations are distinct.

[46] In 2008, 49 % of all California jobs were middle-skill jobs, representing more than 7.4 million workers.

There are also interest groups promoting lifelong learning continuing higher education such as the **Association for Continuing Higher Education**.[47] As an US and Canada-based organization of colleges, universities, and individuals, the Association encourages professional development, research and exchange of information for its members and continuing higher education as a means of enhancing and improving society. Other examples of (national) interest groups are the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Association for Non-traditional students in higher education, the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy, and National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium.

Destiny Solutions[48] commissioned a research firm to interview employers across North America to examine what employers feel are the skills needed to succeed in the workforce and how they want their employees to gain them.[49] The research also explores such key issues as: How are employers investing in workforce development and continuing education? Do employers feel colleges and universities are meeting their needs? Are programs sufficiently relevant? Are corporate partnerships adequately available? Key findings include:

- 95% of employers have systems in place to financially support employee education
- 70% of employers think ongoing education is necessary just for employees to keep up with the pace of their jobs
- 9% of employers maintain a professional development relationship with a college or university
- 16% of employers feel that there is an adequate availability of college or university programs tailored to their needs
- 62% of employers have no preference whether their employees attend for-credit or non-credit programs

The corporate training and education market accounts for over one third of all spending on postsecondary education within the US. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) estimates that US corporations spent $171 billion (2011), broken down as follows: 60.5% of the corporate funding goes towards internal training, 26.6% goes to external contractors, and 12.9% goes to tuition reimbursements (Destiny Soluitins2012, p.6).

Employers complain that higher education institutions do not provide enough relevant programs. Higher education institutions can make an impact on training and development if they better meet the needs of employers. But "for decades business leaders have been asking for greater accessibility to much needed lifelong learning opportunities for working adults" (Destiny Solutions 2012, p.9). There is a clear call for

[47] http://www.acheinc.org/index.html

[48] Destiny Solutions is the leading innovator of lifelong learning business solutions. Since 2001, Destiny Solutions has delivered breakthrough technology designed exclusively to meet the divergent needs of non-traditional higher education.

[49] http://www.destinysolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Research-Paper-The-Voice-of-the-Employer-Final.pdf

more demand-driven training, otherwise higher education institutions will miss the boat: “Without this targeted and specific programming, emp0loyers will simply find other recipients for their training and development budgets – even if they feel that training is less effective than what they might get from a higher education institutions” (Destiny Solutions 2012, p.9).

2.4 Main Providers: Extended Universities and Continuing Education

Apart from regular degree programs, all the systems in Californian higher education offer a range of programs for ‘non-traditional’ learners such as part-timers and adults. Universities of the UC and CSU have the ‘extended university’. The extended university is substantive and important for a number of reasons. First, it is believed that a stronger focus on non-traditional students via non-traditional modes of education can provide a useful response to the changes in higher education and the labor market. Extension is regarded as an entrepreneurial activity to offer among others things graduate degrees and to expand profit producing continuing education. As Matkan (2012) says “UC is looking to its extension divisions for help—weaving continuing education ever more tightly into the fabric of the university” and argues that “as gloom hangs over UC, continuing education prospers.” Second, as the result of declining state support, institutions are in search of other funding sources. And since tuition fees increase students are looking for alternatives. In addition to retraining and repurposing the skills of blue-collar workers and high school drop outs (particularly at the CCC), there is a tremendous push for currently certified professionals such as doctors, teachers, nurses, and engineers to use new technologies and practices. Also the CCC pay significant attention to non-traditional learners, particularly in CTE, basic skills and preparatory courses for access to CSU.
Generally speaking, Extended and Continuing Education offers students opportunities in: a) online and off-campus credit degree programs, b) professional development certificate programs and courses, c) courses for personal enrichment, and d) access to university courses without university admission. There are programs for working professionals, displaced workers, career changers, military and veterans, international students and a host of others. By collaborating with business and industry, Extended and Continuing Education offers a variety of activities aimed at increasing the competitive edge for individuals to succeed in today's global work environment.

One of the issues with respect to adult education concerns what need to be taught. Opinions differ about the orientation of the programs: academically or skills oriented. Some argue that universities should strengthen their liberal-arts curriculum, not diluting it with skills courses, to improve the global competencies and critical-thinking skills of American graduates. In turn, graduates must improve their practical skills by making a commitment to lifelong education. In many fields a college degree is merely a necessary, while not a sufficient credential for lifelong employability.

Continuing professional education—with its focus on nontraditional students, applied learning, support of workforce development, and use of innovative and technology-based pedagogy—was commonly perceived to function outside the core of the academy, which focused on a liberal-arts education for residential traditional-aged undergraduates. But now we observe traditional higher education becoming increasingly "vocationalized" in order to attract and serve students, in many cases, first-generation or international students. At the same time US employers demand just the opposite of highly specialized professionally-oriented majors. They want broad knowledge and skills associated with a liberal-arts education: critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and an understanding of the historical, economic, scientific, cultural, and global contexts in which we live and work (Sandeen 2012)

Another issue relates to the services the institutions should offer. Some argue that if the institutions, including the research-universities, are willing to play their (regional) role then there must be more than just teaching. Each continuing education center, particularly on a research-university campus, needs to become a different kind of resource: not simply a place where adults can go for part-time certification and administrative mechanisms that make it easy for them to access traditional university curricula and degrees, but rather a center of workforce intelligence, jobs and career trends information, and counseling and advising (Lindenstein Walshok 2012, 46). People must be prepared for the next opportunity, help them think about building a knowledge and skills portfolio, and assist them across the lifespan as they move in and out of formal, informal, and degree-oriented education. Universities and especially centers for continuing higher education also can play a powerful role in helping to describe the distinctive character of the regional labor force, assessing the distinctive skills and knowledge that are embedded in that work force as well as the gaps.

2.4.1 California State University Extended

California State University Extended and Continuing Education brings education and training opportunities to people in local communities throughout the state and beyond. Through its 23 campus-based self-support units, Extended and Continuing Education enables individuals, corporations, and public agencies to benefit from the CSU's vast educational resources through such opportunities as degree programs, certificates, non-credit courses, and custom-designed workforce development programs. Programs are in other words offered for university credit or for professional development.
Each year Extended and Continuing Education serves over 300,000 individuals in its wide array of offerings. Extended and Continuing Education are separate organizational units, typically as one of the schools or colleges.[50] Altogether, there are apart from non-credit certificate programs 460 certificate programs offered that are designed in cooperation with professional societies and are designed to provide either entry level knowledge and skills or professional growth and development. Most certificate programs are comprised of multiple courses, and the certificate is awarded

[50] For instance, at Sacramento State Continuing Education (CCE) is one of the eight academic departments (besides arts & letters, business administration, etc.)

upon successful completion of all required coursework. As the economy has changed dramatically in recent years, it has impacted a number of programs offered by the CSU. It will need to expand this ability to be a hub for innovation and agility for the CSU in the years ahead. Certain key program areas that seem to call for a new level of collaboration and innovation are:

- Green/Sustainability
- International Programs and Partnerships
- Economic Development and Workforce Development in Specialized Fields
- The Need for Advanced Degrees and Professional Certification Programs.
- The Need for a Versatile General Baccalaureate Degree Completion Programs.
- Programs for Retirees and Second Career Seniors

Extended and Continuing Education units on each CSU campus operate on a self-support basis, without General Fund (State) allocations. In response to the funding crisis, the Chancellor's Office of the CSU issued an executive order in 2003 to move funding for all new graduate programs away from state support and into self-support (Minassians 2012). As such, they are market-driven, responding rapidly to the changing needs and demands of the diverse continuing education marketplace in California and beyond. They conduct market surveys and create marketing strategies and programs to address and meet workforce needs, frequently bringing together diverse disciplines to create innovative programs.

Extended and Continuing Education is vital to the CSU as its "rapid-response team," meeting the education and training needs of individuals and groups that might not otherwise be served by the CSU. Whether providing leading edge learning opportunities to address emerging job markets, meeting the needs of local economies, or creating programs for public and community entities, Extended and Continuing Education can quickly design, develop, and deliver high quality education and training. CSU Extended and Continuing Education directly and indirectly contributes to California's economy and improves the quality of life for individuals and groups throughout the state and around the world.

CSU Extended University offers:

Degree programs. A wide variety of credit degree programs are offered online and off-campus through Extended and Continuing Education. These programs meet the same academic quality standards of CSU state-supported programs, but are offered on a self-support basis: student fees cover all expenses necessary to conduct the program. Most of these programs do not require campus attendance and thus are available to individuals living anywhere in California, other states, or other countries.

Professional development. Campus extended and continuing education units offer a variety of credit and non-credit courses that provide functionally specific information and skills updating for professional persons. Some of the courses are offered in attenuated formats lasting from one day to a limited number of weeks. Other courses parallel the length of the academic term or semester. Most Professional Development courses have been designed in cooperation with business and industry leaders, and provide up-to-the-moment training and professional direction.

Workforce partnerships. Through CSU Extended and Continuing Education, the CSU tracks economic and workforce indicators, aims to meet current workforce needs and predicts future trends in such industries as healthcare, biotechnology, construction and sustainability. Because of the partnerships between CSU Extended Education and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), over half of the campuses now participate in workforce projects supported by ARRA funding. For example, a workforce initiative to provide career transition and development services to unemployed professionals with degrees is currently underway in San Diego.

Open university. Open University is a program available to anyone who wants to attend a college course without being admitted to the university. If you are a community member wanting to take a course for personal enrichment, a student looking to start your college career or an international student wanting to study abroad for a short time, Open University allows you the flexibility to enroll in courses on a space-available basis and earn college credit. Open University is available at all 23 CSU campuses.

In addition to Open University, anyone can take courses during the summer and during intersession by enrolling through Extended Education and paying self-support fees.

In its latest strategic document ('shaping the future'), the Committee on Innovation of the CSU Commission of the Extended University advocates a stronger focus on *advanced* professional education. Advanced Professional Education, defined as professionally focused baccalaureate degree completion programs, masters and doctoral degrees with a professional focus, graduate credit certificate programs with a professional focus, and executive training or non-credit certificates specifically focused on serving the post-degree professional, may be delivered though any mode (online, hybrid, at corporate or agency sites, etc.). These programs serve professionals (and their employers) in California but may also have a national and international reach tied to the California interest in the national and global marketplace for education and professional practice. Applied research in the CSU is a strong component of making the CSU a preferred provider and a potential leader in Advanced Professional Education in California and beyond.

In 2010, the same committee outlined the key issues and next steps for the future of the extended university and continuing education. These are:

- For many institutions lifelong education, education across a career span, midcareer education, professional or adult education is now the majority market and/or the most rapidly growing market. It is changing what is expected of colleges and universities and it is changing how institutions think about students over a life span. Entrepreneurial approaches and innovation will be more important in higher education in the years ahead.
- In the future marketplace, there is likely to be a growing demand for credit programs – programs that offer direct pathways to employment but also offer stepping stones to higher levels of preparation and degree completion. More students and employers will likely place higher value on programs that offer credit

and first steps toward completion of a credit certificate program and/or a degree. The CSU through the Extended University will likely be called upon to develop more such pathways that like near term career entry or change preparation to higher stages of educational preparation and credentialing on to the completion of degrees (increasingly masters and doctorates). Advanced professional education will increasingly require a significant blending of intellectual development along with the development of professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

- As the programs offered by CSU Extended University expand in the types of programs and the audiences/markets served, there will be a need to provide robust training for staff so they are better able to present programs and respond to the needs of the different audiences.
- To leverage both resources and expertise, partnerships and significant longer-term collaborative working relationships will be important. More effective and productive partnerships among CSU campuses will be important but so will partnerships with regional community colleges, employers, unions, and other universities inside and outside of California. Such working relationships can make programs increasingly excellent and distinctive and can bring needed programs to regions that may not have the expertise or market size to offer a needed program or area of concentration on its own.
- There is a changing and necessary role for the CSU in workforce education. Playing this new role well will require new partnerships and working relationships (with community colleges, WIBs, and the like), new approaches to planning and delivering programs that provide pathways to specific careers that are in demand in regional economies, and new skills and abilities (and working modes) in CE/EE leadership and staff.

Table 12: Fact sheet 1 CSU Extended and Continuing Education 2009 - 2010

Gross enrolment	257,746
Annual FTE students[51]	17,665
Revenue ($)	189,662,226
Student credit units	532,098
Course sections	42,141

[51] Annual FTE students represent only students taking courses for credit

Table 13: Fact sheet 2 CSU Extended and Continuing Education 2009 - 2010

	Student credit units	Gross enrolment	Course sections
Special session programs[52]			
- **Degree programs**	161,587	55,009	3,666
- **Certificate programs**	10,784	4,032	396
- **Other (e.g. summer sessions)**	104,256	37,976	2,963
- **Contract programs**	18,506	6,318	444
- **Open university[53]**	135,298	45,732	23,945
Credit extension programs[54]			
- **Regular ext**	36,968	13,710	1,225
- **Contract ext**	31,892	14,546	1,214
- **Ext certificate programs**	32,808	11, 336	1,077
Non-credit programs[55]			
- **Continuing edu units**		28,747	2,654
- **Noncredit certificate programs**		5,661	749
- **Noncredit contract courses**		2,896	226
- **Other noncredit**		69,087	6,211

CSU Extended Universities: Two examples

At Sonoma State University, part of the CSU system, the more than 65 departments and academic programs are divided into distinct schools: School of Arts & Humanities, School of Business & Economics, School of Education, School of Science & Technology, School of Social Sciences, and the School of Extended Education, all offering undergraduate and graduate degrees and courses and nearly all offering minors and doctorates. One of the schools is the School of Extended Education, offering a variety of services:

- *Certificate Programs*
- *Contract Credit Programs*
- *EXCEL for Youth*
- *Osher Lifelong Learning Institute*
- *Liberal Studies BA Degree Completion Program*
- *MA in Interdisciplinary Studies: Action for a Viable Future*
- *Art Therapy*
- *Depth Psychology*
- *Organization Development Program*
- *MS in Computer and Engineering Science*
- *Open University*

[52] Special sessions may be existing campus degrees or may be approved by the campus to meet a special need of a professional group served by the campus.
[53] The OU program permits students to enrol in regular university courses on a space available basis. Students pay self-support fees and earn university academic credit.
[54] Credit extension courses are generally offered off campus and provide schools and agencies with unique abilities to update and upgrade professional competences.
[55] Non-credit activities may award certificates and other special recognitions. A number of campuses offer CEUs for programs (CEU: continuing education units upon completion of the course or program.

- *Sonoma State American Language Institute*
- *MA in Spanish*
- *Summer Session*

Northridge (CSUN) used the Tseng College of Extended Education as its mechanism for delivering extended programs, and the Tseng College began shifting its offerings away from non-credit courses toward graduate programs specifically designed for midcareer adults. These programs are currently offered on- and-off campus, online, and in a hybrid format, providing agility and a new scale of operations to the university. More importantly, the model has provided the university with new sources of revenue through predetermined revenue-sharing programs among various units. The Tseng College offers programs in arts and humanities, business and industry, education, engineering and technical fields, health and human services, and in the public sector. The public sector programs include certificates, a bachelor's degree, and a number of master's programs, including the master's in public administration (MPA). The self-supported MPA program, with its direct reliance on student tuition, has become the preferred mode of delivery of programs for mid-career adults.

2.4.2 University of California Extended

UC Extended has a long tradition.[56] For more than a century, it provides innovative learning programs to adult learners in California, across the U.S. and throughout the world. UC Extension provides knowledge and connections for people to achieve their personal and professional goals. UC Extension also directly impacts businesses and communities, helping citizens become more skilled and committed.

UC Extension receives no State funding; all of its income comes from student fees, and a small number of contributions, contracts and grants. University Extension enrolls some 500,000 Californians in its programs each year. University Extension offers some 17,000 different courses each year.

There are two clear examples of continuing education for particular vocations: *Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Education of the Bar* (Law). CMECalifornia is a collaborative project of the University of California consortium of continuing medical education programs (five universities). Its mission is to provide health care professionals with quality, evidence-based continuing education to enhance competence, advance physician performance, and improve patient outcomes. It offers research courses, eLearning and other continuing education activities, along with simplified tracking of course participation to meet re-licensure and professional organization requirements. UCSF (San Francisco) offers for example some 200 programs and issues over 4,000 credits to 20,000 learners.[57] UCSF is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Continuing Education of the Bar (CEB California) is a self-supporting, non-profit UC-program that is co-sponsored by the California State Bar. CEB cultivates the professional development of California lawyers by offering CLE courses, and by publishing practice guides. CLE courses are typically presented by practicing attorneys

[56] See http://extension.universityofcalifornia.edu/

[57] https://www.cme.ucsf.edu/about.aspx

and judges with expertise in the course's subject matter. All CEB courses are also available through CEB's "On Demand" service. In June 2012, CEB began offering podcasts on recent developments. CLE courses cover substantive practice areas including business law, criminal law, employment law, estate planning, real property law, family law, and litigation. CEB also offers law practice management programs.

Example of UC Extended University

In 2011–2012, UCSD Extension (San Diego), serving a population of a little more than 2 million, had approximately 60,000 enrolments, of whom 86% had college degrees. Extension also had a high number of students with master's degrees (19%) and doctoral and medical degrees (6%) in these programs. UCSD Extension offers 100 distinct certificate and special-study programs, with 92 % of the students reporting high levels of satisfaction and 69 % reporting an increase in their personal and professional network. These certificate programs do not replicate the campus curriculum, take significantly less time and are less expensive than master's programs, and seem to be valuable, given 50 % annual increases in overall enrolments.

UCSD also wants to elaborate on building partnerships and collaborations. These allow UCSD to work with organizations that have competencies, access to markets, resident talent, or delivery capabilities that they do not possess themselves. Through partnerships and collaborations such as with a public-school district, a hospital-training organization, or a regional department of city planning, we can accomplish a great deal more.

Designed in partnership with pharmaceutical and biomedical research industry leaders, the UC San Diego Extension Clinical Trials and Research Program began in 1998. This first-of-its-kind program not only serves the San Diego region, which is the third largest biotech cluster in the nation, but draws students from across America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

2.4.3 California Community Colleges

College graduates are enrolling in extension certificate programs typically taught by a practitioner with workplace experience. Unlike the 1950s through 1970s, when schools of continuing education and extension services were more like second-chance universities for adults who did not have the opportunity to get a college degree, these units are hubs of education and training for college grads. They provide the practice-oriented credentials that, combined with a solid liberal-arts degree, make for globally competitive careers.

In 2001, the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges called for the formation of a statewide comprehensive career ladders initiative, entitled Ladders of Opportunity, to ensure access to post-secondary career pathways for under-served populations and to meet the labor force needs in the state. The Career Ladders Project was established by the Board to carry this initiative forward.

The Project initially researched and assessed the challenges and opportunities facing community colleges and their regional workforce partners in developing career pathways. This work resulted in policy recommendations and an action plan to move community colleges and the state toward realization of the career ladders vision set

forth in Ladders of Opportunity; these were incorporated into the new Strategic Plan adopted by the Board of Governors in 2006.

2.5 Policy instruments

Given the modest role of the state towards (continuing) higher education, the number of policy instruments used are also limited. The universities are largely autonomous; self-governance and peer-driven mechanisms are key. Nevertheless a few policy instruments are worth mentioning, concerning regulation, financial incentives and communication.

One type of state regulation that impacts continuing higher education concerns licensing. In many cases a license or recognition of particular competences through qualifications are required for practicing a profession. For the coordination of such professional licenses there are many professional associations. For license continuation or renewal professionals or practitioners must update their competences for instance via earning credits of continuing education courses. From the perspective of consumer protection this is, amongst others, regulated by special boards of the California Department of Consumer Affairs. There are boards on accountancy, architects, behavioral sciences, optometry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, nursing and so on. Also other California Departments may have such boards that regulate licenses, certification programs and accreditation of continuing education courses.
For psychologists there is for instance the California Board of Psychology, one of the 30 regulatory entities which fall under the organizational structure of the California Department of Consumer Affairs. Those entering the profession of psychology must possess minimal competency to practice psychology independently and safely. This is achieved by requiring candidates for a license to possess an appropriate doctorate degree from an approved or accredited university and by requiring the completion of a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience. Each license applicant must also pass a national written examination and a California examination. In addition, in order to renew a license, a psychologist must complete 36 hours of approved continuing education every two years. Continuing education means a variety of forms of learning experiences, including lectures, conferences, seminars, workshops, grand rounds, in-service training programs, video conferencing, and independent learning technologies (distance learning). Accreditation of the continuing education is regulated (in detail) by the state's department.[58] With respect to the recognition of credits the regulations stipulate (among many other things) the following.[59]

> *The Board of Psychology recognizes and accepts for continuing education credit courses that are:*
> *(A) provided by American Psychological Association (APA) approved sponsors;*

[58] See http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/cont-edu/index.shtml
[59] http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/cont-edu/ce-regulations.pdf. More information about mandatory continuing education requirements can be found at:
http://www.psychboard.ca.gov/licensee/education.shtml

(B) Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses specifically applicable and pertinent to the practice of psychology and that are accredited by the California Medical Association (CMA) or the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME);
(C) sponsored by the Academies of the specialty boards of the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP).

Quality assurance and accreditation.
Apart from state regulations for special accreditation requirements with respect to licenses, accreditation procedures are voluntary and operate with considerable independence and autonomy. The US and California have no centralized governmental authority exercising control over postsecondary educational institutions. The practice of accreditation arose as a means of conducting non-governmental, peer evaluation of educational institutions and programs. Accrediting agencies assume that the State of California has undertaken, as have most other states, the responsibility for licensing the institutions.

Accrediting agencies are private educational associations of regional or national scope that develop criteria and conduct peer evaluations to assess whether or not those criteria are met. Institutions or programs that meet an agency's criteria are thereby "accredited."
Accreditation does not provide automatic acceptance by an institution of credit earned at another institution, nor does it give assurance of acceptance of graduates by employers. The acceptance of credits is always determined by the institution to which students are applying. Each university has its own admissions and enrollment requirements. Policies regarding the acceptance of Extension credit toward graduate degrees vary widely among institutions and individual programs.

There are two basic types of educational accreditation: Institutional and Specialized or Programmatic ones. Institutional accreditation applies to an entire institution, indicating that each of its parts is contributing to the achievement of the institution's objectives, although not necessarily all at the same level of quality. The various commissions of the regional accrediting associations, for example, perform institutional accreditation, as do many national accrediting agencies.
Specialized or programmatic accreditation applies to programs, departments, or schools that are parts of an institution. The accredited unit may be as large as a college or school within a university or as small as a curriculum within a discipline.
Most of the specialized or programmatic accrediting agencies review units within an institution of higher education that is accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions. However, certain accrediting agencies also accredit professional schools and other specialized or vocational institutions of higher education that are freestanding in their operations. Thus, a "specialized" or "programmatic" accrediting agency may also function in the capacity of an "institutional" accrediting agency.

A continuing education unit (CEU) or continuing education credit (CEC) is a measure used in continuing education programs, particularly those required in a licensed profession in order for the professional to maintain the license.[60] Generally, a CEU is defined as ten hours of participation in a recognized continuing education program, with qualified instruction and sponsorship. CEU records are widely used to provide evidence of completion of continuing education requirements mandated by certification bodies, professional societies, or governmental licensing boards. The records also provide employers with information on training pertinent to particular occupations.

The term CEU is in the public domain. Any organization may award a traditional CEU without requiring any accreditation. With a traditional CEU an employer or other organization must decide on an individual basis whether to honor the CEU from a training provider.

Due to certain CEU providers not adhering to high standards, and the lack of standards for specific fields, there is sometimes a distrust of the value of a CEU, and accrediting organizations have been created to standardize what a CEU means. Of these, the International Association for Continuing Education & Training (IACET) offers the accreditation of CEUs for the most industries. Specific industries, such as nursing, health, etc., have their own accrediting processes for CEUs. Any accredited CEU generally has a preface of the accrediting body. For instance training institutions accredited by the IACET can offer IACET CEUs. IACET's mission is to promote and enhance quality in continuing education and training (CE/T) through research, education and the development and continuous improvement of criteria, principles and standards.[61]

Another accreditation agent in the area of continuing education is the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET).[62] In 1998, ACCET became the only recognized accrediting agency to be certified as an ISO 9001:2008-Quality Management System, under the international standards established by the International Organization for Standardization, and continues to hold that unique status. Accreditation serves the interests of companies, agencies, and the public through the establishment of standards, policies, and procedures in conjunction with an objective third-party professional evaluation designed to identify and inspire sound education and training practices.

A third accreditation agency, the most important one,[63] is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). They conduct three types of accreditation: regional, institutional and specialized/professional accreditation. In fact that WASC has two accrediting commissions—one for four-year and one for two-year institutions. They operate completely independently from one another, which can cause problems where an institution offers both associate's and bachelor's degrees. This is another example of policy fragmentation in California.

---

[60] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuing_education_unit

[61] http://www.iacet.org/about/who-we-are

[62] http://www.accet.org/

[63] This agency is important because if a school does not have accreditation, it generally does not qualify for federal financial aid programs (e.g. Pell grants of federal student loans)

Regional Accreditation is a form of *institutional* accreditation that involves a comprehensive review of all institutional functions. Voluntary, non-governmental, institutional accreditation, as practiced by WASC and other regional commissions, is a unique characteristic of American education. Accreditation is granted at the completion of a peer review process, and assures the educational community, the general public, and other organizations that an accredited institution has met high standards of quality and effectiveness. Regional accreditation is granted to public and private, non-profit and for-profit, two- and four-year institutions.

A second type of institutional accreditation focuses on institutions in special areas of study. For example theology, art and design, and music.

A third type of accreditation is specialized or professional accreditation, which focuses on programs in a specific discipline within an institution, but does not evaluate the entire institution. Specialized accreditation exists in the fields of education, law, medicine, chiropractic, computer science, and more than 90 other disciplines. Most specialized accreditors require regional accreditation as a foundation for their reviews and as assurance of the fiscal integrity and health of the institution.

ASSIST

ASSIST is an online student-transfer information system that shows how course credits earned at one public California college or university can be applied when transferred to another.[64] ASSIST is the official repository of articulation for California's public colleges and universities and provides information about student transfer in California.

Tax benefits

To offset costs for college or career training students may take advantage of a number of federal tax benefits, including credits, deductions and savings incentives.[65] Examples are the American opportunity credit, student loan interest deduction, tuition and fees deduction and *lifetime learning credit*. It applies to tuition for graduate-level courses and continuing education courses. The credit is 20% of the first $10,000 of tuition, for a maximum of $2,000 per tax return. This credit phases out gradually as adjusted gross income rises between $50,000 and $60,000 for singles and between $100,000 and $120,000 for married couples.

This holds for continuing education that is required for a continuing license. It must be part of a degree or certified program and work-related. If it is meant for entering a new professional field or as a side-line hobby, then they do not qualify for this tax credit. In such a case limited deduction (up to $4,000 for tuition and fees) may be the only option.

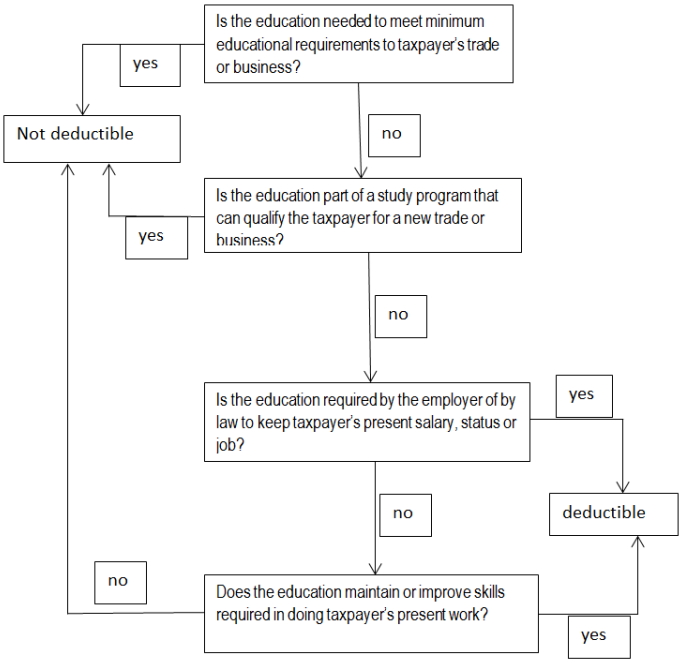
Depending on the situation, there can be a tax free (up to $5,250) from one's employers payment or reimbursement of education expenses (graduate level courses can be exempted).

[64] http://www.assist.org/web-assist/welcome.html

[65] http://www.edfund.org/pubs_order/epub_GetPdf.cfm?documentId=I-91 and http://www.vsaaccountingservices.com/faq-taxbenefitsofhigheredu.php

Nearly all states have established *college savings plans* (as do some private colleges). A person invests now to cover future college expenses, by contributing to a savings account or buying tuition credits redeemable in the future. Investments grow tax-free, and distributions to pay college expenses can also be tax-free.

The US Tax code offers the opportunities for employers and employees to have tax reductions. [66] Section 127 states that educational assistance offered by employers may be exempt from federal income tax. Employers who offer their employees educational assistance can deduct its cost as a business expense in determining the firm's income tax liability. Empirical research suggests that employers gain from sponsoring employee education and training because it increases employee retention.[67] Section 132 concerns the fringe benefit exclusion for working conditions benefits. The cost of education that maintains or improves skills you use on the job – or that is required to maintain your job – is deductible if you itemize. It's a miscellaneous expense, which means you get a tax benefit only if all your miscellaneous deductions exceed 2% of your adjusted gross income. Education that qualifies you for a new trade or business, such as law school, is not eligible for this break.



Grants and scholarships.

Options are limited. Continuing education courses and programs are typically paid for by the student, with or without reimbursement of the employer. Organizations or

[66] see for instance Levine, L. (2008) Tax treatment of employer educational assistance for the benefit of employees.

[67] Capelli, P. (2004) "Why Do Employers Pay for College?," Journal of Econometrics, 121, 2004, and Colleen N. Flaherty, C.N. (2007) The Effect of Tuition Reimbursement on Turnover, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper.

universities might offer scholarships. The state has financial aid programs, such as the Cal Grant Program. Nontraditional learners however only get a small part of the pie.[68]

The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating postsecondary institutions. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution (EFC); the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less.

California Virtual Campus

The California Virtual Campus provides information about online courses and programs in California higher education (public and private), and provides links to resources that support students as they navigate through the complex world of distance education in California. Now maintained by the California Virtual Campus Professional Development Center, the concept was initially created under the auspices of the Chancellor's Office for the California Community Colleges. CVC itself confers no degrees or certificates. It serves as a gateway to technology-mediated distance learning courses and programs from California institutions.

2.6 Summary

Context and provisions
For several reasons there is a clear understanding that students markets reaching out for nontraditional students such as for workers is important and is likely to become more important in the coming years as a means to strengthen the economy. There will be a growing need for people with a college degree or higher, which cannot be fully achieved by a better performing high school system. The overall picture of continuing education in California is scattered. Many educational services for non-traditional students are offered by several providers. Public, not-for-profit and profit private institutions are offering a range of programs and courses. This may contain degree, credit and non-credit programs. Adult education, aged 16 years and older who are not enrolled in high school, attracts many students (44% in the US in 2005). Most adults participated in work-related courses (27%). Higher education is not the main focus; it is primarily basic skills oriented. Distance learning also attracts many students at undergraduate and graduate level education. In 2007/08, about 20% of all US undergraduates took at least one distance learning course and nearly 4% took an entire distance learning program. Of the post

[68] see http://www.csac.ca.gov/facts/competitiveprogram_2010_11.pdf. Also Broek et al (2010, p148).

baccalaureate students 22% took at least one distance learning course and nearly 9% an entire program.
Hybrid offerings – blending online learning with classroom instruction – is underdeveloped but is likely to grow in the coming years.
Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) is a very recent phenomenon that is booming in 2012. While skepticism remains by many, MOOCs are regarded as setting the stage for higher education in the future. Several organizations were established recently to offer learning through massive means.
California has a number of apprenticeships programs that combine classroom instruction with on-the-job training. The volume, type of participants and level of training are unknown.
There is a demand for and growth of lifelong learning programs and institutions. California has 31 lifelong learning institutes. Important programs are Elderhostel and the Osher programs, some of them located at the well-known universities.

Providers

The main providers of continuing education are the universities from the various systems of California higher education. Both the private and the public institutions offer a range of continuing education services. Generally speaking they offer online and off-campus credit degree programs, professional development certificates, courses for personal enrichment and access to courses without university admission. At many institutions the Extended University is a separate unit offering these multiple continuing education services (including for instance an Open University). They serve a substantial number of students. In 2009/10, the State California University for instance had a gross enrollment of nearly 260,000 (in terms of FTE this means nearly 18,000 enrollments).

Governance and the policy arena

With respect to higher education the state plays a modest role. It sets the broader framework (the California Master Plan) and licenses the institutions. It provides funding and aims to impact higher education through labor market policies. The institutions however are largely autonomous with respect to the intake of students and the services they offer. Self-governance is the most appropriate term to characterize the higher education policy area.
Apart from the state, its agencies and boards and the universities, there are many interest groups, accreditation organizations and professional associations in the policy arena. Some of these interest groups include companies and workforce agencies which advocate a stronger link between education and the workforce (e.g. the California Edge Campaign). It is hard to find evidence on the importance and roles of employers regarding continuing education. Employers seem to find it important to train and update skills and knowledge of their workers, but their investments mainly concern internal training. Professional relationships with universities are modest. Continuing

education students bear most of the costs for their training and education, though many employers reimburse costs (e.g. for tuition). Because there is clear evidence about the private rates of return ("education pays off"), it seems likely that students are willing to pay for continuing education activities.

Policy instruments

There is a number of policy instruments worth mentioning. Firstly, there is state regulation, combined with requirements from professional associations, with respect to renewing of licenses for practicing a profession. California Departments through their Boards have set requirements for instance to protect consumers. Secondly, there are financial incentives such as grants and scholarships, but there impact (in terms of volume) on continuing education seems small. Another financial incentive is tax benefits. Under certain conditions one can apply for a lifelong learning credit (up to $2,000 tax reduction). Thirdly, there are tools to provide information about online courses and programs (California Virtual Campus). Fourthly, there is a complex, sophisticated system of accreditation, non-governmental, peer evaluation of educational institutions and programs, to safeguard and demonstrate the value of courses and programs. Accreditation is voluntary and does not provide automatic acceptance by an institution of credit earned at another institution, nor does it give assurance of acceptance of graduates by employers.

3 Continuing higher education in Finland

3.1 Context, provisions and participation

3.1.1 Context continuing higher education

Finland has a surface area of approximately 330.000 square kilometres, with around 10% of its area covered by more than 188.00 lakes. Finland is the northernmost country of the European Union, and forms a bridge between the Scandinavian peninsula of Norway and Sweden and the North Russian lowlands. Helsinki, the capital of Finland is situated on the southern coast. Geographically it lies only 80 km across the Gulf of Finland from the capital of Estonia, Tallin (Zawacki-Richter & Reith 2009, Bohn 2005, cited in Zawacki-Richter & Reith 2009; Wikipedia 2013). Finland has a population of 5.4 million, expressing an average population density of around 17 inhabitants per square kilometre. At the end of 2011, the Finnish population as a whole consisted of 5 401 267 persons, with 2 652 534 males and 2 748 733 females. Table 1 shows the population trends (and forecast) for 1950 – 2060 by age group as a percentage. The total population of Finland will increase according to the population forecast but the number of older people will be increasing most rapidly. In absolute terms the number of children will go up during next five decades but their share of total population will decrease slowly (Statistics Finland 2013).

Table 1. Population trends 1950-2060 by age group as a percentage (* forecast)

Age group	1950	2000	2009	2015*	2030*	2040*	2050*	2060*
0–14 years	30	18	17	17	16	16	16	15
15–64 years	63	67	67	63	58	58	57	56
65+ years	7	15	17	21	26	27	28	29

Source: Statistics Finland (www.stat.fi)

These demographic changes in Finland are considered a challenge for the development of the education system, and according to forecasts Finland is facing a lack of skilled labour in many sectors. Particular in this respect are the several initiatives in Finnish national policy which aim to lengthen working careers. As a precondition for the continuation of working careers, the retraining and continuing training of adults will also become more important. In the period up to the crisis, Finland enjoyed an impressive economic expansion that followed a deep recession in the early 1990s. In comparison to other EU and Nordic countries, the inflation remained relatively low. Finland topped many international comparisons of education outcomes, competiveness,

quality of life, institutions and the environment. Nevertheless, the worldwide recession and collapse in trade hit Finland harder than most other OECD countries - although Finland was insulated from the direct effects of the global financial crises. The unemployment in Finland has risen significantly to a peak of 9% in early 2010, but its increase has been small (OECD 2010, 2012). Table 2 below presents the level of employment and the unemployment rates for the Finnish population in the period 2000-2012.

Table 2. Finnish labour market

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	1 000 persons												
Mean population	**5.176**	**5.188**	**5.201**	**5.213**	**5.228**	**5.246**	**5.266**	**5.289**	**5.313**	**5.339**	**5.363**	**5.388**	***5 414**
Population aged 15–74	**3.901**	**3.909**	**3.918**	**3.926**	**3.935**	**3.948**	**3.963**	**3.981**	**4.004**	**4.025**	**4.043**	**4.059**	**4.075**
Labour force	2.589	2.605	2.610	2.600	2.594	2.621	2.648	2.675	2.703	2.678	2.672	2.682	2.690
Employed	2.335	2.367	2.372	2.365	2.365	2.401	2.443	2.492	2.531	2.457	2.447	2.474	2.483
Unemployed	253	238	237	235	229	220	204	183	172	221	224	209	207
Inactive population	1.312	1.304	1.308	1.327	1.342	1.327	1.315	1.306	1.301	1.347	1.372	1.376	1.385
Labour force rate, %	66,4	66,6	66,6	66,2	65,9	66,4	66,8	67,2	67,5	66,5	66,1	66,1	66,0
Unemployment rate, %	9,8	9,1	9,1	9,0	8,8	8,4	7,7	6,9	6,4	8,2	8,4	7,8	7,7
Employment rate (persons aged 15–64), %	66,9	67,7	67,7	67,3	67,2	68,0	68,9	69,9	70,6	68,3	67,8	68,6	69,0
Employed	**2.335**	**2.367**	**2.372**	**2.365**	**2.365**	**2.401**	**2.443**	**2.492**	**2.531**	**2.457**	**2.447**	**2.474**	**2.483**

Source: Statistics Finland (2013), Labour Force Survey [69]

Rising employment and a shrinking working-age population pushed down unemployment until recently. Still, compared to before the recession, unemployment remains high. Maintaining high participation and employment in the face of the recession and a rapidly ageing population are defined as major challenges for policy makers (OECD, 2010).

[69] http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_tyoelama_en.html

3.1.2 Provisions continuing higher education [70]

The education system in Finland has three levels: 1. basic education - comprising primary and lower secondary levels of education; 2. upper secondary education and training - comprising vocational education and training, and general education; and 3. higher education - the Finnish universities are often referred to in English as polytechnics, but the name 'universities of applied sciences is nowadays is used. Noteworthy is that it was only towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century that the Finnish higher education system is a binary one (Aarrevaara et al., 2009). At all levels, adult education is provided. Figure 1 below illustrates the Finnish education system.

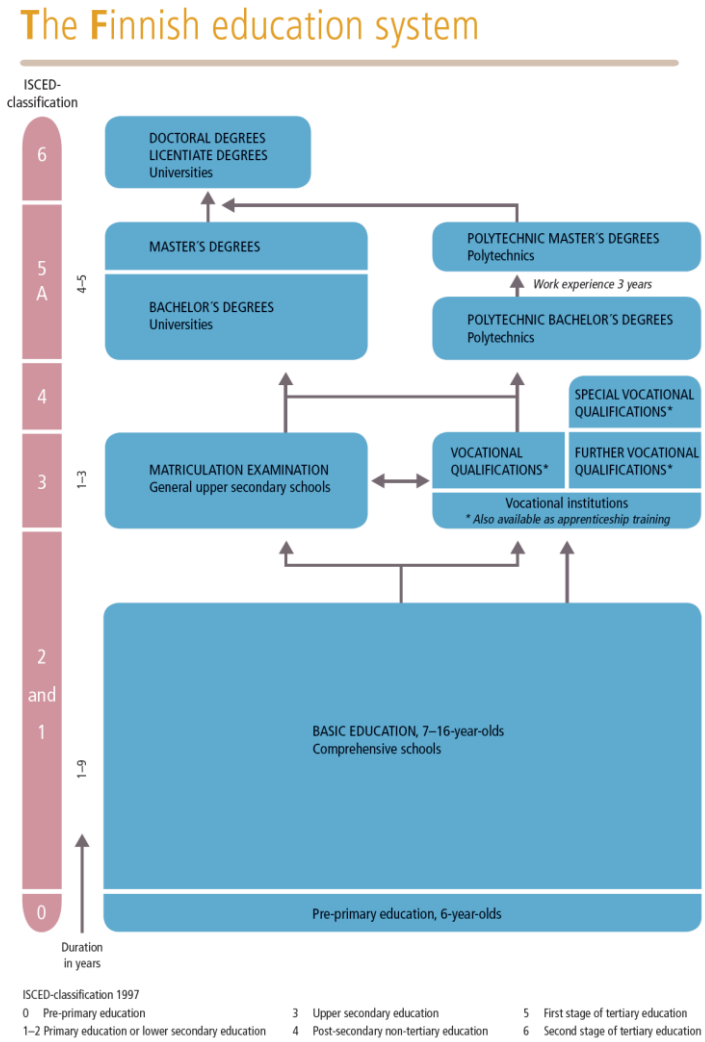


Figure 1. The Finnish education system. Source: CIMO (2010)

[70] This section is based on information available via the websites of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (2012, 2013) and the Finnish National Board of Education (2012); Euridyce (2010); Cedefop (2011).

Finland has a long tradition in adult education. Already in 1889 the first Finnish folk high school started and a decade later the first adult education centre was founded. The first continuing education centre at university was founded in the 1970s. While at first the emphasis was on general adult education, the focus changed towards vocational education and training with the introduction of the Adult Education Committee in 1971 (GHK & Research voor Beleid, 2010). Today, adult education and training in the Finnish context is an umbrella term for different study opportunities. Adults can study for qualifications or parts of qualifications in open instruction (such as open university and open polytechnic), attend training preparing for competence-based qualifications, or take courses in liberal adult education. An important part of adult education consists of further and continuing training designed to upgrade and update competencies. Some 800 institutions in Finland provide adult education and training, some of which are specialised adult education providers. These institutions offer a variety of courses and programmes for adults at all levels of formal education, and the provision of liberal adult education (covering informal and non-formal learning) is extensive (Euridyce 2010:39). Providers of adult education can at large be divided into two main categories: those operating within the official education system, and liberal adult education providers.

Adult education is available within the official education system in:

	number of institutions
general adult education	
• **adult upper secondary schools**	54
vocational adult education and training (upper secondary level)	
• **initial vocational education providers**	220
• **specialised vocational institutions**	54
• **vocational adult education centres**	45
tertiary education	
• **polytechnics**	29
• **universities**	20

and in liberal adult education in:

	number of institutions
adult education centres	258
Folk high schools	91
Study centres	11
Summer universities	20
Physical education centres	14

3.1.2.1 Staff development

Adult education also includes staff-development and other training provided or purchased by employers. In the latter case, employers purchase staff-development training from adult education institutions and firms.

3.1.2.2 Labour market training

Labour market training is also considered part of adult education in Finland. Labour market training is financed by the labour administration and mainly intended for unemployed persons and those aged 20 or over who are threatened by unemployment (see also below).

3.1.2.3 Studies, aims and degrees in adult education

Liberal education institutions offer courses in subjects relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis. Liberal adult education offers non-formal (non-certificate-oriented) studies, which provide adults with opportunities to develop themselves without qualification- or occupation-specific aims. Notwithstanding, the studies completed in liberal adult education may be taken into account in preparatory training for competence-based qualifications and when making an individual plan for completing competence-based qualifications. In addition, some folk high schools also may offer some open university courses.

Within the *official education system*, educational establishments arrange education and training intended for adults at all levels. It may lead to qualifications or relate to general self-development, as illustrated in the table below. The following options are open for adults:

Aiming for a certificate	Self-development
General upper secondary education	
Certificate from an adult upper secondary school	Studies in an adult upper secondary school
Vocational adult and training	
Training preparing for a competence-based qualification, incl. apprenticeship training	
Training preparing for a further or specialist qualification, incl. apprenticeship training	Continuing vocational training
Training arranged by private vocational institutes	Staff-development training arranged by private institutes
Polytechnics	
Adult education leading to a polytechnic degree	Open polytechnic
Polytechnic Master's	Specialisation studies in a polytechnic

	Continuing professional education
Universities	
Separate Master's programmes	Open university Specialisation studies in a university Continuing professional education

3.1.2.4 The official education system

a) Vocational education and training for adults (CVET)

The purpose of vocational adult education and training is to maintain and enhance competencies and promote employment. It can be divided into upper secondary (initial) and further vocational education and training, with the first leading into a certified qualification. Further vocational training may be either certificate-oriented or non-formal.

Upper secondary and additional vocational education and training for adults (CVET) is provided by institutions with a licence to provide this sort of education. Vocational institutions have established special adult education programmes or units. The vocational qualifications provided by these are the same in adult education and training as for young people. Vocational adult education centres provide adult employment training (labour market training), upper secondary vocational education and training leading to qualifications, as well as additional training and in-service training. The theoretical studies in apprenticeship training may also be organised at vocational adult education centres.

Institutions with licences to provide education may provide upper secondary and additional vocational education and training for adults. Vocational institutions have established special adult education programmes or units. The vocational qualifications provided by these are the same in adult education and training as for young people.

Vocational adult education centres provide adult employment training (labour market training), upper secondary vocational education and training leading to qualifications, as well as additional training and in-service training. The theoretical studies in apprenticeship training may also be organised at vocational adult education centres.

A variety of opportunities are available for adults to study for (parts of) qualifications: in-service training, apprenticeship training, the competence-based qualification system, and labour market training (adult employment training):

- In-service training is the most extensive form of adult education and training, in terms of the participation rate. According to studies carried out by industrial organisations, companies have started to invest more in the professional development

of their personnel. In all companies, at least half of the salaried employees participate in some form of training. Financing of in-service training is mainly the responsibility of the companies.

- Apprenticeship training is one form of arranging vocational education and training, which has become popular in recent years. The provider of apprenticeship training (a local authority, joint municipal authority, registered association or foundation) is also responsible for managing apprenticeship training and supervising the apprenticeship contracts.
- Competence-based qualification system. This refers to the recognition of adults' existing expertise and skills. This recognition is validated by institutes of adult education through competence test to those adults who have been working for many years in a certain field without a formal certificate. Normally competence-based qualifications' recognition is preceded by some formal training given by a institute for adult education.
- Labour market training (adult employment training) is mainly intended for unemployed people. Some training is also offered to those at risk of losing their jobs and those who are becoming excluded from the labour market. The proportion of unemployed people in the number of new participants has, however, continuously increased during the past few years. Labour market training is financed by the labour administration and mainly intended for unemployed persons and those aged 20 or over who are threatened by unemployment. Those participating in labour market (mainly vocational) training or employment training purchased by the labour authorities are paid either a training or employment benefit as well as compensation to cover expenses for travel, food and accommodation arising during the training. The aim of the training is to maintain the balance between labour demand and supply and prevent unemployment and labour shortage.

b) Higher education for adults

Within the official education system, continuing higher education is provided by polytechnics (also known as universities of applied sciences), universities, and continuing professional development centres.

Higher education for adults is provided on the same degree programmes as education for young students and leads to the same higher education degrees. Specific provisions for the continuing higher education for adults are also offered by the institutions. Both the universities and the polytechnics offer professional specialisation studies as a form of continuing education as well as open polytechnic and open university education. The different provisions are explained below by type of institution.

Polytechnics

The system of polytechnics in Finland is relatively new. The first colleges are founded in 1991-1991 by way of experiment, and only since 2000 all Finnish universities permanent part of the system. The universities of applied sciences are mainly

multidisciplinary and regional institution of higher education which focus on interacting with the working life and regional development.

As far as continuing higher education is concerned, polytechnics also provide professional specialisation studies. These are extensive continuing education programmes supplementing the degree system, which are provided for people with a university degree, a vocational post-secondary qualification or a vocational higher education degree, or for others with sufficient aptitude for study. In recent years, polytechnics have developed their provision of open education. Open polytechnics offer the opportunity to study individual study units included within polytechnic degrees.

- *Polytechnic degree*

The development of polytechnic adult education in Finland started gradually alongside education provided for young people. Activities have expanded on an annual basis as polytechnics have become an established form of operation. The time spent completing a polytechnic degree as adult education is usually slightly shorter than the corresponding education for young people, since adult students' previous studies and work experience may be accredited.

- *Postgraduate master degrees*

The polytechnics also offer postgraduate degrees aimed specifically at adult students. These master's degree programmes provide practically oriented education and training aimed at mature students who have been active in working life for at least two years. The Polytechnic Master's degree is of equal level with the University Master's degree.

- *Specialisation studies*

In addition to degree-oriented education, permanent polytechnics may provide professional specialisation studies with a scope of 30-60 ECTS credits. The specialisation studies are extensive continuing education programmes supplementing the degree system, which are provided for people with a university degree, a vocational post-secondary qualification or a vocational higher education degree, or for others with sufficient aptitude for study. The polytechnic in question grants certificates to people who have completed the specialisation studies to an acceptable standard.

- *Open education*

In recent years, polytechnics have developed their provision of open education. The open universities of applied sciences are in their early stages, though this is a task based on Polytechnics Act (4§) (Aarrevaara in email correspondence). Open polytechnics offer the opportunity to study individual study units included within polytechnic degrees. The open university of applied science courses are offered by most Finnish polytechnics (and universities, see below), and are individual, fee-charging courses. And although based on the undergraduate curricula of the Finnish higher

education institutions, these are not full-time studies and do not lead to a degree or professional qualification. Completed open studies may be however be included in a student's degree study, provided application for degree student status is granted. The open studies in Finland are available in a wide variety of subjects. Open Studies often entail a lot of independent distance studies and web learning, including essay writing. Depending on the course, studies may also include a varying degree of classroom or small group studies. Lectures and other contact meetings are often arranged in the evening or during weekends. For more information on open education, see the heading of universities.

Universities

All universities have their own continuing education functions or centres. Commercial services provide most of the financing for these. In addition, these centres may have several affiliates operating outside the university town. Continuing education centres organise vocational continuing education for individuals already holding an academic degree and provide and co-ordinate open university education in co-operation with university departments and different adult education organisations.

- *Vocational continuing education*

Adult education at universities is provided by their own continuing education centres, the first of which were founded in the 1970s. Nowadays all universities have their own continuing education centres, which may have several affiliates operating outside the university town. According to Professor Jussi Välimaa (in email-correspondence), continuing education centres have not been a good business for universities. For this reason some universities (like Jyväskylä) have merged these continuing education centres with faculties. Continuing education centres organise vocational continuing education for individuals already holding an academic degree. They provide and co-ordinate open university education in co-operation with university departments and different adult education organisations. Most of their financing is provided by commercial services. In addition to continuing education centres, 10 universities also have separate open university units.

- *Open university*

At open university students may complete different modules, but they cannot take a degree. However, students may gain the right to study for a degree after completing usually at least 60 credits' worth of studies included on a degree programme at open university. However, the required number of credits varies by university and subject. In terms of organisation, the Open University in Finland is not a single, coherent organisation. Rather, almost all Finnish universities offer Open University education, with the first Finnish Open University being established in 1970. Finnish universities offer Open University education not only at Open Universities, but also in cooperation with other educational institutions. This cooperative network characterises Open

University education in Finland. The most important partners among educational institutions are adult education centres, folk high schools and summer universities. In practice, such a cooperative network means that each Open University can offer courses in various localities in Finland. The responsibilities and tasks of various organisations in Open University education are as follows:

The university faculties and departments
- are responsible for the teaching content;
- accept Open University education as equivalent to undergraduate education at universities; and
- approve Open University teachers.

The designated open universities
- cater teaching for adult students;
- provide teaching either on their own or in cooperation with an adult education institution; and
- complete tasks associated with academic administration, such as the registration of completed studies.

The partner educational institutions
- Offer Open University education according to the educational needs of their region in cooperation with Open Universities.

Next to these providers offering formal adult education and training, there are also about one thousand private commercial training organisations in Finland, including art, music and dance institutions, driving schools, language schools and companies providing training in information and communication technology. Private businesses also organise barber, hairdresser and beautician training as well as masseur training. These organisations do not fall within the public system of funding and are not permitted to use the titles of qualifications reserved by the formal education system. Students at these organisations may, however, take part in tests where they can demonstrate their vocational skills and receive the right to use the relevant qualification title. The activities of commercial organisations are controlled by consumer protection authorities.

3.1.3 Participation

More than 1.7 million citizens participate in different types of adult education each year. More than half of this number is made up of the working age population. In international terms, this is a high figure, but the Finnish national target is even higher. A goal of 60 per cent participation is set for 2012. To achieve this figure, the participation base needs to be expanded and the study opportunities of the population groups who participate the least must be improved. The goal is to increase the study

opportunities of people with no vocational education and training or whose education is outdated, entrepreneurs, the staff of small and medium-sized enterprises, immigrants and people aged over 55 (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, 2013).

Education leading to a qualification

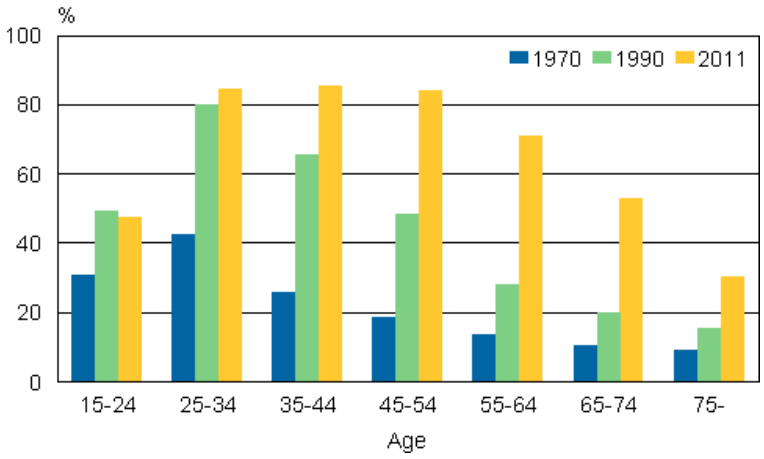
The total number of students in education leading to a qualification or degree was 1.25 million in 2011. Preliminary data on 2011 indicate that the number of students remained unchanged in comparison with the previous year. The number of students decreased in comprehensive school and upper secondary general school education, but increased in vocational and polytechnic education. No significant changes took place in university education. These data derive from the education statistics compiled by Statistics Finland (2013).

With respect to educational qualifications, by the end of 2011 68 per cent of the population aged 15 or over had completed a post-comprehensive level qualification. This includes educational qualifications in upper secondary general school education, vocational education, polytechnic education or university education. The share of population with educational qualifications increased by two per cent from the year before. In 2011, the shares of those having attained post-comprehensive school qualifications were almost equal in three age groups, those aged 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54, that is, 84 to 86 per cent. In 1970 and 1990 the shares of those having completed the basic level of education were highest in the age group of those aged 25 to 34.

By the end of 2011, a total of 3,056,000 persons in Finland had attained post-comprehensive level educational qualifications in upper secondary general school education, vocational education, polytechnic education or university education. In other words, 68 per cent of the population aged 15 or over had completed a post-comprehensive level qualification. The share of population with educational qualifications increased by two per cent from the year before.

In 2011, the shares of those having attained post-comprehensive school qualifications were almost equal in three age groups, those aged 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54, that is, 84 to 86 per cent. In 1970 and 1990 the shares of those having completed the basic level of education were highest in the age group of those aged 25 to 34, clearly more than among those aged 35 to 44 and 45 to 54.

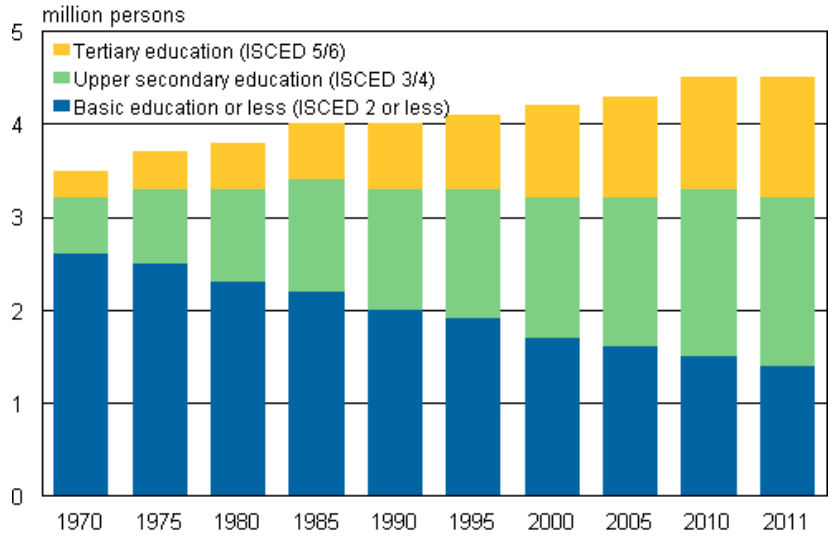
Figure 2. Shares of population with post-comprehensive level qualifications by age group in 1970, 1990 and 2011



Source: Education 2012. Statistics Finland

Persons having completed only the basic level of education, i.e. comprehensive school, middle school or elementary school, numbered one-third of the population aged 15 or over. Upper secondary level qualifications were held by 40 per cent and tertiary level qualifications by 28 per cent. At the end of 2011, 42 per cent of men and 37 per cent of women had upper secondary level qualifications, whereas tertiary degrees were held by 25 per cent of men and 31 per cent of women. Figure 3 illustrates the increase in the number of persons achieving tertiary education.

Figure 3. Population aged 15 or over by level of education 1970-2011



Source: Education 2012. Statistics Finland[71]

[71] http://www.stat.fi/til/vkour/2011/vkour_2011_2012-12-04_kuv_001_en.html

Adult education not leading to a qualification

According to data collected by Statistics Finland from educational institutions, a total of 5.6 million hours of teaching were given in adult education not leading to a qualification, which is two per cent less than in the year before. The number of participants (gross number of students) was one per cent more than in the previous year, totalled 2.2 million. The information below presents the figures as provided by Statistics Finland. The highest number of participants attended education organised as liberal adult education, where the gross number of students was 1.7 million and their net number was 990 000. The number of teaching hours was also highest in liberal adult education, at 2.9 million hours. The highest share (29 per cent) of all the teaching hours given in adult education not leading to a qualification was given in the field of culture, especially in crafts and design.

Table 3. Educational institutions' adult education not leading to a qualification by type of education in 2011

Type of education	Participants (gross)	Women %	Teaching hours
Further vocational education, not apprenticeship training	103 916	45	410 059
Further vocational education, apprenticeship training	5 527	69	64 661
Employment training for adults	66 355	43	1 240 252
Courses ordered by the employer	238 189	50	403 615
Education organised as liberal adult education	1 661 913	72	2 915 856
Open polytechnic teaching	15 800	66	283 361
Open university teaching [1)]	43 226	76	69 164
Other education	95 512	54	256 434
Total	**2 230 438**	**67**	**5 643 402**

1) Excl. data on open university teaching implemented by the universities themselves.
(Official Statistics of Finland, 2011).

3.2 The policy and legal framework

3.2.1 Policy framework

Finnish education and science policy is geared to promote the competitiveness of Finnish welfare society (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, 2012). Particular about the Finnish education policy is that it is built on the lifelong learning principle (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012c). This principle entails that everyone has sufficient learning skills and opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in different learning environments throughout their lifespan. The lifelong learning viewpoint is integrated into education policy and other policy sectors relating

to education and training. The aim is a coherent policy geared to educational equity and a high level of education among the population as a whole. The education policy priorities are outlined in the Government's Development Plan for Education and Research. The Development Plan is adopted by the government every four years, and it directs the implementation of the education and research policy goals stated in the Government Programme.
In Finland, the tasks of adult education policy are to ensure the availability and competence of the labour force, provide educational opportunities for the entire adult population, and strengthen social cohesion and equality. Adult education policy supports efforts to extend working life, raise the employment rate, improve productivity, enhance multiculturalism and implement the conditions for lifelong learning. In addition, adult education alleviates the effects of the recession (Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2012).

This section reports on three recent important policy statements: 1) the total reform of adult education in 2007; 2) the development plan 2007-2012,[72] and 3) the newest development plan for the period 2011-2016 that was adopted at the end of 2011 (see also GHK and RvB, 2010).

The reform of adult education
In 2007, a total reform of adult education (AKKU) was launched in Finland. The AKKU reform encompasses vocational adult education and training, apprenticeship training, adult education provided by higher education institutions, labour market training for adults, and staff training.

The total reform of adult education emphasizes the need for stronger higher adult education, improved information, instruction and counselling services to ensure the correct focus of adult education, better training opportunities for the less active groups of people as well as clearer subsidy systems for adult students and a wider basis of finance. Some of the key issues include strengthening learning in working life, recognising skills that have been acquired in different ways, facilitating opportunities to combine studies in a flexible way, enhancing adult education offered by higher education institutions, making information, guidance and counselling services more effective in order to improve the relevance of adult education, increasing study opportunities for the population groups that are least represented in adult education, clarifying the benefit systems available for adult education, and expanding the funding base (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, 2012; Piensoho & Brofeldt 2011).

[72] In the past decade, different phases can be distinguished in the development of continuing higher education, characterized by important policy documents on adult education and as described in the Finnish country report on the action plan on adult learning (GHK and Research voor Beleid, 2010: 5-6).

From the point of view of university level adult education important development areas include new models of operation in particular, for example special qualifications for degree holders, more extensive university of applied sciences (UAS) studies together with sales of degree modules and further training, and apprenticeship type further training opportunities. (Piensoho & Brofeldt 2011; Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, 2012). Apprenticeship training constitutes the main form of learning in working life in Finland. An increasing share of vocational upper secondary education and training and vocational further education and training is arranged through apprenticeships. According to the Ministry of Education, apprenticeship training will be developed and expanded in accordance with the proposals of the rapporteur and the policies connected to the reforms to adult education. In 2009, apprenticeship-type training was integrated into continuing education for people with higher education degrees. In addition, labour market training is provided in the form of apprenticeship training (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, 2012).

The development plan 2007-2012

The overall aims for adult education as stated in the development plan of 2007-2013 (Ministry of Education, 2008) are to increase the participation of the adult population in education (from 52 per cent to 60 per cent), to activate the possibilities for everyone to participate in open web-based education, to improve the possibilities of the adult population for lifelong learning and to develop the quality of education, local impact and guidance.

'The plan for 2007-2012 also focuses on the competences for the labour market, pointing to the ageing population and the changing conditions of working life. In the summer of 2009, a steering group composed of representatives of different ministries and of national labour market organisations completed the main proposals for an overall reform of adult education, and their implementation has begun. Important issues in this reform are: learning in working life; recognition of prior learning; flexibility of provision; enhancing adult education provided by higher education institutions; making information, guidance and counselling more effective; improving access for those groups that are least represented in adult education; clarifying the available benefit systems; and expanding the funding base. This reform includes identifying different types of continuing education needs among employees, the unemployed and inactive people and developing the supply correspondingly. On-the job learning, in particular, will be promoted, and the continuing education possibilities of higher education graduates (including apprenticeship training) will be expanded. The operations of open polytechnics will also be expanded and fragmentary administration, financing, benefits and training supply will be streamlined. The steering group has also raised the question of financing of CVET, which should be performance-based. Financial support of students should also be renewed and simplified, with the intention of encouraging full-time study. The number of educational voucher grants will be increased, and the possibility of completing basic studies in a primary school or an

adult education centre will be secured for adults with few skills and for young people in danger of social exclusion' (GHK & RvB, 2010:6).

'Based on the national evaluation (done by the Finnish Education Evaluation Council in 2007) a programme for developing liberal adult education in 2009–2012 was published in 2009. This programme includes a reform of the financing system and legislation with regard to the tasks, operational requirements and restructuring of liberal adult education. The steering system will ensure that a sufficient share will be directed to operations that prevent exclusion and strengthen active citizenship. Special mention is made of education that improves the participation and quality of life of the senior population and education that supports the linguistic skills of immigrants and their integration into society. The employment of immigrants will be supported through adult education and training, first within construction, the metal industry, the service sector, healthcare and the welfare of the aged and later also in other fields according to employment needs. The utilisation of competence acquired from abroad will be enhanced by the more flexible recognition of previous education and competence, so that supplementing studies providing a qualification can be offered through the Open University and continuing education' (GHK and RvB, 2010:6).

The development plan 2011-2016

The current Education and Research Development Plan for the period 2011–2016 was adopted at the end of 2011. The key objectives of the Development Plan (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012c) include a) promoting equality in education, b) enhancing the quality of education at all levels; and c) supporting lifelong learning. With respect to adult education, the better opportunities for adults in education and training is promoted. The government's aim is to further increase the participation rate and to ensure that no section of the adult population will be permanently excluded from adult education and training. The identification and recognition of learning acquired outside the education system will be promoted in all types of education be means of legislation, steering and financing. The competence-based examination system developed for adult needs will be reinforced as a mechanism for demonstrating knowledge and skills acquired in working life and as a flexible system for recognizing competences. The Development Plan further states that the opportunities of graduates for continuing education will be expanded by creating specialised competency modules at higher education institution that complement the qualification and are based on working life needs. The goal is furthermore to support responding to individual educational and training needs by introducing personal training accounts. The proposal of a rapporteur concerning the form and introduction of personal training accounts is to be completed in late 2012 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012a).

3.2.2 Legal and regulatory framework

In Finland, legislation is an efficient political instrument as it sets the limits and rules for the actions of higher education institutions (Välimaa, 2012). In line with the

Constitution, that records the basic right to education and culture, public authorities in Finland must secure equal opportunities for every resident in Finland to get education also after compulsory schooling and to develop themselves, irrespective of their financial standing. Legislation provides for compulsory schooling and the right to free pre-primary and basic education. Most other qualifying education is also free for the students, including postgraduate education in universities. The regulatory framework for different provisions of (adult) education are described below (Finnish National Board of Education, 2012; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012, 2013).

Liberal education

The Liberal Adult Education Act (2009/1765) prescribes on liberal adult education institutions and aims at supporting lifelong learning and promoting equality and democracy in society.

Vocational adult education and training

The Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) covers upper secondary vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist qualifications taken as competence tests irrespective of the method of acquiring the vocational skills, as well as preparatory training for these tests. In 2006, changes were made to this Act in respect of preparatory training for competence-based qualification, individual student plans, completion of qualifications and contracts for arranging competence tests.

Upper secondary vocational education and training

The Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998) controls the organisation of curriculum-based upper secondary vocational education and training for both young and adult students.

Higher education for adults

Adult education is also provided by universities, polytechnics and continuing professional development centres.

> Universities are governed by the Universities Act (558/2009) and with a number of Decree regulating mainly degrees awarded in Finnish universities while Polytechnics are governed by the Polytechnics Act (351/2003) and the Polytechnics Decree (352/2003).
>
> Continuing education centres at universities are usually separate institutes, with their own regulations.
>
> Universities, polytechnics and institutions providing liberal adult education have the freedom, within the framework of legislation, to autonomously decide how they organise adult education.

Finnish polytechnics are relative newcomers to the higher education scene. They began as experimental institutions in 1991 with the purpose "… to raise the standard of

higher vocational studies and to rationalise the structure of the education system" (Ministry of Education, Finland, 1996, p. 18 – in Aarrevaara et al, 2009). According to the Polytechnics Act, establishing the new polytechnics these institutes provide professional education, support professional development, conduct applied R&D which supports regional development, and offer adult education. The Polytechnics Act (2003/351) prescribes e.g. on the following: administration, steering and evaluation, language of instruction, degrees, student admission, teachers and other staff, funding.

The new Universities Act of 2009 will further extend the autonomy of universities by giving them an independent legal personality, either as public corporations or as foundations under private law. At the same time, the universities' management and decision-making system will be reformed. The new law replaced the Universities Act of 1997 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013b).

Labour market training
Labour market training is governed by the Public Employment Services Act which states that each registered job seeker is to have an individual job seeking plan within five months, outlining the person's competencies and possible additional training needs. The client is then referred to the type of education or training that is best suited to them.

3.3 The organization and governance of the continuing higher education system

3.3.1 Government layers

In Finland adult education is seen to comprise self-motivated studies, labour market training and in-service (staff) training. The responsibility for organising and funding adult education is divided. With regard to the role of central government, it is the parliament that passes laws concerning adult education and training and decides on appropriations for adult education and training within the framework of the State budget. The Government defines the general principles of educational planning and development .

The Ministry of Education and Culture has the overall responsibility for education policy and for self-motivated adult education. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for labour market training geared to enhance the operation of the labour market and to reduce unemployment. Labour market training is purchased by the employment authorities and financing is channelled through the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Different divisions of the Ministry of Education and Culture are responsible for adult education at the different levels of education, this

being the General Education Division, Vocational Education Division and Division for Higher Education and Science. The Department Office is responsible for the coordination of issues concerning adult education and training, as well as the development of lifelong learning. The division for Adult Education and Training of the Department for Education and Science Policy handles issues relating to adult education, liberal adult education and the promotion of educational policy based on the principle of lifelong learning. The following issues come under the scope of the Division for Adult Education and Training (Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012; the Finnish national board, 2012):

- Developing the conditions for national adult education policy and lifelong learning
- Vocational adult education and training, apprenticeship training and competence-based qualifications
- Adult education offered by higher education institutions and open learning

General adult education and national certificates of language proficiency

- Liberal adult education and educational and guidance organisations
- Guidance on adult education, counselling and the recognition of competence acquired in different ways
- Assessing the need for and provision of adult education as well as guidance (permission to provide education and performance steering)
- Coordinating training for teaching staff and immigrants
- Legislation, funding and economic planning for the sector
- The quality of the activities, evaluations and international cooperation

The Ministry is assisted by the Council of Lifelong Learning consisting of representatives from different interest groups, with expertise in the fields of education, the labour market and research. The Council considers issues relating to cooperation between education and working life as well as the conditions for lifelong learning and developing adult education. The Finnish National Board of Education, an expert body subordinate to the Ministry of Education, assists the Ministry in preparing decisions on education policy. The Ministry of Education and the Finnish National Board of Education regulate education leading to qualifications. The Ministry of Education confirms the qualifications structure including titles of qualifications. The Finnish National Board of Education is in turn responsible for drawing up national core curricula and guidelines for vocational qualifications. The Adult Education Council prepares reports on adult education and training and takes positions on issues concerning areas of interest and future policies.

The role of local government

Adult education organisations are owned by the State, local authorities, joint municipal boards, as well as private organisations, such as associations, foundations and companies. Local authorities maintain the majority of general upper secondary schools for adult students, adult education centres, vocational adult education centres and other vocational institutions.

3.3.2 Employers

The employers are responsible for staff training. The aims of this type of training relate to business economics and productivity. The organisation and support of adult education and training is done in manifold ways, exemplary by funding in-service training and organising company-specific training for personnel, maintaining specialised vocational institutions, and organising training for students and apprentices. Employers also support the training by financing part of their personnel´s self-motivated training by granting paid leave and by paying some training costs. One example of financing is training that is offered through joint purchase by the employer and the Government. In this case, the employment and economic development administration can participate in financing joint purchase training, if this will help secure availability of workforce, promote the employer's operating conditions, and contribute towards prolonging working lives, maintaining jobs and preventing unemployment. Participants receive either pay for the training period, or, on certain preconditions, training allowance and maintenance support for labour force training. However, staff training for which the employer is responsible, e.g. induction for a certain position, or the general brushing up of professional skills, is ineligible for financing as joint purchase training. (Ministry of Labour, 2012; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

Employers are able to deduct the costs of staff training in taxation. As a result of an accord reached by the Finnish labour and employer confederations, the Finnish government has announced its willingness to expand the deductibility of staff training and welfare costs in business taxation. A new arrangement (to be introduced by legislation in 2013) foresees that employers will also be compensated for payroll costs during the training. Under this new accord, companies would make the tax deduction for up to three days a year for each employee. The deduction would be made after formulating a staff skills development plan for the workplace, which could involve discussing educational needs collectively at the workplace or individually with each employee. Instead of a tax deduction, employers in the public and third sectors could be compensated in some other way. The labour protection authorities would be able to instruct employers to conduct appraisals of expertise if this has not been done at a workplace, and if necessary, punish employers with fines if these measures are not complied with (PLC, 2012).

'According to the new reformed Act on Cooperation within Undertakings agreed in 2006, and which came into force in July 2007, every company with more than 20 employees should prepare an annual personnel plan which includes training targets. This plan has to be discussed with worker representatives. In addition to the development of the enterprises' workforce, the plans should also describe the principles governing the use of different types of employment relationships. They should also contain an estimate of changes in the employees' vocational skill requirements and the reasons for these. Based on these factors, annual training targets are then prepared.

The implementation of the plan and targets must be monitored in co-operation with workers representatives. The scope and breadth of the personnel plan varies between larger and smaller companies' (Voss et. al., 2009: 39).

The role of social dialogue in continuous vocational training (CVT) and skills development

The role of the Finnish social partners in the system of continuing vocational training (CVT) is very important – so to the European Commission's Anticipedia (2012). The central labour market organisations have different roles as partners and supporters of adult education and training and the implementation of the national CVT guidelines and objectives at the enterprise level.

This is in particular in the implementation of the national CVT guidelines and objectives at the enterprise level. Co-operation between social partners and training authorities takes place between the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the social partners. The social partners also have representatives on the management board of the National Board of Education. In recent years the Ministry of Education has set up vocational training committees at the branch level in which the social partners, together with the authorities and representatives from universities, anticipate and monitor training needs. In the field of vocational adult education and training there are furthermore qualification committees, which are appointed by the Finnish National Board of Education and organised on a tripartite basis. Their tasks include supervising and steering the organisation of competency tests; confirming approved qualifications; and signing qualification certificates.

The social partners participate in a number of other working groups and committees which work on planning, controlling and monitoring training. The most important channels through which the social partners participate in planning CVT aims and priorities are the training committees, the Advisory Board for Educational Cooperation and the Adult Education Council set up by the Ministry of Education. There are also governing bodies and consultative committees in educational institutions. In 2004, the government established a tripartite Council for Labour and Training Affairs to consider labour and education policies and their major challenges and strategies. Central labour market organisations have high-level representatives in the council. The Act on Vocational Education regulates the cooperation of representatives of working life in the organisation of CVT (Eurofound, 2009).

Example of a policy measure: National Education and Training Committees

In 2007, National Education and Training Committees were set up, following the legislation issued in 2005 and 2006 defining the composition and tasks of the committees. There are altogether 34 National Education and Training Committees. They are required in vocational upper secondary and adult education as well as higher education. Their task is to follow, evaluate, anticipate and analyse the development of skills needed at the labour market; to make suggestions for the qualitative and quantitative development of training; to survey the core curricula and qualifications

requirements and give statements regarding issues in their sector. (CEDEFOP Referent Finland, 2010:32).

3.3.3 Providers

The new universities act (558/2009) has made universities independent legal personalities with strengthened management and increased institutional (procedural) autonomy. So the development responsibility lies with the universities, but the Ministry of Education and Culture is developing follow-up criteria in cooperation with the universities and will the take the results obtained into consideration when deciding on their financing. The objective of this structural development in Finland is to improve the quality of operations, the impact and international competitiveness of universities. As a result of the development activities the universities and universities of applied sciences should be fewer in number and their profiles clearer. In the year 2020 there will be a maximum of 15 universities with a minimum of 3000 students each and no more than 18 universities of applied sciences, most of them having a minimum of 2500 full time students. The objectives of the development work also include bigger structural entities and strategic regional alliances between universities and universities of applied sciences. Overlapping training provision is reduced and restructured to form purposeful and efficient units, and cooperation is increased to provide support services. E.g. cooperation between universities and universities of applied sciences is increased in further training. The higher education reform as a whole is assessed internationally in 2020 (Piensoho & Brofeldt, 2011).

3.4 Policy instruments

3.4.1 Greater diversity in provisions and modes of delivery

In Finland, efforts have been made to make the provision as flexible as possible in order to enable adults to study alongside work (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Adults can study for general education certificates and take the matriculation examination. In higher education, there are specific bachelor's degree paths: these have their own entrance quotas, and the education and training takes many different forms. Polytechnics arrange adult education and open education geared to maintain and upgrade competencies. The teaching arrangements in adult education are flexible and enable mature students to work alongside their studies. Polytechnics also award worklife-based master's degrees. Adults can study in separate adult education programmes offered by polytechnics. In universities there are no specific programmes for mature students, who study in the same groups with young people. At universities, adult students can benefit from conversion training, which makes it possible to attain a new higher education degree in a shorter period of time on the basis of an existing polytechnic or university degree (CIMO 2011:29; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013).

3.4.2 Qualification and quality assurance

Finnish higher education is controlled by the Ministry of Education, but the institutions have a high degree of institutional autonomy. In this context, the institutions are responsible for the quality of their activities. Education and training providers in Finland have a statutory duty to evaluate their own activities and participate in external evaluations. Evaluation is used to collect data in support of education policy decisions and as a background for information- and performance-based steering. Education is evaluated locally, regionally and nationally. Finland also takes part in international reviews.

Universities and polytechnics evaluate their own education, research and artistic provision and undertake impact analyses. They are assisted by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC). FINHEEC is an independent expert body assisting universities, polytechnics and the Ministry of Education and Culture in matters relating to evaluation. The Council is attached to the Ministry and also makes recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Culture concerning centres of excellence in education based on proposals submitted by the universities and polytechnics. Evaluation findings are used in the development of the education system and the core curricula and in practical teaching. They and international comparative data also provide a tool for monitoring the realisation of equality and equity in education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012; Eurypedia, 2013; FINHEEC, 2012).

System of competence-based qualifications

The matching of vocational education and training and the needs of working life has been improved by expanding on-the-job learning, but also by constantly reforming and developing initial and competence-based qualifications and through performance-based funding. In earlier years, adult education and the education for young people were developed separately, which was visible also in that they were separated as their own departments within the national education administration. Today, however, the vocational qualifications system is being developed as an entity. This is done in view of the competence needs of the world of work and individuals, so that qualifications comprise general vocational and sector-specific competencies. Thus the qualifications provide the field-specific vocational competence required by working life and broad vocational skills and competence for further studies (Cedefop 2011:19).

Finland has been developing competence-based qualifications since 1994. This system makes it possible to recognize the competencies of individuals regardless of how they have acquired them: at work, at school or in some other way. It is intended to enable working-age adults to gain qualifications without necessarily attending formal training. The criteria for each qualifications are determined in the Qualification Requirements. It is possible to take competence-based vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and special vocational qualifications or only parts of them through the competence test system, within which competence acquired through various ways is recognised and validated. The competence test is completed by

demonstrating competence required in the profession. Although taking part in competence tests does not require formal preparation, about 95% of candidates attend some training, in which they are provided with individual learning programmes. Upper secondary vocational education and training provides preparation for upper secondary vocational qualifications and additional vocational training prepares for further and specialist vocational qualifications (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012, the Finnish National Board of Education, 2012).

3.4.3 Measures regarding financial support for continuing higher education

With respect to the financial arrangements, education and training leading to qualifications is mostly financed by the national and local administration. University degree education is totally government-financed, while training leading to further and specialist qualifications is mostly publicly funded but may result in moderate fees. About half of liberal adult education costs are covered by the government and the rest mostly comes from student fees and from maintaining organisations. The labour administration also purchases a great deal of different training for unemployed people and for those at risk of unemployment. The purpose of State funding is to guarantee the largest possible provision without burdening students with high fees. Adult education and training receives about 12 per cent of the appropriations allocated in the State budget. Almost half of this funding is channelled to vocational training and one fifth to liberal education. Labour market training is purchased by the employment authorities and financing is channelled through the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Staff-development training is purchased by employers from adult education institutions and firms (GHK and RvB, 2010; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

Funding models

Universities and polytechnics use new funding models since 2012, and these are to emphasise the quality of teaching and research, and higher education's impact on society (Dobson, 2010).

In the funding of polytechnics the Government allocates resources in the form of core funding, which is based on unit costs per student, project funding and performance-based funding. For example completed degrees are part of performance-based funding. Polytechnics also have external sources of funding. Both in vocational training and in the funding of polytechnics the education providers are encouraged to improve their results through performance-based funding. The polytechnic reform recorded in the Government Programme started in 2011 with the aim of transferring their financing from local authorities to the government while altering the legal personality of the polytechnics. The purpose of this is to expedite the structural reform of polytechnics and to improve the quality and impact of their operation (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012).

Finnish universities are independent corporations under public law or foundations under private law. Each university and the Ministry of Education and Culture set operational and qualitative targets for the university and determine the resources required every three years. The agreement also defines how these targets are monitored and evaluated. Universities receive funding from the state but they are also expected to raise external funding (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2012; the Finnish National Board of Education, 2012).

Adult student support

In 2010, the financing for adult learners was made more flexible in 2010, so that financial support can be paid for part-time studies (CEDEFOP, 2011).

Financial support for mature students is provided by the Education Fund. The Education Fund is a fund administered by the social partners of the Finnish labour market. Its purpose is to support employees' vocational studies by granting them financial assistance (Adult Education Allowance) and to support the development of the vocational qualification system by granting scholarships for competence-based qualifications (Scholarship for Qualified Employee). The Fund also provides information and advice on benefits and makes proposals for the development of legislation within its field. The Education Fund is financed by the Unemployment Insurance Fund and the state, and its operations are supervised by the Financial Supervisory Authority (FIN-FSA). In 2011, the Education Fund paid out a total of EUR 78.7 million in benefits, of which adult education allowances accounted for EUR 70 million and scholarships for qualified employees for EUR 8.8 million. The Fund's expenses totalled EUR 80.5 million (The Education Fund, 2012).

- *Adult education allowance from the Education Fund*

Mature students are eligible for an adult education allowance from the Education Fund. The purpose of the adult education allowance is to support employees' and self-employed persons' voluntary vocational studies. To qualify for the allowance, the applicant must participate in studies leading to a degree, or in vocational further or continuation training organised by a Finnish educational institution under public supervision. The amount of the allowance is equal to the amount of the earnings-related unemployment allowance, without increases. The adult education allowance is taxable income.

The maximum allowance period is 18 months if the applicant has a working history of at least eight years. If the working history is less than eight years, but at least five years by 31 July 2010, the allowance period is determined on the basis of the applicant's working history and ranges from 2 to 3.5 months, depending on the length of the working history. Conditions to receive the allowance are that the applicant resides permanently in Finland, and his or her full-time employment relationship with the same employer or pension-insured entrepreneurship must have lasted for at least

one year. In addition, the applicant must have been employed by a Finnish employer or have worked as a self-employed person in Finland for at least eight years. The allowance can also be granted to an applicant who has a working history of less than eight years, if he or she has a working history of at least five years by 31 July 2010. The applicant must be on unpaid study leave of at least two months due to his or her studies. As from 1 August 2010, allowance can also be paid to an applicant whose periods of study leave last less than two months or who studies part-time on the basis of a study leave agreement made with the employer. The absence from work due to studies must last a total of at least 43 days. If the entire period of study leave is not unpaid or if the studying is part-time, the allowance shall be applied for in retrospect each calendar month. The amount of allowance paid will be affected by the income earned during the month. In 2011, allowance was granted to 11,104 students and the scholarship to 24,113 people (Kela, 2012a, 2012b; The education fund, 2012).

- *Student loan*

If the student receives adult education allowance for a consecutive period of at least 8 weeks, a government guarantee can be granted for any student loan the student may wish to take out. The terms of the loan guarantee are the same as in the regular student financial aid system (Kela, 2012a, 2012b).

- *Scholarships for qualified employees*

The scholarship for qualified employee is available for those who have passed the tests of competence based qualifications. The amount of the scholarship is EUR 365 and it is tax-free. The scholarship must be applied within a year after passing the tests. The scholarship is granted on condition that the person has at least five years of working history in Finland before he has passed the tests. It doesn't matter whether the applicant is unemployed, employed or on study leave. In 2009 the costs totalled EUR 8,3 million and the scholarship was granted to 23 660 persons. The scholarship is financed from the unemployment insurance contributions paid by the employers (2/3) and employees (1/3) (The Education Fund, 2012; GHK and RvB 2010).

As described in the report on higher education for adults by GHK and Research voor Beleid (GHK and RvB 2010), a study voucher system has been implemented in Finland since 2007 in the field of liberal adult education. The target groups of this system are immigrants, people with a poor educational background, the unemployed, people with learning problems, retired persons and elderly persons, as well as higher education students who have interrupted their university studies and study at Summer University. The voucher enables the providers of adult liberal education to reduce the student fees of these target groups and to enhance guidance.

Literature

Aarrevaara, T., Dobson, I.R., and Elander, C. (2009). Brave New World: Higher Education Reform in Finland. In: Higher Education Management and Policy. Volume 21/2. OECD.

Bohn, I. (2005). Finnland – von den Anf¨angen bis zur Gegenwart. Ingrid Bohn Pustet, Regensburg, 2005.

CEDEFOP Refernet Finland (2010). A bridge to the future. European policy for vocational education and training 2002−2010. National policy report – Finland. Helsinki: Finnish National Board of Education.

CEDEFOP Refernet Finland (2011). Finland. VET in Europe – Country Report 2010.

CIMO (2010). Finland in Focus – Towards 2020 in Vocational Education and Training. Leonardo da Vinci: Promoting cooperation and development. Avialable via: http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/18941_Finland_in_Focus_web.pdf

CIMO (2011). Lifelong Guidance in Finland. Availabe via: http://www.cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/25493_Lifelong_guidance_in_Finland.pdf

Dobson, I.R. (2010). FINLAND: Change the only constant in higher education. In: University World News, 27 June 2010 Issue No:130. Available via: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2010062518314670

Euridyce (2010) Structures of Education and Training Systems in Europe. Finland. 2009/2010 edition. Finland: Eurydice and CEDEFOP

Eurofound (2009). FINLAND: Collective bargaining and continuous vocational training. Statistics Finland. Available via: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0804048s/fi0804049q.htm

European Commission Anticipedia (2012). Restructuring in Finland and the role of the social partners. Available via: https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/anticipedia/xwiki/bin/view/Main/Restructuring+in+Finland+and+the+role+of+the+social+partners

Eurypedia (2013) The European encyclopedia on national education systems by Eurydice, European Commission. Subpage Finland, Quality Assurance. Available via: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Finland:Quality_Assurance

FINHEEC (2012) The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. http://www.finheec.fi/en

GHK and Research voor Beleid (2010) Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Finland. Carried out on behalf of the European Commission.

KELA (2012a). Adult education subsidy. Accessed via: http://www.kela.fi/in/internet/english.nsf/NET/081001143356IL?OpenDocument

KELA (2012b). Student Financial Aid. Available via http://www.kela.fi/in/internet/liite.nsf/NET/090109095723JP/$File/Optuinfo_engl.pdf?OpenElement

Ministry of Education and Culture (2012c). Education and Research 2011-2016. A development plan. Reports of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2012:3.

Ministry of Education (2008) Education and research 2007-2012. Ministry of Education publications 2008:11. Helsinki: Helsinki University Print Bookstore, Finland

Ministry of Education and Culture (2012b) The Education and Research Development Plan promotes equality. Available via: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2012/liitteet/Development_Plan.pdf

Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (2012, 2013) Available via: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/?lang=en

Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland (2013b) University reform in brief. Available via: http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Koulutus/artikkelit/Suomen_Akatemian_arviointi/Liitteet/Universities_Act_rationale_of_the_Gov_Proposal.pdf

Ministry of Labour in Finland (2012) http://www.mol.fi/mol/en/

OECD (2010), OECD Economic Surveys: Finland 2010, OECD Publishing.

OECD (2012), OECD Economic Surveys: Finland 2012, OECD Publishing.

Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) (2011): Adult education of educational institutions [e-publication]. ISSN=1799-4551. 2011. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 13.2.2013]. http://www.stat.fi/til/oaiop/2011/oaiop_2011_2012-12-14_tie_001_en.html

Official Statistics of Finland (OSF) (2013). Students and qualifications of educational institutions [e-publication]. ISSN=1798-7679. 2011. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 15.3.2013].

Access method: http://www.stat.fi/til/opiskt/2011/opiskt_2011_2012-01-26_tie_001_en.html.

Piensoho, T., and Brofeldt, T. (2011). The coordination of adult education in the Helsinki metroplotian area. Proceedings of the ICERI2011 Conference. 14-16 November 2011, Madrid, Spain.

PLC (2012) Employment and employee benefits in Finland: overview. Practical Law Company. Acces method: http://employment.practicallaw.com/6-503-3587?q=*&qp=&qo=&qe=

Statistics Finland (2012; 2013). Avialable via: http://www.stat.fi

The Education Fund (2012). http://www.koulutusrahasto.fi/en/theeducationfund/

The Finnish National Board of Education (2013). http://www.oph.fi/english

Välimaa, J. (2012). The Corporatization of National Universities in Finland. Bookchapter in: Pusser, B., Kempner, K., Marginson, S., and Ordorika, I. (eds.) (2012) Universities and the Public Sphere. Knowledge Creation and State Building in the Era of Globalization. International Studies in Higher Education. New York: Routledge.

Wikipedia (2013). Finland. Available via: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland

Zawacki-Richter, O., and Reith, A. (2009). Continuing Higher Education in Finland. Bookchapter in: Knust, M., and Hanft, A. (eds.). Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning. Springer Science and Business Media.

4 Continuing higher education in Sweden

4.1 Introduction

Adult education has deep roots in the Swedish educational system. The earliest types of adult learning go back to the 19th century when the first folk high school based on the Danish model was established. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of discussion societies and study circles as the result of the major popular adult movements such as the free Church- and labour movement. In the years to come, municipal and private initiatives made it possible to set up a considerable number of colleges of commerce, vocational schools and technical evening schools, hence allowing (young) adults to benefit from a wide range of learning opportunities. In the second half of the 20th century, two state schools for adults were set up (one in 1956, in Norrköping and six years later in Härnösand) to enable adults the pursuit of training activities that would entitle them to further studies.

In the time after the Second World War, the Swedish adult education system was reformed in way that it could better contribute to the development and progress of the Swedish economy. Trade unions were actively promoting greater learning opportunities for adults and were eager to make the pursuit of adult education also financially attractive. Nine-year compulsory education was introduced and upper secondary education expanded rapidly as was the case in many other European countries. During the 1960s, the gap between the younger and older generations widened and there was an increased level of skill shortage. In 1968, a major reform was launched according to which all municipalities were made responsible for providing adult education that was equivalent to compulsory education and theoretical and vocationally oriented programmes in the upper secondary school. The organisation of these programmes was financed with Government funding to pay teachers, school heads and career counsellors. During the 1970s, the focus of reform shifted more into the direction of re-distribution policy with a view to support socially disadvantaged groups. To facilitate access of these groups to adult learning opportunities, a number of social study reforms was implemented that amongst other things resulted in better financial support for those groups participating in the adult learning programmes.

The late 1980s and 1990s witnessed modifications in the division of responsibilities of the adult education system. De-regulation, de-centralisation, steering by goals and the "municipalisation" of the school system became buzz words of this particular period. The special earmarked state grant for municipal adult education became part of the general appropriation for municipal schools, and was later on incorporated into the Government's general grant to municipalities. It is furthermore worth noticing that municipal adult education received a common curriculum with the same syllabi and grading system as being used in upper secondary schools. In 1991, the dissolution of the National Board of Education by the Swedish Parliament ('Riksdag') had two major consequences. On the one hand, it resulted in the establishment of the National Agency of Education that assumed responsibility for the entire school system (hence also including municipal and adult education). On the other hand, the dissolution implied that responsibility was shared by a number of different agencies. In 1996, the Labour Market Board, a newly established agency

took care of labour market training; the folk high schools were called upon to set up a new non-commercial body, the Swedish Council of Adult Education that was given some official tasks.

In the beginning of the early 1990s, major changes in the economy such as new technology and new work organisations implied that both the employed and unemployed needed to make themselves familiar with new skills if they were to remain competitive. High levels of unemployment stipulated the organisation of specific courses for those that wished to re-integrate themselves into the workforce. The launch of the *Adult Education Initiative* must be seen in this light: Municipalities became in charge for its implementation with the explicit mandate of involving other educational organisers than those in their internal organisations. That is, municipal adult education could be organised by private organisers, but also by liberal adult education organisations such as folk high schools and study associations (Köpsén & Andersson, 2010, p. 20). Their efforts were supported by earmarked state grants for about 100,000 study places a year, mainly being targeted at upper secondary education, folk high schools created approximately 10,000 study places. The end of the Adult Education Initiative in 2002 resulted in a reduction of earmarked state subsidies for municipal adult education, but the principle of shared responsibility by the municipalities and other types of adult education providers remained the same. [73]

Prokou (2008, pp. 131-132) argues that the mid-2000s witnessed the construction of the adult learner as a self-governing and autonomous person. The responsibility of participating in lifelong learning trajectories was divided between the Swedish Government, the municipalities and the individuals, making latter co-creators of their own destiny. If individuals did not make use of lifelong learning opportunities, it would be their own fault, and hence not the failure of the nation state.

4.2 Context, provisions and participation

4.2.1 Context continuing higher education[74]

4.2.1.1 Population

Sweden is the fourth largest country[75] in Western Europe. In 2011, the population was just over 9.4156 million (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The country is sparsely opulated with only three habitants per km², but the distribution as such is not even: over 90% of all inhabitants live in the southern half of the country where also three major urban centres – Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö- are located. Swedish is the official language spoken, but the Language Act also gives official recognition to five minority languages, namely Finnish, all Sami dialects, Torne Valley Finnish, Romani and Yiddish.

[73] With the expiry of the *Adult Education Initiative*, municipalities do no longer receive earmarked subsidies for general adult education from the Government, but are nonetheless required by law to provide adult education at levels corresponding to compulsory schooling. See also (Andersson & Köpsén, 2010)
[74] All statistics presented in this section as well as corresponding explanations draw on Refernet Sweden (2011). In some tables, numbers have been updated.
[75] Size hereby refers to square miles.

Table 14: Total Population in Sweden (1st of January), 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011

	2003	2006	2009	2010	2011
EU-27	486647831	493226936	499723520 (p)	501105661 (p)	502 489.1
SE	8940788	9047752	9256347	9340682	9 415600

Source: Eurostat (LFS)
Notes: "p" = provisional

As is the case of many other European countries, Sweden faces a huge demographic challenge in the years to come. According to demographic projections, the number of older people will grow at a faster rate than the young population which increases the pressure on the government in terms of ensuring that a sufficient number of people enters the labour force at times that the older generation retires. The risk of skill shortages underscores the importance of developing life long learning opportunities that take account of labour market needs. Yet, demographic projections also indicate that Sweden is among those European countries with a lower old-age dependency ratio as the result of a relatively high rate of gross and net immigration. Although the inflow of young workers from with migration background eases the employment situation to a certain extent, the further development of labour market skills plays a crucial role if Sweden endeavours to remain competive in the forthcoming decades.

4.2.1.2 Economy and Labour Market Information

Ever since the economic crisis dating back to the early 1990s, Sweden's economy has steadily been growing and in recent years, the rise in the value of exports yielded grow rates that exceeded EU and OECD averages. The combination of a low inflation policy and a prudent fiscal policy, clear-sighted investments in human capital and the emergence of globally leading information and communication technology are among those reasons accounting for Sweden's economic success over the last fifteen years. The strong fiscal situation made it easier for Sweden to respond with fiscal stimulus in response to the economic crisis of 2008 and the renewed economic turbulence in 2011.

Sweden has lower unemployment rates among young people than do many other EU 27 states. Yet, the level of youth unemployment in Sweden is markedly higher than in countries with a more pronounced tracking such as Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands or Germany. Stenberg (2012, p.7) assumes that the emphasis on general skills could generate inefficiencies in the transition from education to work, as vocational schooling at upper secondary level assumes a preparatory nature. On a more positive note, he opines that this general skill level also implies a more flexible workforce in the longer run.

The Swedish Government has been ambitious to combat youth unemployment by means of embarking on a number of policy measures that included amongst other things a 50% reduction in employer premiums for those under the age of 26 and the earmarking of EU 600 million in state funding to fund the establishment of 55 000 vocational training spaces.

4.2.1.3 Level of Educational Attainment

In the early 1970s, about 60% of Sweden's population completed compulsory school (ISCED levels 1-2), 40% finished upper secondary education (ISCED levels 3-4) and less than 10 per cent graduated from higher education (ISCED 5-6). Ever since then, levels of educational attention have witnessed considerable growth, although Sweden still lags behind other leading countries such as Canada. In comparison to other member states of the European Union, Sweden is among those countries with the highest share of population with higher education. Labour market projections indicate that by 2030, demand for compulsory education will decrease at least half.

In comparison with other EU 27 states, Sweden features a lower percentage of young people in the 18-24 age cohort that completed only lower secondary education which must also be considered as a result of its commitment to lifelong learning (see Table 15).

Table 15: Early School Leavers (%), 2002-2009

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU-27	17.0	16.6	16.1	15.8	15.5	15.1	14.9	14.4
SE	10.0	9.2	9.2	10.8	12.4	11.4	11.1	10.7

Source: Eurostat

Table 16 indicates that about 86% of those aged between 20 and 24 have completed upper secondary school (the EU 27 average amounts to 78%). The Swedish Government is strongly committed to education and has various policy measures in place to keep participation at high levels.

Table 16: Youth Education Attainment Level by Sex (%), 2002, 2005, 2009.

	2002			2005			2009		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
EU-27	76.7	79.3	74.0	77.5	80.2	74.8	78.6	81.4	75.9
SE	86.7	88.3	85.2	87.5	88.7	86.4	86.4(p)	87.9(p)	84.9(p)

Source: Eurostat.

4.2.2 Provisions continuing higher education

In Sweden, lifelong learning is considered to be deeply embedded in the Swedish culture (Research Voor Beleid, 2011). Participation in adult education offers is facilitated by a sophisticated formal as well as informal adult education system that also includes labour market training schemes. Figure 8 provides an overview on the Swedish adult education system, starting from upper secondary level onwards:

Figure 8: The Swedish Education System from upper secondary school onwards. Available at http://www.infonet-ae.eu/en/adult-education-in-sweden-1126. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on December 10, 2012.

4.2.2.1 Formal Adult Education at the Basic- and Upper Secondary Level

The national adult education system consists of municipal adult education (so-called *Komvux* which offers basic and upper secondary education for adults), education for adults with learning disabilities and Swedish tuition for immigrants (known as sfi).

Municipal Adult Education (Komvux)

The municipally run public education system for adults dates back to 1968. The aim was to equip adults with skills that are equivalent to 9- year compulsory education (basic adult education) and upper secondary school education. Although there may be differences in terms of content, the curriculum and the goals of the national syllabuses for upper secondary adult education and upper secondary school for youths are the same. The high degree of commonality in regular upper secondary school, i.e. that a large share of each cohort participates in the same courses, implies that less adult education is required to switch from a profession where a vocational qualification is needed, to one where general skills are required (Stenberg, 2012, p.8). The ordinance on which *Komvux* is based envisages that the content of municipal education is tailored to individual needs. Educational activities must be designed in a way as to take into account the knowledge and skills that adult learners obtained in his/her working life. Representatives of the infrastructure developed by local authorities may join other actors and stakeholders such as employers to organise municipal

education. Basic adult education aspires to equip adults with the skills and knowledge needed to play a more active part in social- and working life. This implies that the municipalities must offer those courses which are normally part of compulsory education. Upper secondary adult education takes one step further and seeks to transmit the knowledge that pupils usually acquire at upper secondary level. Here, the goal is to train adults for new jobs for a new level in their existing occupations. Grades and certificates can be obtained at all levels of Komvux education; in certain instances, a leaving certificate can be asked for (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2007).

Municipal Education for Adults with Learning Disabilities (Särvux)
Särvux is targeted at adults with learning disabilities. The curriculum corresponds to the one used in upper secondary pupils with learning disabilities. Also here, the underlying idea is that any taught information takes account of an individual's prior training experience and knowledge. The programmes can therefore result in certain skills obtained in individual subjects, or those skills are transmitted in the first place that are equivalent to compulsory school or upper secondary vocational training for adults with learning disabilities (www.unesco.org).

Swedish Tuition for Immigrants (Sfi)
This type of adult learning seeks to teach immigrants knowledge about the Swedish language and society. There is an obligation for municipalities to offer sfi; the organisation of the introductory courses is however left to the municipalities themselves to decide on.

4.2.2.2 Formal Adult Education at the University Level

Formal adult education is also offered by **Higher Education Institutes** (HEI) of which most are owned by the State. The Swedish higher education system currently consists of more than 52 higher education institutions (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012). The majority of universities and university colleges have public ownership status, which means that they are subject to the same legislation and regulations as other public authorities in Sweden. A number of universities and university colleges are self- governing and independent. There are three private universities or colleges (Chalmers University of Technology, Stockholm School of Economics and University college of Jönköping) and several smaller private higher education institutions entitled to award specific first level degrees.

Higher education within all cycles has two strata of entry requirements: general and (additional) specific requirements. General eligibility to the first cycle is attained either by completing an upper-secondary school programme, completed adult education at upper secondary school level or having the potential to benefit from the education, by virtue of other education, practical experience or other circumstances. There is also the opportunity to participate in a Scholastic Aptitude Test which measures knowledge and skills and provides an indication of the ability to succeed in higher education. One third of the study places on a course should be given to students with that background.

Specific requirements vary according to the field of higher education and are in general expressed in terms of upper-secondary school qualifications in specific subjects. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available, there is a selection process.

Applicants are grouped into categories and then ranked on the basis of their qualifications. The highest-ranking candidates are admitted. (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012).

Award of Degrees

The institution organising a programme – whether it is accountable to the state or independent– is required to have degree-awarding powers in order to be able to award a specific regulated qualification. Universities may award first, second and third-cycle general qualifications. The public-sector university colleges have a general entitlement to award Higher Education Diplomas, Bachelor's degrees and 60-credit Master's degrees. Those with the entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications within one or more specified fields according to the new regulations that apply from 2010 are also entitled to award 120-credit Master's degrees in the field specified. However, the Higher Education Act envisages that each HEI has the right to apply to the Swedish Higher Education Authority[76] for entitlement to award 120-credit Master's degrees in one or more main fields of study. In other cases the Government or the Swedish Higher Education Authority decides on entitlement to award general qualifications. With respect to first and second-cycle professional qualifications and qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts in every cycle, both universities and university colleges need to apply to the Swedish Higher Education Authority for degree-awarding powers. In addition, university colleges have to apply to the Swedish Higher Education Authority for entitlement to award third-cycle qualifications. Independent education providers have to apply to the Government for degree-awarding powers. This is also the case for the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the National Defence College. The qualifications that may be awarded are listed in the National Qualifications Ordinance (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012).

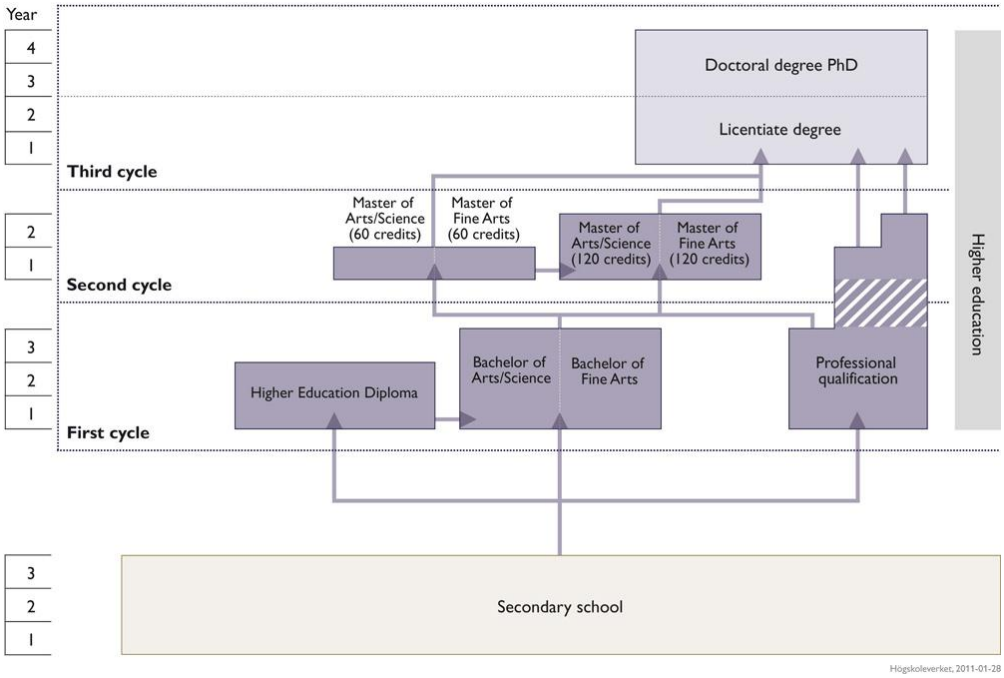
There are three categories of qualifications: (1) general qualifications, (2) qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts and (3) professional qualifications. Professional qualifications are awarded within the first and second cycles and mainly in the regulated professions on the basis of the appropriate requirements. Both general qualifications and qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts are assigned to the first, second or third cycle. Third-cycle qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts were introduced on 1 January 2010. Of the professional qualifications awarded in the second cycle, the Postgraduate Diplomas in Midwifery, Specialist Nursing, Psychotherapy, Special Needs Teaching and Special Educational Needs require a previous qualification. Other programmes that lead to the award of a professional qualification in the second cycle are undivided, i.e. are not split between the cycles.

The Swedish system differs from many others in this respect (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012).

[76] Until December 31 2012, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education decided on the entitlement to the award of third-cycle qualifications. On January 1 2013, the latter agency has ceased to exist as a public authority. Its operations has been transferred to two new public authorities: **the Swedish Higher Education Authority** (Universitetskanslersämbetet) and the S**wedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet)**. See also http://english.hsv.se/. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on February 12, 2013.

In addition to the programmes that lead to the award of qualifications, Swedish higher education offers a wide range of freestanding courses that are frequently offered in the form of distance-, respectively online learning. Students may select their own combinations of these courses. Given that these combinations meet the requirements laid down in the qualitative targets, a general qualification may be awarded.

Figure 9: The Swedish Qualification System.



Available at: http://www.hsv.se/highereducationinsweden/titlesofqualifications.4.28afa2dc11bdcdc557480002633.html#Overview. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on December 14, 2012.

4.2.2.3 Non–formal Adult Education

Adult education opportunities are by no means limited to the formal education sector. Sweden features a strong tradition in non-formal adult education which is also denoted as *folkbildning*. Speaking in general terms, there are two key systems of provision, namely the folk high schools and study associations. Although *folkbildning* is often translated to English as liberal or popular adult education, it should nevertheless be noted that the term is characterised by a specific conceptual foundation that goes beyond what is usually understood as 'adult education'. Folkbildning exists for everyone in society, but is particularly targeted at those adults with low levels of formal education. The policy surrounding liberal or non-formal education aims at establishing an open climate of discussion about democracy and encouraging participants to actively contribute to society. As is the case of formal education activities, non-formal education providers (unless they are private) receive funds from the Swedish Government; yet, they are free to shape their activities according to their own objectives (Ghk, 2011, p.4).

4.2.2.4 Higher Vocational Education

Higher vocational education**,** HVE, (Yrkeshögskolan) constitutes a type of post-secondary, non- tertiary school education and is designed to provide training to meet labour market demand for specialist know-how in various business sectors. The courses are developed in consultation with employees and are tailored to meet the manpower needs of the labour market and lead to jobs. The content and direction of the courses may vary over time depending on the needs of the labour market. HVE is from 2009 the successor to Advanced Vocational Education (Kvalificerad yrkesutbildning, KY) which is no longer offered. In 2010, over 43 000 students took up a higher vocational education programme, with total participation amounting to 138 000. The great interest in these programmes (on average, 3.8 applicants compete for one place) could be explained by the fact that eighty per cent of the students had a job or started their own business after completing their programme (Sweden, 2011). Higher Vocational Education participants represented about 10 per cent of the student cohort at tertiary level in 2011 (Statistics Sweden, 2012).
There is also a number of several smaller vocational education training forms for adults including programmes through supplementary education (*kompletterande utbildning*) and folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*). Finally, there are vocational training opportunities for adults through joint training boards at the sector level. These are apprenticeship-like programmes leading to certification in trades such as electrician, automotive mechanic, and plumber and are administered exclusively by the social partners (Cedefop, 2011, p.42).

4.3 The Legal and Policy Framework

4.3.1 Policy Framework

Sweden's lifelong learning strategy pursues the goal of fostering the country's reputation as a knowledge economy. Equal access to education plays a crucial role in this respect, because only then, people can make a vital contribution to society. Priority should be given to those who have the lowest level of education. The Government considers the individual to be responsible for his/her own learning process and institutions should be set up in a way as to support this process at different stages of life. The strategy plan on adult education furthermore envisages that the public education system should be free of charge for all Swedish citizens, that skills must be acknowledged through valorisation of prior knowledge and education should have the same value regardless of the place where it is provided (Ghk, 2011).

The establishment of forms for cooperation between different political spheres of activity is a necessary prerequisite for the development of a support infrastructure for adult learning and lifelong learning in general. According to the Ministry of Education and Research, the public sector can assist these endeavours by means of offering labour market training. The Government Bill on Adult Learning of 2001 therefore presented a strategy for central and government –financed support for adult learning being tailored to the learning requirements of the individual. Education activities range from guidance, outreach activities, validation or prior knowledge and accessibility to financial study support.

4.3.2 Legal and regulatory framework

The public higher education institutions in Sweden are formally government agencies under the jurisdiction of the government and parliament (Riksdag). They are therefore subject to general rules and regulations that apply to all governmental agencies, but there is also a special regulatory framework for higher education, laid down in the 1993 Higher Education Act and Higher Education Ordinance. The private higher education institutions are only bound by the first chapter of the Higher Education Act, and there are separate laws and regulations for the private institutions. Private institutions have to comply with general quality requirements to retain the entitlement to award degrees and to receive public funding for courses and programmes (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012).

With respect to vocational higher education, the official creation of higher vocational education institutions goes back to a bill being presented to the Riksdag in 2009. Vocational higher education brings together post-upper secondary school vocational programmes which are not part of the higher education system, including advanced vocational education. The Agency for Higher Vocational Education effectively gathers all publicly-financed post-secondary VET in the country under one administrative structure which is expected to result in more consistent funding mechanisms and norms for post-secondary vocational education training (Cedefop, 2011).

4.4 The Organisation and Governance of the Continuing Higher Education System

The **Swedish National Agency for Education** (*Statens skolverk*) is the central administrative authority for the school system and its responsibilities include national monitoring and evaluation of all school activities as well as central development work. The **Swedish School Inspectorate (***Statens skolinspektion*) is the authority in charge of supervising the quality of the school system.

The **Swedish National Council for Adult Education (***Folkbildingsrådet***)** takes care of the distribution of state grants and furthermore develops and monitors activities within liberal adult education. The Government determines for what purpose the government grants shall be used while objectives and regulations are set independently by the liberal education providers. Yet, the Government remains involved in these activities by means of reviews and assessments carried out by the national inspectorate agency (Ghk, 2011, p.8).

The **Swedish Adult Education Association** (*Folkbildningsförbundet*) is an umbrella organisation for all study associations in Sweden. Its work is targeted at enhancing the status of study associations and improve the conditions in which they operate. They are also a negotiation body for the study associations and enter into joint agreements with them (Ghk, 2011, p.4).

The **Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education** (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) has been set up and is responsible for the new system of post-secondary vocational education and training outside the university sector. The agency superseded the Agency for Advanced Vocational Education and also became in charge of two smaller VET

forms for adults – supplementary education (*kompletterande utbildning*) and post-secondary training (*påbyggnadsutbildning*) – from the National Agency for Education, which retains national responsibility for IVET for adults through municipal adult upper secondary education (CEDEFOP- VET). Business actors from all occupational fields participate in the development of the courses on offer.

From 1 January 2013, the **Swedish National Agency for Higher Education**, the body responsible for evaluating subject areas (main fields of study) and study programmes as well as granting degree awarding powers, has ceased to exist as a public authority. Its responsibility to evaluate the quality in higher education and other responsibilities have been taken over by the new agency the **Swedish Higher Education Authority** (*Universitetskanslersämbetet*).

4.4.1 Providers

Vocational higher education programmes and courses may be organised by state-owned universities or university colleges, municipalities, county councils and private natural or legal persons. Education programmes and courses are to be characterised by a strong link to workplaces and a grounding in theory. In addition, programmes and courses are to be developed and organised in cooperation with working life and education providers. After applying to the Agency, a provider may apply for central government grants or special funds for the programme.[77]

The educational offer is organised as follows. The providers of higher vocational education training apply to join the National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. The agency assesses the application on the basis of a number of quality criteria, whereas specific attention is being paid to the question whether the competence being generated suits labour market needs. Before the official start of the course, employers are asked to defined needs and assist the organiser in shaping the educational curriculum.[78]

A programme normally has several periods of work placements that aim at increasing the students' knowledge and experience through mentorship. Students will also gain practical experience and have the opportunity to apply new knowledge gained during studies to real life situations. The work placement enables students to familiarise themselves with their future professional role during studies and offers an opportunity to combine theory with practice. Besides, the employer has the opportunity to get to know a potential future employee (Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, 2012).

4.4.2 Employers

Employers and industry representatives play a crucial role in the planning of higher vocational education programmes. Employers and industry contribute to and influence the programme content by taking part as lecturers, joining in projects, welcoming study visits and by offering work placements.

[77] See http://www.government.se/sb/d/6997/a/198495. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on November 30, 2012.
[78] See also http://www.kormany.hu/download/3/df/30000/Enochsson's_presentation.pdf. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on November 30, 2012.

A considerable part of labour market training is organised by private educational providers and by **Lernia**, a state-owned company that offers amongst other adult education with a vocational focus, job coaching services and a variety of integration services geared towards immigrants (www.lernia.se). Educational opportunities are furthermore provided by upper secondary schools, municipal adult education, popular adult education, and university colleges.

4.5 Policy Instruments

4.5.1 Greater Diversity in Provisions and Modes of Delivery

4.5.1.1 Professional Development Courses

Some Higher Education Institutions have special units for continuing education (such as an office of lifelong learning, commissioned education or professional services). For example, Lund University Commissioned Education offers special educational programmes, ranging from one-week short courses to year-long masters programmes in different fields. Moreover it organises one-day seminars as well as a wide range of web-based courses (more than 250 courses in English annually). As another example, a key element in Karlstad University's strategic plan envisages the provision of lifelong opportunities to employees of companies and governmental organisations. To this end, the Latter university established *Karlstad University Professional Services,* a kind of transfer office that should facilitate the interaction between the university and society.

4.5.1.2 Guidance & Counselling Services[79]

Guidance and counselling services are targeted at those in education and training as well as at those looking for employment opportunities. There are a wide range of targeted measures for at risks groups including immigrants and those that experience learning problems. As was mentioned above, lifelong learning is strongly supported through guidance and counselling via municipal adult education and through liberal adult education including folk high schools and thousands of study circles. Guidance and counselling is also offered in the workplace, in cooperation with trade unions, to try and reach those who did not attend, or complete, upper secondary school and/or have had negative experiences at school. Some employers also offer career counselling as part of in-company training and/or personal development.

The website www.utbildningsinfo.se is an online tool to provide guidance- and counselling services. **Euroguidance Sweden** (the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance) offers information and documentation for counsellors who require information on studying and training opportunities in Europe. Besides, there is information in shops and special market stalls in municipalities, which complement initiatives such as 'open houses' at the different training centres. In certain municipalities, brochures with education and career information have been distributed to all households.

[79] The information presented in this section draws heavily on Cedefop. (2011) 'Vocational education and training in Sweden'. Available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/Files/5198_EN.PDF.

The **Public Employment Service** (*Arbetsförmedlingen*) provides services such as the job bank, job-seeker bank, temporary worker bank, image and artist bank, information on occupations and training programmes. It also offers more general information about the labour market, forecasts and analyses of current labour market dynamics. Career counselling for adults is mainly delivered via municipal adult education and the Public Employment Service, but also through liberal adult education. According to the new Education Act (2010:800), each municipality must try to reach all who have the right to basic adult education and motivate them to participate. Several initiatives have been developed to reach groups traditionally without access to education and career counselling, such as adults outside the school system.

The Public Employment Service also offers an online education and career guidance portal which is called the occupation compass (*Yrkeskompassen*). This portal provides information on approximately 200 occupations in Sweden and employment prospects by occupation over the next year as well as five- and 10-year periods. The one-year occupational forecast is available for the national and regional levels while the five- and ten-year forecasts are only at the national level. Last but not least, from December 1, 2010 the Public Employment Service coordinates a new initiative targeted to recent immigrants (establishment support -- *etableringsstöd*) offering a wide range of information, guidance and counselling, assessment, validation, coaching and employment introduction services for recent immigrants. This strong support package can be utilised by recent immigrants over a period of up to 24 months.

4.5.1.3 Commonality in Degree Structures

Commonality in curricula structures at the upper secondary level enhances flexibility in that adults may switch between professions at relatively low costs. Evening classes allow adult learners to combine study with work. Flexibility in terms of entrance also accounts for higher education, given that for example scholastic aptitude tests can be taken at any age so that higher education is not restricted to the younger generations (Stenberg, 2012, p.21).

4.5.1.4 Distance/ Online Learning

With respect to higher education, the same universities and university colleges that organise campus-based education also offer e-learning courses and programmes. This system is commonly called the dual mode (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2008). The Swedish Net University (SNU) was a joint project among universities and university colleges on ICT-aided distance learning. Programmes and courses were presented on a joint web portal. The net university was a Government initiative with special grants launched in 2002 and coordinated by the Swedish Net University Agency. The agency supported the net university in collaboration with universities and university colleges to promote the development and use of ICT-aided distance learning programmes. In 2006 the agency changed name to Swedish Agency for Networks and Cooperation in Higher Education (Myndigheten för nätverk och samarbete inom högre utbildning, NSHU) and got accountable also for widening participation and educational development. This special governmental initiatives were closed down by the end of 2008.

Over the course of the Net University Initiative, thousands of web-based courses were made available and could be applied for in a short period of time. This website is now working through the address www.studera.nu, as NSHU was closed down. The discussion is currently very focused on the development of web-based courses, blended learning and widening participation. Although still in use, the video-conferencing technique has diminished (Kristinsdóttir, Jóhannesdóttir, Þórsteinsdóttir, et al., 2009).

In Sweden, the on-line network of distance education is supported by learning centres set up by the local municipalities. In 2009, there were about 200 well-equipped learning centres that organise academic, vocational and pre-academic courses and education. The learning centres that are financed by the municipalities are responsible for investigating and charting the needs for education and competence development in the local and regional labour market as well as those of individual citizens. The demands and needs are discussed in meetings, and a specially developed questionnaire can be used by the counsellors. Together with different organisations like universities, labour exchange offices, companies, libraries and educators, the learning centres attempt to address the local and regional needs of education and competence development. In particular, their focus is on:

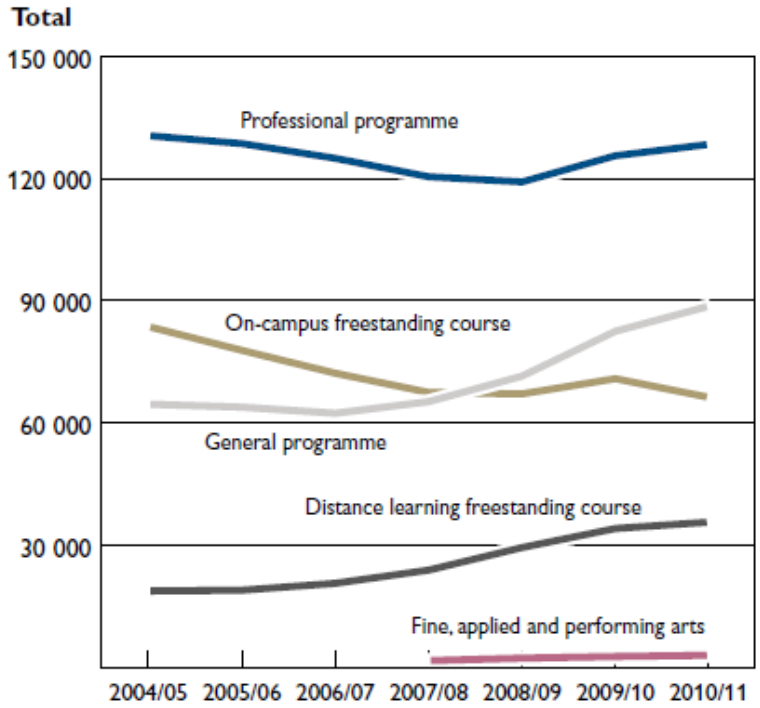
- Blended learning and education (demand and supply)
- Investments in development
- Experience based cooperation with social partners, industry and the business world
- Coordination of operators, resources and activities.

From time to time, universities give courses and programmes operated entirely from one learning centre if there is a sufficient number of students to be taught. The most common form of distributed education is where many learning centres take part in the same course and have students who attend the same course. Every municipality hosts at least one learning centre. The bigger learning centres are well equipped and work very well in their role as a meeting place, broker of education and motor for regional development (Kristinsdóttir, Jóhannesdóttir, Þórsteinsdóttir, Jóelsdóttir, Hultman, Rennie & Downer, 2009, p.37).

In 2012, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education reported that an increasing number of students participates in higher education distance courses. In the autumn semester of 2011 there were 86,400 students participating in courses of this kind. Of these, 67,500 were taking distance courses only and 18,900 were combining on-campus courses with distance courses. The number of students taking distance courses has risen more than the number studying on-campus, which has increased the proportion of the student population taking distance courses. In the autumn semester of 2011 students taking distance courses only represented almost one-fifth of the total number in higher education. The majority of those taking distance courses are women. This applies both to those taking only distance courses (69 per cent women in the autumn semester of 2011) and those combining distance courses with on-campus study (61 per cent women). Students taking distance courses also differ from those studying on campus in terms of age. A larger proportion of students on distance courses belong to the higher age groups. Most of the students taking only distance

courses are also part-time students (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2012, p.29).

Figure 10: Total numbers of FTEs registered in programmes leading to the award of professional qualifications, general qualifications and qualifications in the fine, applied and performing arts, as well as on-campus or distance free-standing courses



Source: Swedish National Agency foe Higher Education (2012). Swedish Universities and Colleges. Short Version of Annual Report, p. 29.

4.5.1.5 Flexible Working Schemes

The pursuit of adult education is furthermore facilitated by flexible working schemes. Parental leave schemes allow for re-arranging working time; parents are entitled to it until their child turns eight years old. However, the absence from work for study purposes is by no means restricted to parental leave. Since 1974, employees face the option to take a break for sake of participating in adult education activities. Although legislation does not envisage any compensation for loss of income, financial support schemes ensure that adults can make active use of their entitlement to leave of absence (Anxo, 2009, p.59).

4.5.2 Qualification and quality assurance

4.5.2.1 Quality Assurance with respect to Higher Education

Since 2001, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) has conducted evaluations of all subject areas (main fields of study) and study programmes at higher education institutions (HEIs) leading to degrees in the arts, sciences, social sciences and artistic fields as well as vocational and professional qualifications. These evaluations

take place on a cyclical basis and on all three levels: first cycle (undergraduate), second cycle (Master's) and third cycle (doctoral).

A new quality assurance system was implemented in January 2011. In *Focus on knowledge — quality in higher education (Government Bill 2009/10:139)*, the Government suggested changing the direction of the national quality assurance system for higher education institutions to meet the new demands that are based on the goals of greater freedom, internationalisation and high quality. A quality assurance system was to be put in place that encouraged high standards regarding learning outcomes of study programmes. The Government furthermore announced that universities and higher education institutions that have study programmes of high quality would be rewarded through increased appropriations.[80]

In 2012, the Swedish System for Quality Assurance became subject to heavy criticism when it was found to have failed to meet European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) regulations by an ENQA review panel. According to the panel's judgement, Sweden's quality assurance system was at odds with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, because it largely ignored institutional arrangements for internal quality assurance (Myklebust, 2012b).

In response to ENQA's judgement, the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Education Peter Honeth announced that a new body, the Swedish Higher Education Authority, would reform the current quality assurance system so that within two years it would comply with ENQA regulations (Myklebust, 2012a).

4.5.2.2 Quality Assurance with respect to Higher Vocational Education

The **Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education** is responsible for guaranteeing that higher vocational education programmes match actual needs for qualified labour in working life or contribute to the development or maintenance of advanced vocational expertise in certain narrowly defined occupational fields. To this end, the Agency collects and analyses information about the skills required by the labour market in different industries and regions and then uses this information as a basis for assessing which programmes will be included in higher vocational education. The Agency also keeps track of students' entry into the labour market and provides statistics on the proportion of students in work, and the accuracy of programmes, i.e. whether students have obtained work in the field for which the programme is intended (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2011).

4.5.2.3 Quality Assurance with respect to Online/ Distance Learning

The same fundamental quality requirements applies to e-learning as to campus-based higher education. However, there is also consensus that there are significant differences between e-learning and campus-based education. To address these differences, adjustments in the

[80] For more information, see: http://www.hsv.se/qualityassurance/subjectareasandstudyprogrammes.4.28afa2dc11bdcdc557480001508.html

methods of evaluating higher education are required, given that traditional quality criteria and evaluation methods do not identify and assess new aspects of higher education that are introduced by e-learning (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2008, pp. 11-12).

4.5.3 Measures regarding financial support for continuing higher education

Vocational education has played an important role in times of lower labour market demand. Between 2009 and 2011, the Government has made major investments in higher vocational education and training with a view to meet the demand for qualified labour when the economy recovers. During the above indicated period, the Government provided extra funding of more than SEK 1 billion which corresponds to nearly 12 000 FTE places (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2011).[81]

In light of Sweden's political tradition, the majority of continued higher education offers is publicly funded. Students making use of higher vocational education opportunities are entitled to study support regardless of the study programme in which they are enrolled. Study support can be provided for full- or part-time studies; if students work alongside their studies, they may earn a limited amount without having their study support being reduced. Study support usually is a combination of a study loan and a grant being given for the period of study (usually 40 weeks per academic year). 54 years is the upper age limit for students to receive financial aid.

The sum paid as a study grant is equal for all and is adjusted annually according to the general development of prices in society. The study grant constitutes approximately one-third of the total amount of study support and is tax-free and pensionable. Students with children are entitled to an additional grant. More than two-thirds of all students choose to take a study loan which makes out about two-thirds of the total amount of study support. Some students receive further supplementary loans and loans for additional costs in connection with their studies. Repayment of study loans starts at the beginning of the year following the completion of studies and normally continues for 25 years. Interest is immediately added to the debt. The interest rate is advantageous in comparison to other interest on loans and takes account of deduction rules in the tax system. The repayment system furthermore contains safety clauses so that an individual's ability to pay can be taken into consideration.[82]

Notable in the context of financial assistance for continued education offers is also the policy initiative Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs). During the period 1997-2002, the Swedish Government developed a system for ILAS which formed part of the Country's lifelong learning strategy. The initial idea in was to open a bank account where money for education and training purposes could be saved and deposited (Cedefop, 2009, p.11). Government funding of the accounts was to be based on the income tax system, not as a direct payment into the account as in Great Britain where ILAS were also being developed (Ljunggren-

[81] Policy measures are not only targeted at increasing access to vocational higher education: during 2010-2011, the Government invested nearly 1 bill SEK/year in increasing the number of study places by 10 000 at higher education institutions.

[82] See Also http://www.government.se/sb/d/2098/a/69849. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on November 30, 2012.

Lönneberg et al., 2003, cited in Cedefop, 2009, p.12). Payments into the account could then be deducted from taxation up to an amount of SEK 37 700 (EUR 4 100 in 2001). To encourage employers to contribute to the accounts, they too would have been able to deduct the deposits from their tax. They would also have received a 10 % reduction in the income tax that would normally be payable (Cedefop, 2009, p.12).

In the end, however, the idea of Individual Learning Accounts was never translated into practice, which is amongst other things due to the heavy opposition by labour organisations and trade associations. Labour organisations argued that the system would put high-income earners at an advantage, while low-income earners would be reluctant to save any money. The employers' confederation, criticised the model, but for other reasons than the labour organisation. They contended that without asking employers for their active involvement, the savings could easily be misused or invested in purely recreational activities. Experiences from the United Kingdom showed that this could indeed be a considerable problem (Ericson, 2005, p.15).

4.5.4 Effects of Policy Instruments

Broek & Hake (2012, p.142) contend that the Swedish adult education system has three major strengths. To begin with, the flexible organisation of latter system as highlighted by a modular basis of programmes makes it easy to enter, exit and re-enter higher education. Secondly, the embeddedness of adult education in the Swedish society implies that many people make use of educational opportunities being tailored to adult learners. The low threshold for entrance makes the provision of formal adult education accessible to both adults and employers who are interested in improving the knowledge and skill level of their staff members. Thirdly, an excellent support infrastructure (e.g. childcare provision, grants for students younger than 54, and legal possibilities for unpaid leave without job loss) implies that the pursuit of adult education constitutes an attractive option for both the employed as well as the unemployed.

References

Andersson, P. and Köpsén, S. (2010) 'BAEA: Becoming Adult Educators in the European Area'. Available at: http://www.dpu.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/eubecomingadulteducators/publications/om-dpu_institutter_institut-for-didaktik_20100903100535_baea-handbook-final_electro.pdf.

Anxo, D. (2009) 'Working time policy in Sweden'. Available at: http://web.jil.go.jp/english/reports/documents/jilpt-reports/no.7_anxo.pdf.

Broek, S. and Hake, B. J. (2012). 'Increasing participation of adults in higher education: factors for successful policies', *International Journal of Lifelong Education Increasing participation of adults in higher education: factors for successful policies*, 397-417.

Cedefop. (2009) 'Individual learning Accounts'. Available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5192_en.pdf.

Cedefop. (2011) 'Vocational education and training in Sweden'. Available at: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/Files/5198_EN.PDF.

Ericson, T. (2005). Trends in the pattern of lifelong learning in Sweden: towards a decentralized economy. Paper presented at the Céreq, Marseille.

Ghk. (2011) 'Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Sweden'. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/sweden_en.pdf.

Kristinsdóttir, S., Jóhannesdóttir, S., Þórsteinsdóttir, G. R., et al. (2009) 'Net University, Transfer of Innovation In Continuing University Education- Best Practice Report 2009'. Available at: http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/5095/project_5095_en.pdf.
Myklebust, J. P. (2012a) 'Row over ministry meddling and quality assurance blow '. Available at: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120928130847663.
Myklebust, J. P. (2012b) 'Sweden: Quality assurance regime fails to meet European standards'. Available at: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120503164105608.
Prokou, E. (2008). 'A Comparative Approach to Lifelong Learning Policies in Europe: the cases of the UK, Sweden and Greece', *European Journal of Education A Comparative Approach to Lifelong Learning Policies in Europe: the cases of the UK, Sweden and Greece*, 123-140.
Research Voor Beleid. (2011) 'Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Sweden'. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/adult/doc/sweden_en.pdf.
Statistics Sweden. (2012) 'Yearbook of Educational Statistics 2013'. Available at: http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/UF0524_2012A01_BR_00_UF01BR1201.pdf.
Stenberg, A. (2012) 'Access to Education Over the Working Life in Sweden'. Available at: http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/download/Stenberg.pdf.
Sweden, M. O. E. a. R. (2011) 'Sweden´s 2011 Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training'. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/natreport11/sweden_en.pdf.
Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. (2007) 'Adult Education in Sweden- Factsheet'. Available at: http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/08/00/78/8c84638d.pdf.
Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. (2011) 'Sweden´s 2011 Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training'. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/natreport11/sweden_en.pdf.
Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. (2008) 'E-learning quality: aspects and criteria for evaluation of e-learning in higher education'. Available at: http://www.eadtu.nl/e-xcellencelabel/files/0811R.pdf.
Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. (2012) 'Swedish Universities & University Colleges. Short Version of Annual Report 2012'. Available at: http://www.hsv.se/download/18.485f1ec213870b672a680003285/1218R-swedish-universities-annual-report-2012.pdf.
Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. (2012) 'Factsheet on Higher Vocational Education'. Available at: www.yhmyndigheten.se.

5 Continuing higher education in the United Kingdom

5.1 Context, provisions and participation

5.1.1 Context continuing higher education

5.1.1.1 Historical context

There is a long tradition of adult education in the UK. A well-documented description was provided by GHK in cooperation with Research voor Beleid.(GHK, 2011) In the following some of the most relevant highlights of that description are listed.

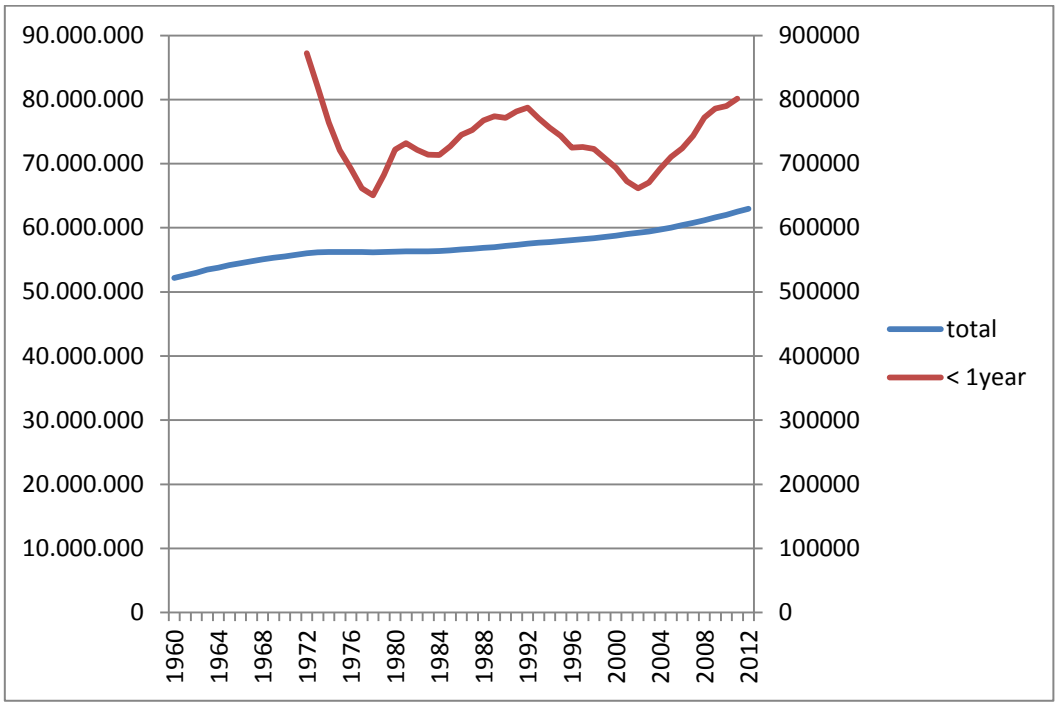
- Adult education dates back to the 17th century, with the oldest current actor is the WEA and local authorities.
- Until 2001 Local authorities decided the public spending on adult education services. In 2001 the Learning and Skills Council incorporated the AE budget in England.
- The role of universities was mainly to provide Liberal Adult Education. In the early 20th century, political and social change movements started to influence the adult education provision. At the end of the 1980s, learning for learning sake was challenged by the rise of credit bearing provision and the provision of AE as a mechanism to enhance access (for non-traditional/underprivileged groups) to degree oriented provision. That type of AE was already more common in the polytechnic sector and in the Further Education sector. Widening participation (as a policy mantra that is still part of current higher education policy) became more important in the activities of universities, although these activities were not (anymore) limited to adult education
- In 2008 government in England withdrew funding for students who are studying for a qualification that is at an equal level to a qualification that they already have. That funding was redirected to support those who wish to enter higher education for the first time. This has led to the disappearance of the provision of traditional AE services (the non-vocational or leisure form).

In Arthur (2011) an interesting context was discussed. In the UK there has been a relatively lose connection between the bachelor programs and the demand for specific skills from the labour market. The role of continuing education as a way to provide such skills was more pronounced than in the continental higher education systems, with their tradition of long first degrees.

5.1.1.2 General context

Population in the UK has grown at a steady pace to nearly 63 million in 2012. In the early 1990s growth slowed down, due to a drop in the number of newly born. In the early 2000s, growth picked up again. This fluctuation implies that the number of 18 years olds (the traditional age group when looking at entry into higher education) will decrease in the very near future with a low around 2020, after which year the size of the traditional entry cohort will grow again.

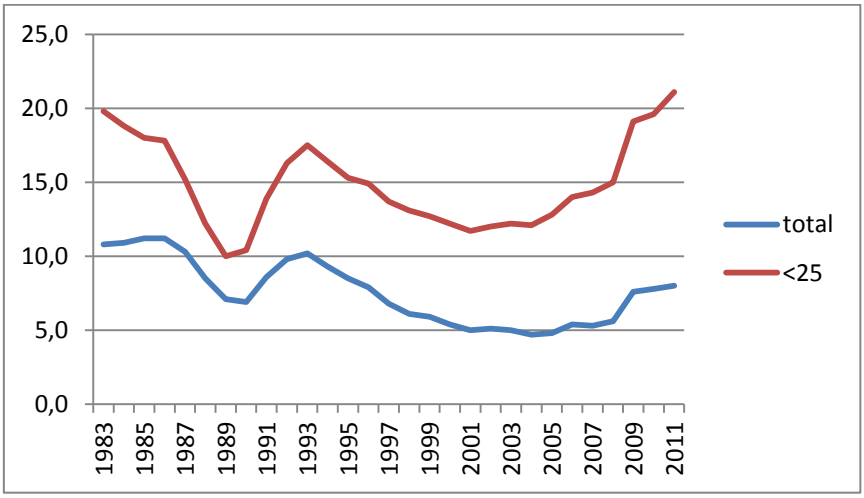
Figure 11: Population in UK



Source: Eurostat

The economic situation in terms of unemployment rates has deteriorated the last decade. Growth of unemployment among youth has been significantly above average.

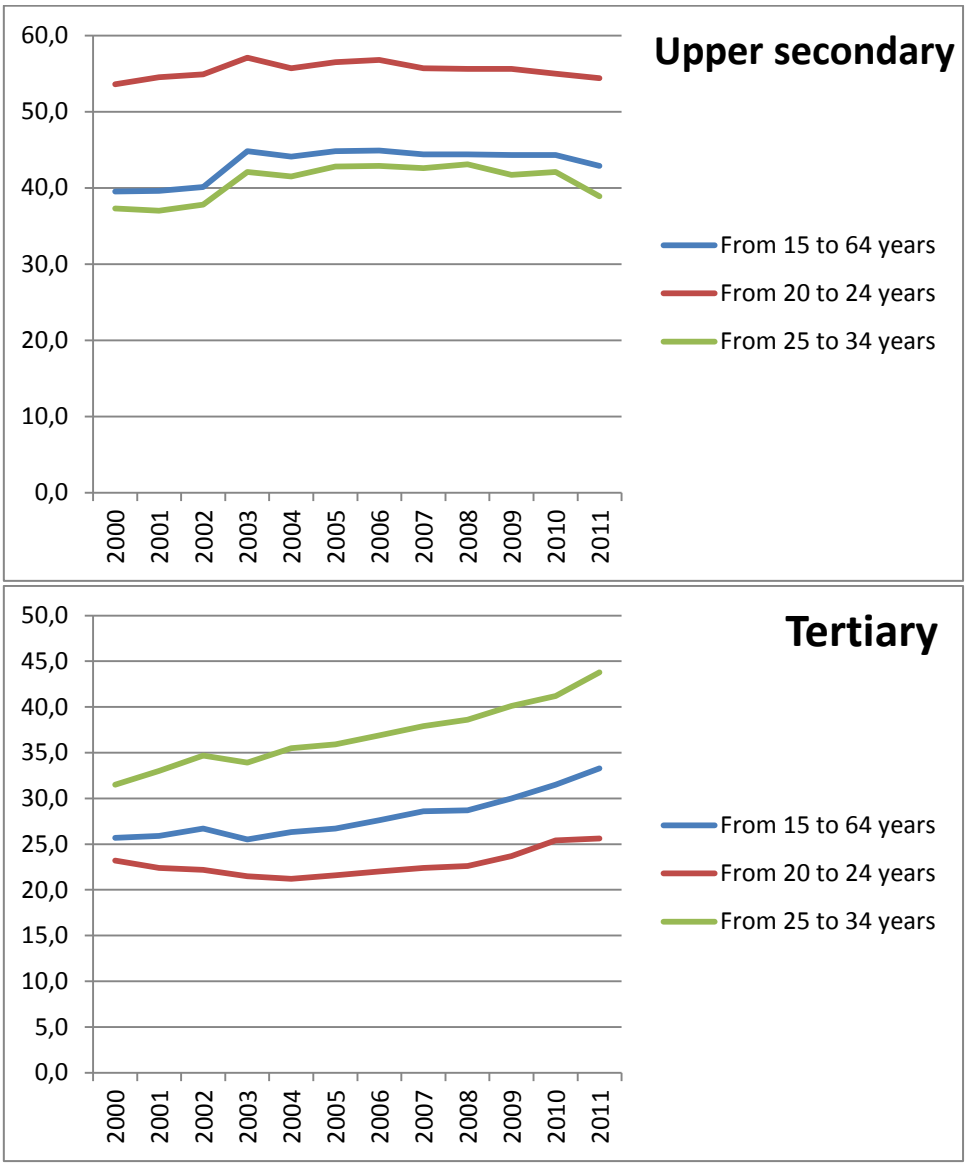
Figure 12: Unemployment rate by age, UK



Source: Eurostat

Educational attainment (the highest degree level obtained) has grown. The percentage of the population with upper secondary education has remained stable over the last decade, whereas the percentage of population with tertiary education is growing. Not surprising, growth has been strongest in the age group that has graduates during the previous decade (25-34 years olds).

Figure 13: Educational attainment by age group, UK



Source: Eurostat

Most of the higher education graduates end up in a paid job (around 80%). If we look into the different levels of qualification we can see that the percentage of unemployed is slightly higher among 'other undergraduates' (holding a short degree) and that first degree holders more often continue with full time study.

Table 17: Destinations of leavers by level of qualification and activity, 2006/7

	post graduate	first degree	other ug	all levels
Full-time paid work only (including self-employed)	**73,6%**	**72,4%**	**65,9%**	**72,2%**
Part-time paid work only	**9,0%**	**6,7%**	**13,9%**	**7,9%**
Voluntary/unpaid work only	**0,5%**	**0,5%**	**0,4%**	**0,5%**
Employed mode unknown	**0,1%**	**0,2%**	**0,2%**	**0,2%**
Work and further study	**5,2%**	**5,4%**	**6,0%**	**5,3%**
Further study only	**5,1%**	**7,9%**	**4,3%**	**6,8%**
Creating a portfolio(#1)	**0,3%**	**0,4%**	**0,4%**	**0,4%**
Assumed to be unemployed	**2,6%**	**3,9%**	**4,5%**	**3,6%**
Not available for employment	**3,5%**	**2,5%**	**4,1%**	**3,0%**
Other	**0,2%**	**0,2%**	**0,3%**	**0,2%**

Source: HESA

5.1.2 Provision of continuing higher education

In the discussions regarding Continuing higher education the focus is very much on formal education. Non-formal or informal learning is addressed in some documents (especially in the context of the recognition of competencies acquired outside higher education and in the policies regarding Community Learning), but even there the focus is on the translation of those skills into a regulated formalised degree.

Continuing education has a long history in England and the UK. Because of that, there is a wide range of modes of delivering higher education. The following description addresses the main types of provision.

Traditional modes: The 'traditional' modes of universities providing continuing higher education is through part time and sandwich courses. In addition to this the majority of higher education institutions have now adopted a modular structure for courses. This means that students can build a personalised degree by choosing modules or units of study from different subject areas. Modularity provides flexibility and helps mature students to negotiate personalised programmes that perfectly match their needs. However, it requires highly developed time management .(UCAS 2012)

The traditional modes of delivering continuing higher education is through part-time programmes and sandwich courses.

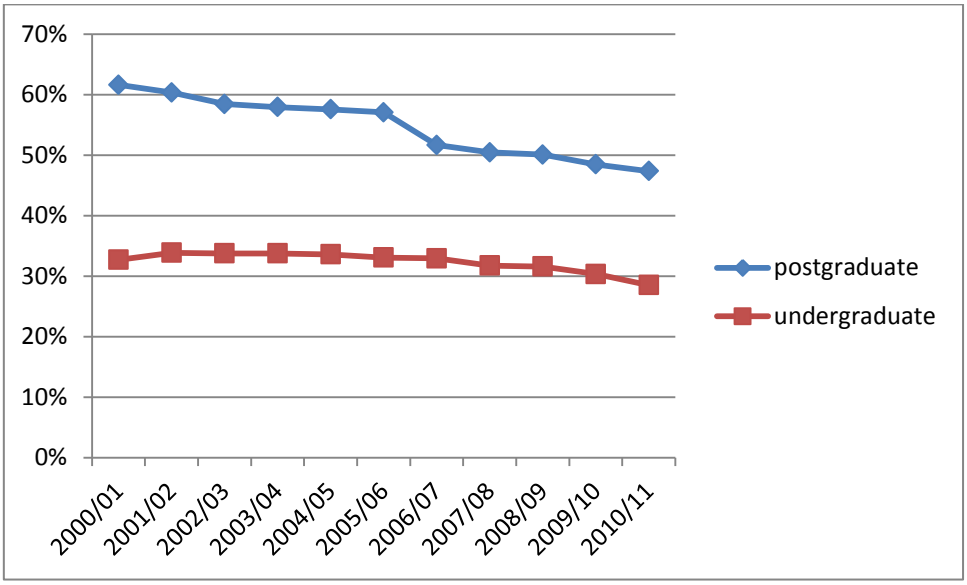
Sandwich courses. Sandwich placements and work experience placements are widely acknowledged as being of great benefit to students, businesses and universities. Sandwich course students are those following a course in which the period of study at the university is broken by a period (or periods) of industrial training forming an integral part of the course. Certain vocational courses include a year of working within the industry as part of the course. This will usually be for the third year of a degree course or the second year of an HND and, depending on the employer, may be full-time paid employment. The purpose of this is to gain valuable experience in a profession . The average salary of students who have

completed sandwich placements is 8% higher than those that didn't six months after graduating, and completing a work placement has been found to augment students' academic performance. Offering students placements allows employers to trial a potential employee, as well as gain a direct link to the university research that applies to their sector. There has been a decline in the number of students taking sandwich placements over the last ten years, and 70% of those placements are now provided by just twenty HEIs. The present regulations permit institutions to charge new students starting their courses from September 2012 onwards a fee of up to £4,500 for sandwich years (50% of the maximum fee cap). Government is considering to reduce the maximum fee. They believe that a fee of only 15% of the maximum fee cap more reasonably reflects the costs of a sandwich place year, whilst still providing sufficient income to HEIs to meet their costs and to continue to invest in and expand sandwich course provision. Government has asked HEFCE to monitor the costs of these courses.

'Nowadays everyone is scrambling for work placements. Even unpaid internships are oversubscribed. Meanwhile employers say recent graduates are lacking work skills. Why then, are sandwich courses in decline? There has been a steady fall in the numbers enrolling on such courses. The Wilson review of links between universities and industry says (on page 38): "Despite the undoubted advantages of undertaking a placement, there has been a decline in this practice in recent years from 9.5% of the total full-time cohort in 2002-03 to 7.2% in 2009-10."
The vast majority of these sandwich degrees are provided by a small cluster of universities and they're mostly in areas such as science, engineering, IT and business. But why don't more universities offer placement years – and in a broader range of courses? Employers' reluctance to spend time supervising students is partly to blame, says Warwick University professor Kate Purcell, an expert in the graduate labour market." Work placements are very difficult for universities to set up and they're expensive for to run – departments have to arrange visits by academics, and mentoring, to ensure students are having a rewarding experience." For students, the burden of paying tuition fees (albeit discounted) while on a placement year is off-putting. At the moment, universities can charge up to £4,500 for sandwich years – though a guideline fee of £1,000 has been suggested by the Wilson review'. (source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/mortarboard/2012/apr/30/students-sandwich-course)

Part-time courses. Part-time courses have been, and still are, a substantial part of higher education provision by British universities. Slightly less than half of post graduate students are enrolled part-time and more than a quarter of undergraduates students. There is however a rather slow, but consistent decrease in the proportion of students enrolled as part-time as the figure below shows.

Figure 14: Students enrolled as part time students as a percentage in total enrolment in UK universities



Source: HESA

Traditional modes 2: The current Government's policy is not to promote artificially one form of qualification over another. Qualifications are a vital indicator of an individual's level of skills. It is important that a range of qualifications are available in the marketplace – Higher National qualifications; professional awards; higher level apprenticeships; foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees – with all necessary information available for employers, employees and students to figure out the best route for them.

The previous Government promoted the ***Foundation Degree*** as the vocational qualification of choice within vocational higher education. A foundation degree is the equivalent of the first two years of an honours degree, may be studied full- or part-time, and consists of academic study integrated with relevant work-based learning undertaken with an employer. It may be studied as a stand-alone qualification or upon completion you may progress to the final year of an honours degree. As a result, after a prolonged period of low activity, Foundation Degrees have become an established qualification, with some highly successful examples of employer engagement.

Newcastle College – Foundation Degree Programme for Contitech Beattie

Newcastle College has developed a bespoke foundation degree in Leadership and Management to assist with succession planning at Contitech Beattie, a key manufacturer of products to the Oil, Gas, Power Generation and Chemical Industries.

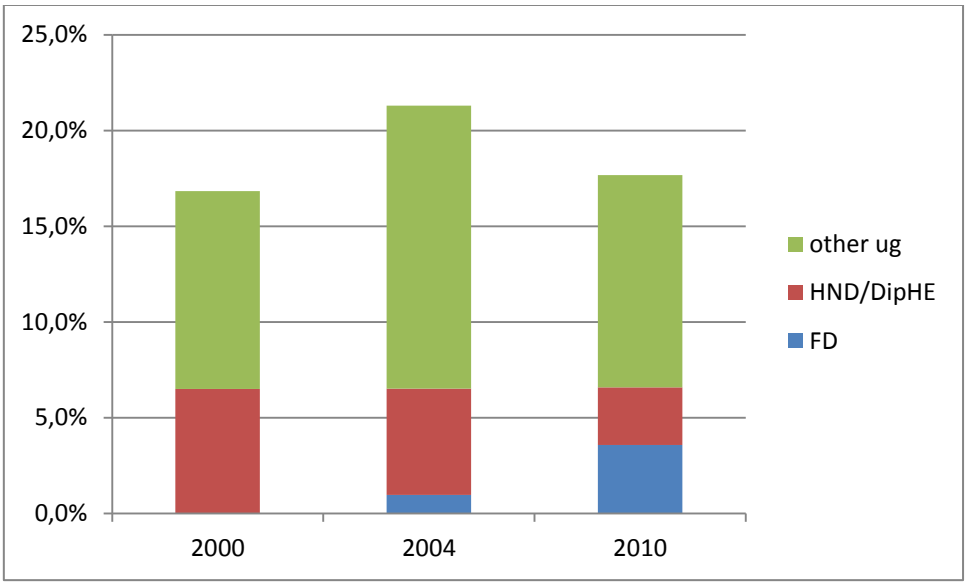
The qualification comprises a blend of on-site delivery, E-learning delivered through the college's Virtual Learning Environment Blackboard, and workshop sessions facilitated at the college. Work based learning is an integral part of the course with students submitting projects on issues such as the development of new marketing strategies, implementing new quality procedures and managing complex change in the oil industry.

Effective collaboration between Contitech Beattie and the college has ensured a 100% retention rate for students entering the programme. Students can go on to enter the BA (Hons) Leadership & Management Programme, which allows them to further enhance skills that are relevant to their employment.

Higher national diploma (HND) and higher national certificate (HNC). Equally, however, qualifications such as the HNC and HND have been enduringly popular, and this is to be welcomed. Higher national diploma (HND) and higher national certificate (HNC) are courses that are generally related to particular career areas, for example agriculture, art and design, business studies, or hotel and catering, and are validated by the Edexcel Foundation (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (Scotland). HNDs are fully recognised by employers as valuable qualifications and comprise units of study. They are usually taken full-time over two years, or longer if they are taken part-time or include work experience or a placement in industry. Some successful HND students later transfer to the second or occasionally the third year of related degree courses. HNCs are a popular part-time study option for those in work, though they can also be taken full-time.

Diploma of higher education (DipHE) Two-year full-time DipHE courses are offered by some universities and colleges. These courses are normally equivalent to the first two years of a degree course and can often be used for entry to the third year of a related degree course. There are relatively few DipHE courses and these are mainly linked to vocational areas such as nursing and social work.

Figure 15: Degrees awarded (UG) as percentage of all degrees awarded



Source: HESA

From these data we conclude that Foundation Degrees and HND/DIPHE are a relative small part of the higher education provision of universities. It is clear that FDs have cannibalised the HND/DipHE. The other non-first degree undergraduate degrees show some fluctuation.

Open educational Resources (OER). OER in principle, are cost free to the learner and do not require any prior qualifications. They may enable some to study materials on their own without any social or cultural pressures. But they do require computers and internet access unless someone can produce low or no cost hard copies instead, and these problems are often exacerbated in rural/remote locations. Another way to think about this is to consider the

types of support required to encourage learning in any situation where educational resources are involved (Lane 2008b) separately from those that enable learning to happen at all (such as social and financial support). In this respect there is a need to also consider the learning environment in which the resources are located and that is done by reference to features of the OpenLearn website based on the open source software. These features are:

1. Pedagogic support built into the educational resources, such as exercises and activities that challenge students and enable them to assess for themselves the learning they are achieving (examples of these can be seen in OpenLearn units);
2. Personal support through encouraging self-reflection and guidance within some of the in-text activities, but also in formal assessments and underpinned by a broad range of guidance material on study skills and the recording of learning and achievements in e-portfolios or learning journals (examples of which are also on OpenLearn);
3. Peer support providing mutual reflection and guidance created within tutorial groups that can meet physically or virtually (each unit on OpenLearn has an associated forum or video conferencing meeting);
4. Professional support, the expert reflection and guidance provided by subject tutors available through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls or an online conference, and the guidance provided by support specialists whether individually or collectively through comprehensive online systems. Indeed, new technologies have greatly facilitated the mobility of support so that the supporter and supported do not need to be in the same country or communicate at the same time (this is not directly provided by the UK Open University for OpenLearn although others could do so using the site or its content).

In other words if learners are to engage with educational resources then that process can be mediated by structuring of the resource, their own capabilities, the inputs of fellow learners and the interventions of professional teachers/support workers (Lane 2008c). Digital resources and digital environments can substitute for physical resources and physical environments but they are different and the need to learn and understand how to navigate and use such resources must not be underestimated (Lane, 2009).

OER is an issue that is on the agenda. December 2012 eleven UK universities indicated that they are joining the Open University to launch free internet courses, in a bid to catch up with the elite US institutions that have led the way online (source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/dec/14/top-uk-universities-launch-free-online-courses). King's College London, along with the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, East Anglia, Exeter, Lancaster, Leeds, Southampton, St Andrews and Warwick have partnered with FutureLearn, a company set up by the Open University that will offer free, non-credit bearing courses to internet-users around the world. The courses are modelled on the US phenomenon 'massive open online courses' (Moocs), which have attracted millions of users across the globe, and are especially popular in emerging economies – a key market place for UK universities. FutureLearn will promote UK institutions to international students, "Massive open online courses present an opportunity for us to widen access to, and meet the global demand for higher education. This is growing rapidly in emerging economies like Brazil, India and China." Moocs have grown rapidly in the US over the past year, with two providers leading the field. Coursera offers courses from 33 universities, including

Princeton, Brown, Columbia and Duke and has reached more than 1.7 million users (see California in this report).
EdX, a non-profit start-up from Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has 370,000 students enrolled on online courses this autumn. Partner institutions will be responsible for their own content while the OU, which has been providing distance learning courses since 1971, will assist with course delivery and infrastructure. A charge for (optional) certificates and exam invigilation will form the company's primary revenue stream. The Open University is the company's only shareholder, though it is not expecting big profits. Details of further universities who may sign up to the deal will be revealed in the new year, as will the courses on offer. ""FutureLearn will roam the tapestry of HE and not be bound to any particular discipline. But ultimately the crowd will decide."
Leeds University say the partnership will also benefit students studying on campus: "And our current students will have access to a rich, interactive set of resources, from both Leeds and our partners. In line with the Leeds Curriculum, this will help give them a deeper and fuller understanding of their field of study as well as encouraging them to broaden their education beyond their main subject areas."

Continuing Professional Development (CPD). There is a wide variety of Continuing Professional Development courses on offer. These services are mainly focussed at professionals who want or have to keep their professional skills and competences up to date. The Royal College of Psychiatrists describes it as 'a process of self-assessment, self-directed, life-long learning that complements formal undergraduate and postgraduate education and training. It enables psychiatrists to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as to maintain and improve their standards across all areas of their practice'.
(http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/workinpsychiatry/cpd.aspx).

Higher Apprenticeships. In the Plan for Growth (March 2011), the Government set out its approach to putting the UK on a path to sustainable, long term economic growth. A key proposal within this plan was to target the expansion of Higher Apprenticeship places – improving the skills available to businesses whilst widening opportunities for employment and progression.
With the launch of the Higher Apprenticeship Fund by the Prime Minister in July 2011 approximately 30 partnerships have been awarded funding to develop and implement Higher Apprenticeship frameworks in a number of occupational areas.
These partnerships increasingly demonstrate that there is substantial employer demand across a wide range of industry sectors for Higher Apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5 (Higher Education Certificate and Foundation Degree Levels) and in developments at Level 6 (Bachelor degree level) and Level 7 (Master's Degree Level).
Higher Apprenticeship qualifications at Levels 4 and 5 are designed on the basis of employer skills requirements and in accordance with the legislative requirements outlined in the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) to enable individuals in employment develop the knowledge and occupational competencies needed to perform a particular technician, management or professional job role.

Correspondence courses. Correspondence courses are offered by many providers, including many regular universities as distance education. There is an Association of British

Correspondence Colleges in which a small number of specialised institutions are represented. http://www.homestudy.org.uk/

5.1.2.1 Participation

NIALS Adult Learner Survey. The results of the latest version of the survey of adults (Aldridge, 2012) showed that participation in adult education has decreased significantly since the previous survey. In this annual survey among around 5000 adults, information is provided on all forms of adult education. A breakdown by level of activities is not publicly available.

National Adult Learner Survey. Adult participation in **all categories** of learning in the three years preceding the survey was 69%. This represents an 11 percentage point decline from the 80% recorded in NALS 2005. Indeed it is the lowest level recorded in the NALS series. The causes of the decline are not directly collected by NALS but are likely to be due to a combination of the following:

- The economic downturn since 2008. This has affected individuals' willingness to spend money on learning – 58% of respondents cited cost as an obstacle to learning compared with 21% in 2005.
- A reduction in funding for many short courses in favour of longer, qualification-led, learning in response to the Leitch Review of Skills;
- A decline in employer funding for on-the-job training; and
- A reduction in participation in ICT skills (a strong driver of learning participation in previous NALS) as more of the adult population have developed basic ICT skills.

There are differences by learning category:

- The most significant decline has been in non-formal learning – from 56% in 2005 to 39% in 2010; Participation in informal learning declined by 13 percentage points from 56% in 2005 to 43% in 2010; and
- Participation in formal learning in unchanged at 24%.

Overall participation continues to be closely linked to household income, employment status and previous educational attainment.

- There is a 29 percentage point gap in overall participation between those in the highest and lowest income bands (84% of those with a household income of £31,200 plus per annum compared with 55% of those with £10,399 or less), although formal learning rates are not too dissimilar (29% and 25% respectively). The widest gap is in informal learning, 63% and 25% respectively.
- The highest participation rates were for respondents in work – 81% of those in full-time employment, 72% part-time and 74% self-employed but declining to 64% among the unemployed. It is lowest for respondents who are economically inactive (45% of those looking after family, 38% retired and 40% of those incapable of work).
- There is a positive link between participation in learning and highest qualification. There is a 63 percentage point gap in participation rates between those with a Level 5 qualification (90%) and those with none (27%). This gap has widened since 2005.

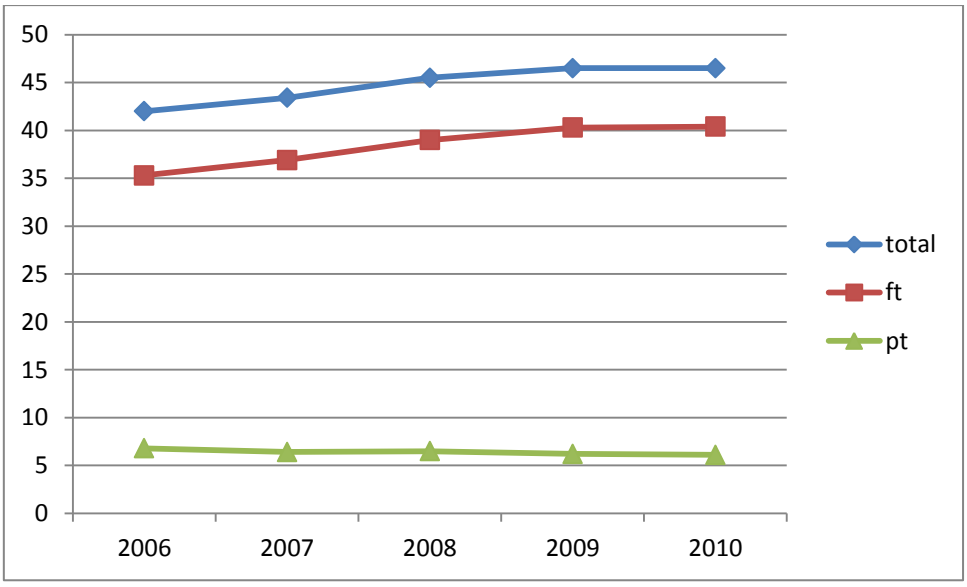
Participation among those with Level 1 or no qualification trail significantly behind those with even Level 2 attainment (55% compared with 73%).

In the three years prior to the 2010 survey, learners undertook an average of 2.06 courses, up from 1.9 in 2005. Some 41% of courses were taken to obtain a qualification, 39% were guided on-the-job training and 20% were neither qualification-led nor on-the-job.
Academic and job-related courses are most popular in the formal and non-formal learning types (43% of courses studied) followed by leisure and life skills courses (28%). As noted earlier, participation in ICT-related courses has declined since 2005 – from nine to five per cent in 2010.

HEFCE/ HESA statistical data

Government publishes a participation rate for English domiciled first time higher education entrants (HEIPR). The data show that participation rate is still rising, but participation rate in part time education is decreasing (BIS, 2012c).

Figure 16: HEIPR in England (in percentage)



Source: BIS, 2012c

5.2 The Legal and Policy Framework

Since 2009 HE and FE (and adult education at that level) are under the realm of the Department for Business, Innovation and skills (and no longer under the realm of the department of education).

Policy documents published in 2010 and 2011. In 2010 and 2011 a number of policy papers were published in which the need for further investment in the development of skills of the workforce was stressed. In 2010 the Skills for Sustainable growth paper was published in which the planned reforms of the skills system were announced. Following up on that

paper in December 2011 The New Challenges, New chances: further education and skills system reform plan (BIS, 2011b) was published.
In these documents the plans to reform the skills system are described. These reform plans focus on a number of issues:

- Funding
- Level playing field: removal of barriers
- Transparency for students Role of NCS; LLA
- Transparency for employers
- Employers more in the lead
- Modes of Cooperation
- Credit accumulation/ accreditation

In between, in June 2011, the white paper 'Higher Education -Students at the heart of the system' (BIS, 2011) was published. In this white paper the reform plans for higher education were set out. These reforms focus on three major challenges: Putting higher education on a sustainable footing, delivering a better student experience and increasing social mobility.
The first challenge is tackled by shifting public spending away from teaching grants and towards repayable tuition loans. As one of the consequences many part-time and distance learning students will become entitles tot tuition loans to pay full tuition fees for the first time.
The second challenge will be tackled with a number of initiatives, ranging from removal of regulatory carries that are preventing a level playing field for higher education providers (which will improve student choice), moving away from tight number controls, improve the information available to prospective students, empowering students through student charters, enhance university –business collaboration (Wilson review) to a new regulatory system to protect standards and quality.
To achieve the third objective (increasing social mobility) OFFA will receive more resources.

The LSC (Learning and Skills Council) published their national priorities, which were focused on basic skills, up to level 3 (level 4 is FE level and level 5 is higher education level). Government is moving away from a direct involvement in adult education activities at the FE and HE level.

Two main pieces of legislation are of particular importance regarding the reform of continuing education. These are the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) and the Education Act (2011).

5.3 The Organisation and Governance of the Continuing Higher Education System

5.3.1 Government

Government has a very active role in the developments of continuing (higher) education. The character of its role and the key governmental actor playing that role have changed. The Department of Education used to be the key player in higher education and the skills sector, but that has changed. Now the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) is the leading department, developing a new strand of skills development policies. With this new

player, the character of the role has changed as well: government has a strong drive towards empowering the providers and demand (students and workers), instead of coordinating continuing education services itself. The Coalition Government attempts to introduce more market characteristics into the delivery of HE.
In essence, the government believes that the present 'quasi market' in HE is not working for several reasons: (a) there is insufficient competition based on price and (b) there is inadequate information for applicants to make informed choices. Further, governments need to intervene in HE markets because (a) private credit markets are unwilling to lend owing to uncertainties about future behaviour (b) HE is a public good and provides wider benefits to society that a purely private market would not take into account and (c) as HE provides significant individual benefit it is important these benefits are shared across society – arguments related to equity.

5.3.2 Employers

With the change in role of the government, employers are put much more in the lead. In the reform plans, business will get more resources and responsibilities for the development of the skills system.

5.3.3 Providers

Universities. The Universities are the main providers of the 'regular' continuing higher education programmes. Regular refers to degree oriented programmes. The programmes are delivered in 'alternative' ways, as part-time course or as sandwich courses. In addition to these modes of delivery, universities provide certain types of programmes that are more geared towards the continuing education market: Foundation degrees, HNDs and DipHEs.
In addition to this traditional role, universities have developed a more open attitude towards the demands from the region and from the regional economy. Universities are engaging in Community learning and universities are investing in de the development of CPD courses. The latter are often organised in and by special institutes, offices or centres in or at the university.

Open University UK. Figures for 2010 shows that overall the University had 250,000 students in that year. This total includes:

- over 180,000 studying at undergraduate level,
- over 14,000 following taught modules at postgraduate level,
- over 40,000 studying for awards validated by The Open University,
- over 1,300 research students.
- OU offers 342 undergraduate modules, 60 CPD modules and 141 post-grad modules
- 15,726 OU students are studying at postgraduate level
- 22,722 OU MBA graduates active in 91 countries
- 80 of the FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff on OU courses
- 62% study vocational or professional courses
- 89% of part-time students study to further their career aims

The median age of new undergraduates is 32. Of those who declared an 'ethnic origin' 8% identified themselves as Asian or Black. Forty three per cent of the undergraduate students

have entry qualifications lower than those normally demanded by other UK universities (reflecting the open access policy); more than 12,000 declare they have a disability and more than 47,000 receive some form of financial support (many related to widening participation schemes).
The Open University (OU) in the UK is internationally renowned for its flexible approach to the delivery of high quality learning opportunities, especially for non-traditional students, providing an effective and efficient model for lifelong learning. However, completion to graduation is statistically low and drop-out between modules considerably higher than in the campus-based part of the higher education (HE) sector. There are many possible reasons for this phenomenon but research has tended to focus on an assumption that drop-out is negative and ignores the possibility and positive effects which students may have achieved their study goals with a single module or may be using their acquired credit to move into the campus-based sector.
This is not just a problem for the OU, but a reality for various European higher education institutions (HEIs) and is fundamentally the result of a perception that higher education can only be pursued through qualifications. This very perception informs funding models, quality assurance measures, student support, curriculum content and teaching and learning strategies in most HE systems in Europe and thus mainly caters for traditional students. In short, retention is seen as a problem because the access models we currently have are predicated on modes of study which are not appropriate for lifelong learning (Mosidis, 2011).

FE Colleges. Colleges provide a rich mix of academic and vocational education. It may be at any level above compulsory education, from basic training to Higher National Diploma or Foundation Degree. As autonomous institutions incorporated by Act of Parliament they have the freedom to innovate and respond flexibly to the needs of individuals, business and communities.
Colleges in the UK that are regarded as part of the Further Education sector include General FE and Tertiary Colleges; Sixth Form Colleges; Specialist Colleges (Agriculture and Horticulture, Art and Design, Specialist Designated) . There are around 400 Colleges in the UK. Some facts: Colleges provide 33% of entrants to higher education; half of all Foundation Degree students are taught in Colleges; 67% of Colleges teach Foundation Degrees; Colleges deliver 81% of HNCs and 59% of HNDs; 170,000 students study higher education in a College; 257 Colleges provide undergraduate and postgraduate level courses.
(http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/about_colleges/college-key-facts.cfm)

In the wider HE policy context the drivers for FEC/HEI partnerships have focussed around improving access to HE for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, improving employability and supplying economically valuable skills – arguments around social justice and economic competitiveness. Some FE/HE partnerships have come under pressure in recent years as funding for partnership working, e.g. through Lifelong Learning Networks, has come to an end and a cap on student numbers has been introduced. These tensions have been exacerbated in the last year in the run up to a new funding regime from 2012 and publication of the current HE White Paper explaining how a new market in HE will operate. The recent imposition of a competitive bidding process for student numbers (the 'core-margin' process) has added to the tension. There are examples of HEIs withdrawing from funding

and validation relationships with College partners, and many more examples of HEIs reviewing their partnership strategies and the charges they make for their services.

The following categories of partnership, relating to funding and the delivery of awards, are common in the current landscape:

- **Indirect funding or franchising where the FEC delivers an HEI award.** In this model the HEI owns, and is responsible to HEFCE for the student numbers. Typically in this kind of relationship the awarding institution agrees to authorise the FEC to deliver (and sometimes assess) part, or all, of one (or more) of its own approved programmes. Often, the awarding institution retains direct responsibility for the programme content, the teaching and assessment strategy, the assessment regime, and quality assurance.
- **Indirect funding where the FEC develops an award.** In this model the FEC develops a case for a new award and seeks validation for the award by a partner HEI. The HEI still controls the student numbers.
- **Direct funding:** the FEC has a direct contract with HEFCE and owns, and is responsible for, the student numbers. Courses are designed by the College – e.g. Foundation degrees in response to local need; 'top-ups' to honours for internal progression. The HEI approves the programme to be of an appropriate standard and quality to lead to one of its awards.

HEFCE is only empowered to fund 'prescribed' courses of HE in FECs. These include HNCs, HNDs, Foundation degrees, Bachelors degrees, Postgraduate degrees and certain teacher training qualifications; the awarding bodies include HEIs and Edexcel, and those FECs with the power to award degrees. Prescribed courses[83] do not include other HE courses at FECs, such courses at Level 4 and above accredited by professional bodies. These courses are the funding responsibility of the SFA – the funding body for Further Education.

Strategic alliances (the case of OU and WEA). The Open University (OU) and the Workers' Education Association (WEA) have announced a new strategic partnership, with the signing of a memorandum of understanding, that will remove barriers to adults wishing to enter further or higher education by providing practical training and freely available learning resources.

The partnership brings together two national organisations with a combined total of over 150 years' experience in delivering adult education. Both are committed to increasing participation by adults in learning by researching their needs and creating learning pathways that raise aspiration and progression and by targeting those learners who are on low incomes and whose previous education level is below that traditionally required for University entry.

LLN. The Lifelong Learning Networks are regional partnerships of universities and colleges. LLNs aim to improve and make sense of opportunities for learners on vocational programmes to be able to enter higher education. The aim of LLNs was to provide a focus on vocational routes into and through higher education, in the context of lifelong learning

[83] Prescribed courses of HE are defined in legislation, but broadly relate to courses of at least one year's duration when studied full-time and which lead, on successful completion, to the award of certain HE qualifications by certain awarding bodies.

(HEFCE Circular letter 12/2004) and through HEIs and FECs working in partnership. They were funded to 'improve the coherence, clarity and certainty of progression opportunities for vocational learners into and through higher education'.
LLNs try to achieve their goals by a) Curriculum development to facilitate progression from vocational courses into HE. They focus on removing barriers to progression and improving provision of courses which bridge the gap between FE and HE, as well as on new HE curriculum development involving employers (foundation degrees, work-based learning, e-learning, collaborative modules and 14-19 diplomas); b) Information, advice, guidance for students. Main instrument here is the production of 'progression agreements' defining the expectations about entry to HE that learners can reasonably hold if they are on a vocational course and making commitments by universities and colleges that these expectations will be met. There is no standard format for progression agreements. However, there are some general principles in drafting them:

- they support learners' legitimate expectation to progress from specific programmes or institutions to other programmes or institutions, and establish the commitment of institutions to meet those expectations
- they are negotiated to make credit transfer a reality
- they are developed on a network-wide basis, with all the institutions that form part of the LLN.

LLNs will develop mechanisms to agree and manage progression arrangements and ensure they operate across the LLN.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/recentwork/lifelonglearningnetworks/progressionagreements/

5.3.4 Other stakeholder organisations

The Skills Funding Agency. The Skills Funding Agency is a partner organisation of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and it exists to fund and promote adult further education (FE) and skills training in England.
The FE and skills sector in England comprises more than 220 FE colleges, some 900 independent training providers, and some 2,500 training organisations with which colleges and providers subcontract. It is all of these organisations that make skills work. The SFAs job is to facilitate their crucial mission by making funding and support available.
Each year BIS sets out its policy priorities for the skills sector in a Skills Investment Statement (SIS), detailing the overall level of funding available to the sector to deliver the policy intentions of government. The Agency's task is to implement BIS's policy, as set out in the SIS, consistent with the Chief Executive's statutory duty to promote and secure reasonable adult FE in England. To achieve this, we influence and support the capacity and quality of the FE system so we can fund the expected demand for high-quality skills training. Additionally, SFA houses the National Apprenticeship Service.

CPD organisations. There is a large number of private and public organisations, often on behalf of professional organisations, that certify programmes and courses that are provided as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses. A selection of such organisations:

- The CPD certification service (http://www.cpduk.co.uk/) This service helps organisations provide certified CPD and acts as a point of contact for those seeking to obtain certified CPD material.
- The health and care professions council (http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd/) provides audits for provided cpd courses
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (http://www.cipd.co.uk/cpd/aboutcpd/) provides guidance and support in planning CPD activities for professionals in the HR sector.
- The Royal Institute of British Architecture provides a CPD to its chartered members (www.architecture.com/EducationAndCareers/CPD/CPDAtTheRIBA.aspx)
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (http://www.rics.org/us/about-rics/what-we-do/continuing-professional-development/) has part of its CPD activities outsourced to the CPD Foundation (https://www.cpdfoundation.com/)
- CPD Scotland is a National CPD Team project committed to creating, and maintaining, an online CPD space for educators in Scotland(http://www.cpdscotland.org.uk/)
- The Chartered Institute of Public Relations coordinates the CPD activities of its members http://www.cipr.co.uk/content/careers-cpd/about-cpd.

Regular higher education providers (universities) do provide some CPD courses and there is a serious discussion among universities to engage more in these activities.

HEFCE (the Higher Education Funding Council for England). HEFCE distributes public money for higher education to universities and colleges in England, and ensures that this money is used to deliver the greatest benefit to students and the wider public. The Government's higher education White Paper, published in June 2011, signalled major changes to the way the higher education system in England will be funded and regulated. In particular, more public funding for teaching will be routed through the student loan system and less through HEFCE, and HEFCE will have a greater role in regulation and protecting the interests of students.

HEFCE funded the Lifelong Learning Network programme between 2004 and 2012.

National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). In January 2008, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), was announced and officially launched in April 2009. The service was created to bring about a significant growth in the number of employers offering apprenticeships. NAS supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England. NAS is responsible for increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities and providing a dedicated, responsive service for both employers and learners. This includes simplifying the process of recruiting an apprentice through Apprenticeship vacancies, an online system where employers can advertise their Apprenticeship job vacancies and potential apprentices can apply.

Skills CFA is a registered charity, promoting skills and qualifications in the workplace. Since 1996 they develop standards, apprenticeships and training programmes across the UK for a whole range of business skills. They provide apprenticeship frameworks suitable for 11

million employees across all sectors of the UK. The apprenticeship frameworks provide on-the-job training coupled with structured, individual technical learning programmes which then lead on to nationally recognised qualifications. http://www.skillscfa.org/

Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations). BIS intends to transfer more awarding powers to national organisations in order to remove barriers for providers (see students at the heart white paper). A key organisation in that process is Ofqual (http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/). The main way Ofqual regulates is by setting the standards and rules that awarding organisations need to meet when they design, deliver and award regulated qualifications. They monitor awarding organisations and qualifications to make sure that standards are maintained. As well as awarding organisations and qualifications, Ofqual looks at the whole qualifications and exams system. They investigate and do research to make sure the system is fit for purpose. When Ofqual decides whether to recognise organisations or to award regulated qualifications, they judge applications against the Recognition Criteria. Once recognised, each awarding organisation is subject to the General Conditions of Recognition as well as any other applicable regulations or subject criteria.

Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). Ofsted reports directly to Parliament and is independent and impartial. They inspect and regulate services which care for children and young people, and those providing education and skills for learners of all ages. For those inspections they use the Common Inspection Framework http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/common-inspection-framework-for-further-education-and-skills-2012 which applies to the inspection of provision either wholly or partly funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) or Education Funding Agency (EFA) in: further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent specialist colleges, independent learning providers (companies), community learning and skills providers (local authorities), specialist designated institutions and not-for-profit organisations, employers, higher education institutions providing further education, and providers of learning in the judicial services.
The different types of provision inspected under the Common Inspection Framework for learners aged 16–18 and 19+, and learners aged 14–16 in colleges only, are: apprenticeships, access to apprenticeships and National Vocational Qualifications offered in the workplace; community learning; National Careers Service – careers advice and guidance; learning programmes leading to a qualification; learning provision in the judicial services; employability programmes; Foundation Learning.

LSIS. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in England. LSIS provides resources and support for the day-to-day work in the learning and skills sector.
(http://www.lsis.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx)

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). NIACE began in 1921 as the British Institute for Adult Education. It is a charity, a company limited by guarantee and a member-led, non-governmental organisation. Their membership base is made up of

individual and corporate members, who range from universities, colleges and local authorities to the BBC, the National Federation of Women's Institutes, the Trades Union Congress and the Ministry of Defence.

5.4 Policy Instruments

The policy instruments used by the government and other actors in the field have a rather diverse character. The categorisation used below is therefore not always as clear-cut as it suggests it is: it should be seen as one of many ways to cut through the thick of information regarding continuing higher education policy in UK/England.

5.4.1 Information and guidance

The first category refers to the provision of information and guidance to students. The major policy document on the reform of the skills system is 'Students at the heart of the Further Education and Skills system'. In this document, more of the responsibility to invest in learning is shifted to individuals. In order to make these investments wisely, those individuals need to be better informed about careers and skills. Two major initiatives in that respect are the creation of the National Career Service and the Lifelong Learning Accounts.
A Key Information Set will be available from autumn 2012, which gives prospective students access to high quality information about different courses and institutions, enabling them to make informed choices.

National Career Service (NCS). The National Careers Service provides information, advice and guidance to help users make decisions on learning, training and work opportunities. The service offers confidential and impartial advice, supported by qualified careers advisers.
(https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/Pages/Home.aspx)

Lifelong Learning Accounts (LLA). Lifelong Learning Accounts will empower adults to take greater control over their learning by providing clear information and advice on skills, careers and financial support, tailored for the individual, all in one place.
Accounts will encourage users to link up with other learners to share knowledge and experiences, and account holders will be signposted to relevant learners' forums and communities through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. A Lifelong Learning Account gives access to a range of tools in a safe and secure place which an individual can return to again and again as (s)he develops her/his career.
By opening a free account an individual can:

- Update and store a CV, skills action plans, and course details to help the individual as she progresses through her learning and working life.
- Store all individual qualification details in a Personal Learning Record and track what financial contributions have been made towards the individuals learning.
- Personalise and manage the information the individual has gathered to help her make the right choices and allow her to share this with employers, learning providers and advisers so the individual can take the next step.

An account stays with the individual throughout her working life.
(https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/LifeLongLearningAccount/Pages/default.aspx)

5.4.2 Deregulation/ streamlining

The second category comprises instruments to aim to reduce the administrative burden for providers and remove barriers that prevent providers from entering the market.
The Department of BIS has taken a three strand approach to helping colleges and training providers to run their businesses and better respond to the needs of learners, employers and communities:

- **Streamlining the landscape.** They abolished, merged, ceased funding or scaled back the number of government organisations in the FE landscape to ensure only the most focussed and relevant remain, so reducing the number of interactions providers have with Government.
- **Simplifying systems and processes.** The Skills Funding Agency is scaling back its bureaucracy to simplify processes, working jointly with the Young People's Learning Agency, so reducing the time spent on Agency related activity by providers.
- **Deregulation.** The Education Act 2011 removes burdensome duties on colleges and confers more power on governing bodies, while the Skills Funding Agency is working jointly with Young People's Learning Agency to reduce bureaucracy for providers.

5.4.3 Legislation

Two main pieces of legislation are of particular importance regarding the reform of continuing education. These are the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) and the Education Act (2011). In these Acts, the withdrawal of government as a central actor in regulation is addressed. It is also specified what organisations will take responsibility in regulating skills development.
This shift is intended to remove some major barriers for (potential) providers of continuing education (at the higher level), like the tight student number controls and the complex processes for obtaining taught-degree-awarding powers. Opening up the awarding powers to national organisations and freeing student numbers have to contribute to a more level playing field. Government is freeing the current, restrictive approach to student number controls, introducing competition into the sector to drive quality and value for money for students. Competition in the sector will be further stimulated by reducing the 'numbers' criterion for university title from 4,000 higher education students to 1,000. This will widen access to university title for small, high quality providers.

5.4.4 Qualification and quality assurance

In this category the focus is on providing transparency for all actors involved of the system of qualifications and credits awarded in continuing higher education.

FE Inspection framework. Accreditation of workplace learning/experimental learning has been tried in the past but it proved to be limited successful. In 2009 the Office for standards in Education (Ofsted) introduced a new inspection framework for FE Colleges, work-based learning providers and adult and community learning. There is also a framework for excellence, operated by the Skills funding agency to provide information to learners and employers. The lifelong learning UK organisation is set up to develop new professional teaching standards for the whole FE system. LLUK is responsible for the professional development of all those working in community learning and development, further education, higher education and work-based learning.

Qualifications and credit framework. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) is a new way of recognising achievement through the award of credit for the achievement of units and qualifications. It provides a simple and rational organising framework that presents learner achievement and qualifications in a way that is easy to understand, measure and compare. It gives individuals the opportunity to learn in a more flexible way and enables a wider range of organisations, including employers, to have their training recognised.

The QCF provides the structure for creating and accrediting qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. QCF qualifications are designed with the help of employers, so learners can be assured they are gaining the relevant skills that employers are looking for. The QCF takes a modular approach to qualifications, enabling learners to build up qualifications step by step. Qualifications that use the QCF rules are made up of units. This provides flexible ways to get a qualification. Each unit has a credit value which tells you how many credits are awarded when a unit is completed. The credit value also gives an indication of how long it will normally take you to prepare for a unit or qualification. One credit will usually take you 10 hours of learning. Units build up to qualifications. There are three different types of qualification in the QCF: Award, Certificate and Diploma. You can achieve an Award with 1 to 12 credits; for a Certificate you will need 13 – 36 credits and for a Diploma you will need at least 37 credits. Units and qualifications are each given a level according to their difficulty, from entry level to level 8. The title of a qualification will tell you its size and level. If a qualification includes a unit that you have already been awarded, you can use the unit you have already taken towards that qualification. Units awarded by different awarding organisations can be combined to build up qualifications (http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-and-assessments/qualification-frameworks/).

Qualifications that use the rules of the QCF are regulated by Ofqual.

Apprenticeship frameworks. An apprenticeship framework is a definition of requirements for an apprenticeship programme. It is used by training providers, colleges, and employers to ensure that all apprenticeship programmes are delivered consistently and to agreed standards. Each framework includes details of the qualifications needed to be completed, the key skills targets, and any other requirements of the apprenticeship. Each framework also includes information on job roles, entry routes, length of the apprenticeships and career paths available upon completion. For England the apprenticeship frameworks are described in the Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE), that may be accessed online at Apprenticeship Frameworks Online.

Progression agreements. The main instrument in the framework of the LLNs to achieve transparency and credit transfer. A more detailed description is provided above.

Personal Learner Register. It is important that providers understand learners' needs and aspirations and are able to offer information, advice and guidance on the most suitable units for learners to undertake. The Personal Learner Record (PLR) is a free service to help providers and learners to understand what different combinations of units can lead to and also to view their achievement record so far, on-line and in one place. Providers can use the PLR as a guide in forming a coherent programme towards credit accumulation and qualification achievement.

Learners do not have immediate access to the PLR but this can be arranged via a provider who is registered as a Learning Registration Body (LRB) with the Learning Record Service (LRS). The LRB will verify the learner's identity with the LRS and arrange access to the PLR for the learner. Full details about the LRS found on the Learning Records Service website (http://www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk/products/learnerrecord/.)

The Personal Learning Record (PLR) application offers access to verified participation and achievement records of individual learners from when they were at school, college or a recognised further education training provider from 14+ years. The academic and vocational records data is from 2009 but does not typically cover education completed at university.

The PLR is a free and important application. It allows individual learners access to their past and current achievement records. It can share records with the school, college, further education training provider, university or employer; where the individual is making an application to further their education, training and employment. It can also allow an individual learner to share their PLR with a Careers Advisor when taking advice on what to do in future.

Schools, colleges, further education training providers and universities staff can use the PLR to directly access records for individuals making applications or studying at their organisations. These organisations will inform individuals where they plan to access their records usually during an application process. Any individual can opt-out of sharing their data with organisations by using the PLR, or by informing the relevant organisation(s) during the application process. Organisations typically use the PLR to verify learners' qualifications because it's quicker and easier than reviewing and checking certificates, so speeds up the application process. They can quickly build up a picture of an individual's achievement to give the best next-step education or careers advice and/or ensure the individual receives all the public funding to which they are entitled.

The PLR makes it easy to plan an individual's future vocational training within the complicated structures of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). You can search different routes to achievement. You can identify the best combination of units and calculate the credit needed to achieve a qualification all in a few clicks. You can also monitor an individual's progress by unit or qualification against their chosen route to achievement.

5.4.5 Measures regarding financial support for continuing higher education

New funding arrangements for Universities and Colleges have begun for the new intake of students in 2012-13. HEFCE funding for teaching will start to decrease, and Universities and Colleges will be more dependent on funding from publicly-funded student loans. Teaching funding from HEFCE will increasingly be focused on those costs incurred by Universities and Colleges which cannot be met entirely by tuition fees, e.g. supporting high-cost and vulnerable subjects, and widening participation. HEFCE will retain a pivotal role in the allocation of funding and publicly-funded student places to institutions.

Colleges and Universities are responsible for setting their own tuition fees. For some groups of students attending publicly-funded institutions (mostly undergraduates and students on HNDs and Foundation degrees), there are overall limits set out by law on the fees that can be charged. Publicly-funded tuition fee loans will be available to these students, so that there is no up-front cost to them. The Student Loans Company (SLC) administers the payment of tuition fees to Colleges and Universities.

Higher Apprenticeship Fund. In July 2011 a Higher Apprenticeship Fund of £25m has been made available by Government for the development of new Higher Apprenticeship frameworks. These Apprenticeships - equivalent to degree level - will help to deliver the higher skills most critical for economic growth. Key aims of the Higher Apprenticeship Fund are to:

- generate on-going employer contributions to support programme costs
- facilitate stronger sector or occupational partnerships to drive developments
- create a lasting change in employer recruitment and training patterns
- develop new models of Apprenticeship learning at the higher level.

The first round of competitive bidding in 2011 resulted in the development of 19,000 new Higher Apprenticeship places through 250 employers across many industries including construction, engineering, insurance, business and financial services.
The second round of bids, in June 2012, supported the development of a further 4,230 new Higher Apprenticeships in sectors that include aviation, low carbon engineering, legal services and space engineering. There was also a first ever Apprenticeship at Master's degree level with the development of an Accountancy Apprenticeship that will give the apprentice chartered status within the profession.
Employers will benefit from these developments because Higher Apprenticeships enable them to develop their workforce to a higher level of skill, help tackle issues of diversity, support emerging specialist roles and reduce skills gaps; employers of all sizes will now be able to access nationally accredited and nationally recognised vocational training delivered in the workplace. For individual learners, Higher Apprenticeships give unique access to employment opportunities and the chance to develop valuable high level professional skills.
(http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/the-basics/higher-apprenticeships.aspx**.)**
To ensure Higher Apprenticeships best meet the needs of employers and individuals, and to support their continued development and expansion, the National Apprenticeship Service are consulting on how the current Specification of Apprenticeship Standards for England (SASE) 3 can be improved for Higher Apprenticeships at Levels 4 and 5, and how it should incorporate new Higher Apprenticeship frameworks at Level 6 and above.

National Scholarship Programme. Government has introduced a new National Scholarship Programme, which started in the 2012/13 academic year, and will provide financial benefit to some of the least well-off young people and adults as they enter higher education.

OFFA. Government is taking action to strengthen the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to ensure that it can provide support and challenge to institutions on fair access. The Director of Fair Access - who must approve institutions' plans to promote access, retention and student success for under-represented groups before they can charge more than the basic amount for tuition - supports activities that improve graduate employability. In his guidance to institutions on how to prepare 'Access Agreements' he highlights for example initiatives that make placement years, or a year abroad, more attractive to under-represented students. The Director has also clarified that in some instances institutions might include in their access plans post-graduation activities and expenditure such as advice or funding for internships in professions where social mobility is low, as this could make undergraduate

courses more appealing to disadvantaged groups by providing clearer pathways to jobs after graduation. It is for each institution to determine exactly how they invest in access, retention and student success activities within the guidelines set by the Director of Fair Access.

Business in the lead. In the policy documents government has published the last two years, there is a clear move away from direct funding by government to an indirect way of financially supporting the provision of continuing education. There are various initiatives in which public funds are provided either directly to business to enhance skills development or through other intermediary organisations or institutions, like the Higher Apprenticeship Fund. The direct funding approach can be found in two initiatives administered by the SFA.

The Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot. The Employer Ownership of Skills pilot is a competitive fund open to employers to invest in their current and future workforce in England. Employers are invited to develop proposals that raise skills, create jobs, and drive enterprise and economic growth. Government will invest in projects in which employers are also prepared to commit their own funds in order to make better use of the combined resources.
In November 2012 it was announced that businesses across the country can bid for a share of a £150 million fund to create the training schemes they need to grow their companies (http://news.bis.gov.uk/Press-Releases/-150-million-for-businesses-to-build-skilled-workforce-68396.aspx). The fund is the second round of the Employer Ownership Pilot (EOP) which is already giving nearly £70 million to companies including Nissan, Whitbread and GE Aviation, with projects ranging from extending skills training to local suppliers, to doubling the number of female apprentices.

Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF). The other channel for providing public funds for skills development to business is through the Growth and Innovation Funds. There are various strands of activities in that programme that support business that (may) contribute to the development of skills of their employees, like the Best Market Solutions initiative and the National Skills Academies. These NSAs are employer-led organisations with a leading role in developing the infrastructure needed to deliver specialist skills for key sectors and sub-sectors of the economy. National Skills Academies bring employers together with specialist training organisations to develop solutions which tackle the skills challenges facing their sector, and contribute to world-class competitiveness through increased skills levels and employer investment. They are focused on transforming the way a sector's training and development needs are addressed. There are currently 19 National Skills Academies in various stages of development. This National Skills Academy strand of GIF (Phase one) looked for Expressions of Interest for up to four new National Skills Academies with the aim of transforming skills delivery, evidencing an employer-led approach and showing on-going financial investment whether in an area of industry where there is currently no National Skills Academy or from a National Skills Academy seeking to expand its sector presence.
The demonstration of lasting benefit, 50:50 employer investment and sustainability is essential as National Skills Academies will be expected to be self-financing by their fourth year.
Government is pulling out of direct funding of continuing education and skills development at the higher level (level 4 and beyond). The public funds will be used to enable business and

students to articulate their needs and have providers meet those needs regarding skills development.

FE loans. One of the consequences of that policy is the introduction of Further Education loans. Further Education (at 4+ level) will not be funded anymore. Students will be given the opportunity to take up loans that will pay the fees and cost of living. Starting in the 2013/14 academic year, learners 24 and older can get government loans for the tuition of FE courses at A level equivalent or higher, including apprenticeships.

Professional and Career Development Loans are bank loans to pay for courses and training that help with an individual's career or help get a job. An individual may be able to borrow between £300 and £10,000. Loans are usually offered at a reduced interest rate and the government pays interest while the individual is studying. To apply an individual must: be 18 or over; have been living in the UK for at least 3 years before the course starts; plan to work in the UK, European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) after the course. (https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans)

References

Aldridge, Fiona and David Hughes (2012), *2012 NIACE Adult Participation in Learning Survey*, NIACE, Leicester

Arthur, Lore and Brenda Little The REFLEX study: exploring graduates' views on the relationship between higher education and employment in Higher education and Society [

Association of Colleges, Learning and skills development services (2012), HE in FE Guide, http://www.aoc.co.uk/download.cfm?docid=0F0237D2-2659-4673-858131FBB4F8D8A8

BIS (2011), Higher Education - Students at the Heart of the System https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31384/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf

BIS (2011b), New challenges, new chances- Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: Building a World Class Skills System

BIS (2012), Following up the Wilson review of business-university collaboration, Next steps for universities, business and Government.

BIS (2012) National Adult Learner Survey 2010: Technical Report

BIS (2012c) Statistical first release, 28th March 2012, Participation rates in higher education: academic years 2006/2007 – 2010/2011

GHK, Research voor Beleid (2011), *Country report on the action plan on adult learning: United Kingdom*

Lane. A.B. (2009)The impact of openness on bridging educational digital divides, The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 10(5): 12 pp, ISSN 1492-3831, available at http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/637

UCAS (2012), Mature Students' Guide, 2013.

Wilson, T. (2012) A Review of Business–University Collaboration