

Chapter 2

Access to tertiary education is still challenging

The inclusive policies developed in recent years have helped to optimise access to tertiary education for young adults with disabilities, particularly those with learning difficulties. They have facilitated their access to secondary education and their success at school by mobilising the financial, technical and human resources needed to meet their particular educational needs and by developing educational systems that seek to ensure the success of every student regardless of his or her particularities. However, access to tertiary education for young adults with disabilities is not as smooth as it is for other young adults, particularly for those with psychological or behavioural problems. These difficulties are attributable in particular to a lack of synergies between the actors involved in the process of transition to tertiary education, the lack of training of these actors, and the inadequacies of the tools and statistical data required for the development of integrated systems of transition.

Introduction

This chapter describes developments in terms of access to tertiary education in light of initiatives taken in recent years to improve schooling for children with disabilities. It describes the factors that have contributed to these developments, based on an analysis of the country reports and information gathered during the site visits. It also describes the challenges to be taken into account to ensure that access to tertiary education and employment for young adults with disabilities is approached as part of an integrated transition system.

A lack of reliable statistical data

Precise tracking of changes in access to tertiary education for young adults with disabilities is difficult: the data supplied by countries participating in the project are unclear as to the population groups covered, their trajectories and the courses of study followed. Few countries, in fact, have statistics that offer an accurate view of the number of children and young adults with disabilities. Countries such as Norway and Denmark are prohibited by law from identifying persons with disabilities in terms of a disability category, while in the Czech Republic the Statistics Office is not authorised to collect data on students who are disadvantaged or have special learning needs. In the United States, NLTS2 data provide information on participation rates in tertiary education for young adults with disabilities.

The data available show the number of persons using services for persons with disabilities, those receiving support and/or those who feel disabled or consider themselves as such. The data may therefore fail to include young adults who have a disability without having any educational needs, those who require support but do not feel disabled or those who need support but do not satisfy the eligibility criteria. Students whose difficulties are not clearly identified may be counted as having a disability. The issue of the increasing number of dyslexic students in many OECD countries, for example, is surrounded by uncertainties: research is unable to establish whether the increase is attributable to a greater prevalence of dyslexic children, to a steady rise in the number of dyslexic students enrolled in education, to greater responsiveness to dyslexia on the part of schools as a result of the policies implemented, or to the impact of identification methods based on individual subjectivity and the evaluation criteria established by schools (Dyson, 2008; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007).

The data included in the country reports also differ. The time periods covered are not always the same, the data may be drawn from different sources, and populations are not always comparable. In countries such as France, the United States and the Czech Republic, the data reflect the number of students declaring an impairment, a long-term illness, or a specific learning difficulty when applying for the support or accommodation required by law. They do not include young adults who do not think it useful or desirable to report their particular circumstances and they do not always show whether young adults are receiving support. In Denmark, the data supplied relate to students receiving support or special accommodation in their course of study. They do not include those who have a disability, a long-term illness or a specific learning difficulty but who receive no support or accommodation, either because they are not eligible or because they have not considered it useful or desirable to declare their educational need. Moreover, the data may count the same student more than once if that person is eligible for several kinds of

support. The Irish data refer to the number of students recognised as eligible for the support and accommodations stipulated by law.

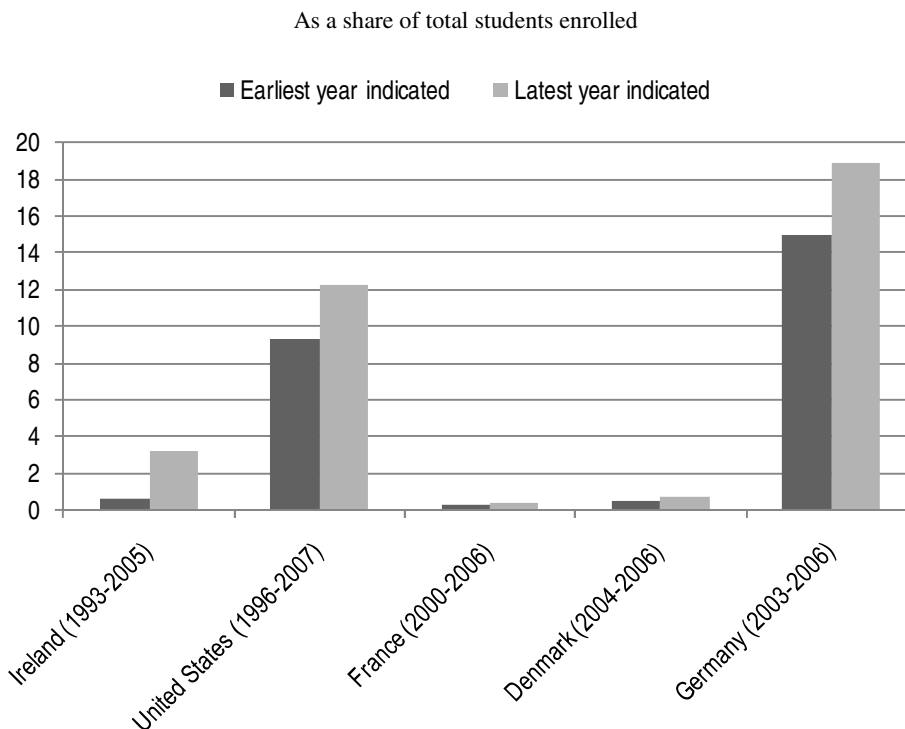
In Germany, the data reflect the number of students declaring a health problem or a long-term illness. They were gathered during a 2006 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Research among the student population as a whole. They exclude students with an unreported health problem or those who did not consider their disability to be associated with a health problem. This health problem or long-term illness does not necessarily affect their academic progress. According to the 2006 German survey on students in tertiary education, 44% of students reporting a health problem considered that it limited the pursuit of their studies, especially among those with a psychological disorder (91%), problems of the nervous system (70%), reduced mobility (60%) or visceral or metabolic impairments (53%) (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007).

Easier access to tertiary education

Although the data are not very precise, all countries reported a significant increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education (Figure 2.1). In the United States, the proportion of young adults pursuing their education after high school increased by 17% between 1987 and 2003, while the proportion of students reporting a disability who were enrolled in tertiary education rose from 9.2% in 1996 to 10.8% in 2007 (Wagner *et al.*, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). In Germany, the proportion of students reporting a health problem increased from 15% to 18.5% of the student population between 2003 and 2006 (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007). In France, the number of students reporting a disability in tertiary education doubled between 2000 and 2006 to 0.4% of the student population (ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, 2010). According to the Danish report, the number of students receiving support in tertiary education rose from 0.5% to 0.7% of the student population between 2004 and 2006 (Danish Ministry of Education and Rambøll Management, 2009).

In Norway, the proportion of persons with a disability aged 16-67 years enrolled in tertiary education rose by 7% between 2001 and 2004, and the “living conditions survey” conducted in 2005 revealed that 24% of Norwegian tertiary education students said they had a health problem. Among these, 42% considered that their health problem diminished their ability to study (Statistics Norway, 2007). The number of Czech students with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary vocational training courses increased by 0.02% between 2005 and 2008 to 0.09% of students in these courses. A 2005 survey by the Federation of Persons with Disabilities, covering 161 university faculties, counted 460 students, representing 0.4% of the student body, with a disability (Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, 2009).

There are few data available to distinguish students with disabilities from the rest of the student population. Those that exist suggest, in line with the work conducted in the context of PISA on pupils with disabilities (OECD, 2007), that the social and demographic characteristics of students’ families have a greater influence on their access to tertiary education than in the case of other students. In Norway, parents’ educational level plays a more important role for students with disabilities than it does for the average of the population (Bjerkan and Veenstra, 2008). In the United States, young adults with disabilities from the wealthier socio-economic groups are twice as likely to be enrolled in tertiary education as those from a lower socio-economic background (Newman *et al.*, 2009).

Figure 2.1. Students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education

Source : Denmark: Danish Ministry of Education and Rambøll Management (2009), “Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment”, Country background report, Copenhagen; France: Délégation ministérielle à l’emploi des personnes handicapées (2009), “Parcours des personnes handicapées vers l’enseignement supérieur et vers l’emploi”, Rapport de pays, ministère de l’Éducation nationale, Paris; Ireland: Higher Education Authority (2009), “OECD Project on Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and to Employment”, Country background report, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin; Germany: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (2007), *Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Studierenden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2006*; 18. Sozialerhebung des Deutschen Studentenwerks durchgeführt durch HIS Hochschul-Informations-System, Bonn/Berlin; United States: National Center for Education Statistics (2009), *Digest of Education Statistics*, US Department of Education, Washington, DC.

Students with disabilities also appear on the whole to be older than the student average, as shown in Norway’s 2005 living conditions survey, while in Ireland the data gathered by universities such as Trinity College Dublin show that many students with disabilities were employed before being enrolled.

As Table 2.1 shows, the profile of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education differs among countries. In France, the majority of students with disabilities recruited in 2006 indicated a sensory or physical impairment (44.5%), a health problem (20.6%) or a specific learning difficulty (11.8%). These profiles contrast with those observed in Ireland where 67.1% of the students with disabilities had learning difficulties and in Denmark where 66% of those receiving educational support owing to a disability have a specific learning difficulty (reading and writing). Students with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary vocational training courses in the Czech Republic reported for the most part either a specific learning difficulty (32%) or a mobility impairment (28%). In the United States, undergraduate students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education in 2003 reported mainly a mobility impairment (25.3%), mental health problems (21.9%), learning difficulties, attention deficit disorders (18.4%) or health

problems (17.4%) (Horn and Nevill, 2006). In Germany, a survey in 2006 found that more than 60% of students indicated health problems (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007).

Table 2.1. Students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education, by type of disability

	Percentage			
	Denmark	France	Ireland	United States
	2006	2006	2007	2003
Specific learning difficulty ¹	66.0	8.2	67.1	18.4
Mobility impairment	17.2	20.3	7.7	25.3
Hearing impairment	5.4	10.8	5.2	4.9
Visual impairment	5.4	13.9	3.5	3.8
Health problems		20.1	5.2	17.4
Mental health problems	4.3	11.2	3.1	21.9
Multiple impairments			4.0	
Temporary illness		5.3		
Communication				0.4
Other	1.7	10.2	4.2	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Denmark: students receiving special education support; France: students who declared a disability; Ireland: students who disclosed a disability; United States: students who declared a disability.

1. This category corresponds to the OECD cross-national category B.

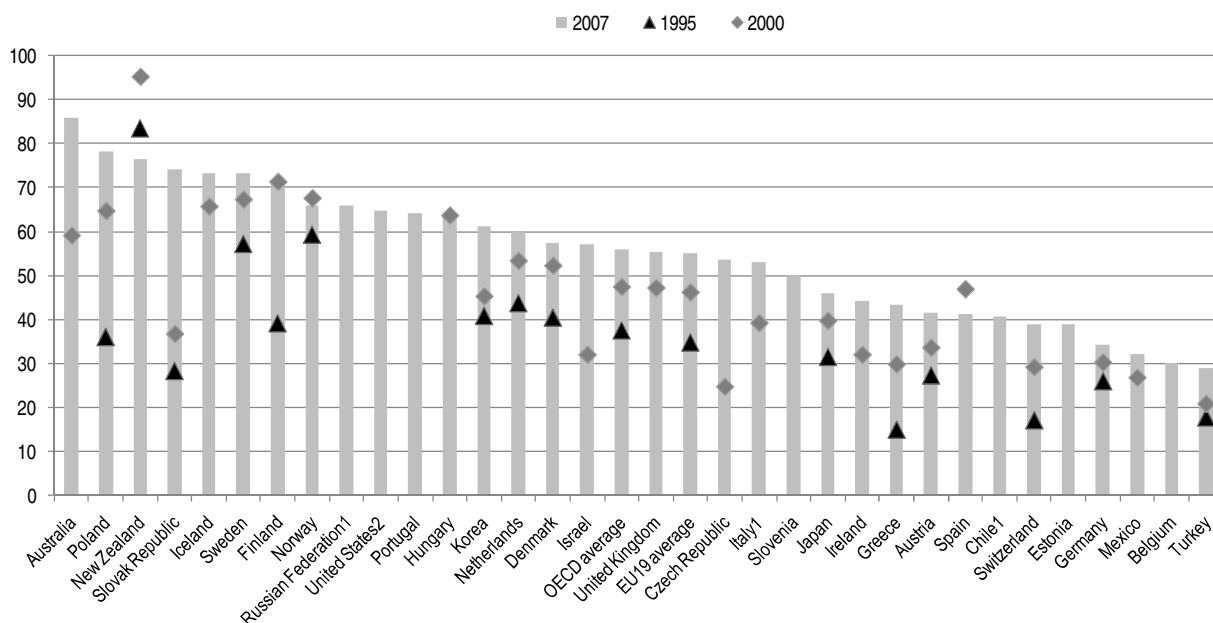
Source : Denmark: Danish Ministry of Education et Rambøll Management, (2009), “Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment”, Country background report, Copenhagen; France: Délégation ministérielle à l’emploi des personnes handicapées (2009), “Parcours des personnes handicapées vers l’enseignement supérieur et vers l’emploi”, Country background report, Ministère de l’Éducation nationale, Paris; Ireland: Higher Education Authority (2009), “OECD Project on Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and to Employment”, Country background report, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin; United States: Horn and Nevill (2006), *Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions: 2003–04: With a Special Analysis of Community College Students* (NCES 2006-184), US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, DC.

Finally, transition to tertiary education is not considered in the same way in all countries. In France and the Czech Republic, it essentially concerns young adults with a visible disability, who may require relatively complex support involving pedagogical adaptations but also material arrangements to ensure their mobility both to and on campus or co-ordination of support for daily living (home assistance) and for study. In other countries, transition essentially concerns young adults whose problem is a specific learning difficulty that is not apparent and not always readily accepted as a disability by members of the university community. Such a disability requires pedagogical arrangements that are available only if the student indicates his or her particular need.

Inclusion policies increase acceptance of disability

The growing receptivity of tertiary education to students with disabilities reflects the increasing numbers of students enrolling in tertiary education in OECD countries. As Figure 2.2 indicates, entry rates in tertiary-type A education increased by nearly 20 percentage points on average in OECD countries between 1995 and 2007 (OECD, 2009a).

Figure 2.2. Entry rates into tertiary-type A education (1995, 2000 and 2007)



1. The entry rates for tertiary-type A programmes are calculated on a gross basis.

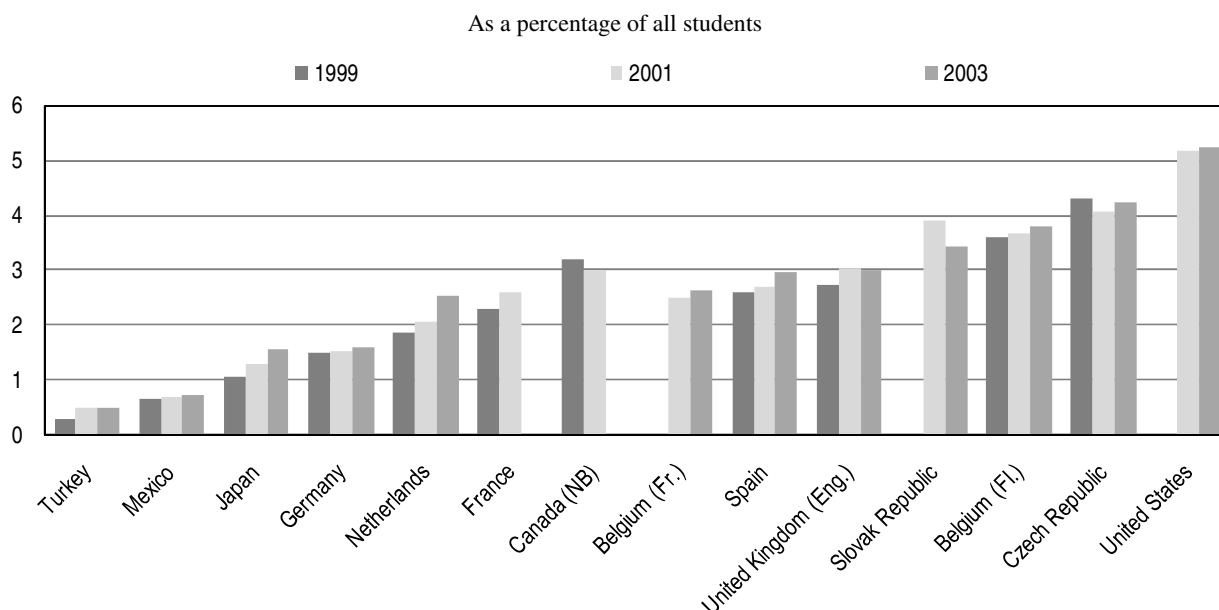
2. The entry rates for tertiary-type A programmes include the entry rates for tertiary-type B programmes.

Source: OECD (2009), *Education at a Glance*, OECD, Paris.

This growing receptivity is closely linked to the diversification of educational profiles observed in recent years. The steady growth in the ranks of students from a lower socio-economic background challenges tertiary education institutions to deal with a population that is less ready to make academic and professional choices, more exposed to the risk of failure, and more likely to drop out (Selz and Vallet, 2006; Galland and Rouault, 1996). Greater international mobility has also increased the proportion of foreign students in tertiary education institutions, which must now deal with the expectations and specific needs of students who are less at ease linguistically (OECD, 2004, 2005). The spread of vocational training and lifelong learning has also boosted the numbers of older students returning to tertiary education to follow courses related to their job or compatible with their previous experience (Douglas, 2004).

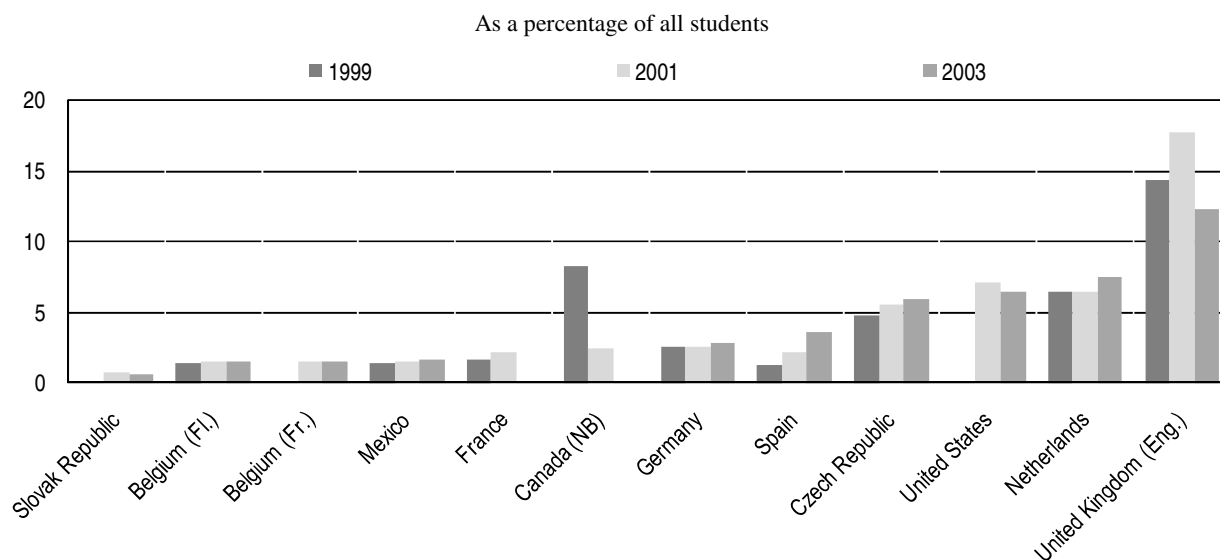
This growing receptivity also reflects the impact of policies developed since the early 1990s to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities at all levels of the education system, as a result of which a growing number of young adults with disabilities who wish to enrol in tertiary education can hope to do so (OECD, 1999, 2003).

Figure 2.3. Students receiving additional resources during compulsory education for a disability (CNC A) (1999-2003)



Source: OECD (2007), *Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Policies, Statistics and Indicators*. OECD, Paris.

Figure 2.4. Students receiving additional resources during compulsory education for a specific learning difficulty (CNC B) (1999-2003)



Source: OECD (2007), *Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Policies, Statistics and Indicators*, OECD, Paris.

As Figure 2.3 shows, the proportion of students receiving additional resources for a disability or illness has risen in many OECD countries, especially in the Czech Republic and in the United States. Figure 2.4 indicates that the proportion of students receiving additional resources for a specific learning difficulty also rose in the Czech Republic and in France between 1999 and 2003, but not in the United States.

Mobilise financial means to promote inclusion

Inclusion policies have required significant supplementary funding, in addition to that provided by the health-care and social protection systems, in order to make the education system pedagogically and socially more accessible. Information from countries on the funding provided to implement these policies differs in quality and in importance. However, few countries have reliable statistics on the impact of policies for students with disabilities and are able to identify their cost-effectiveness.

Nevertheless, the country reports reveal the growing share of resources dedicated to mainstream education of children with disabilities. The United States has increased the federal share of funding for special education by 3.1% since 2008, to the equivalent of EUR 8 billion. The portion earmarked for covering the extra costs associated with disability in the regular school system rose by 3% between 2001 and 2009 to the equivalent of EUR 1 230 per child. In 2009, the Education Department devoted 11.5% (EUR 8.3 billion) of the FY 2010 budget under the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) to the education of students with disabilities within the framework of the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA), Part B (611), and 0.5% (EUR 96 million) to the vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities (*Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Summary*; US Department of Education, 2010).

In France, disability-related spending as a proportion of GDP rose from 1.75% in 2000 to 1.91% in 2006, when education-targeted spending accounted for around 0.39% of GDP. Funding for the education of students with disabilities was boosted substantially by the *Law on equal rights and opportunities for participation and citizenship for persons with disabilities* of 11 February 2005 to nearly EUR 260 million. For example, the bureau for school education (*mission de l'enseignement scolaire*) devoted EUR 197 million in 2009 to recruiting teachers' assistants to act with children enrolled in mainstream classes on a one-to-one basis (up by 30% over 2008) and EUR 42.6 million for teachers' assistants in special classes (up by 11% over 2008). In addition, EUR 13 million was earmarked for adapted teaching materials, and EUR 300 000 to support tertiary education students with disabilities in preparatory classes for the *grandes écoles*, as well as in advanced engineering sections. France also decided to create 2 000 special classes at the upper secondary level (*unités pédagogiques individualisées*) by 2010 (Délégation ministérielle à l'emploi des personnes handicapées, 2009).

In Ireland, spending on the schooling of students with disabilities in primary and secondary education rose by 28% between 2006 and 2008 to EUR 900 million while the budget for students with disabilities doubled between 2003 and 2008 to EUR 11.7 million. This budget served to triple the number of teachers' assistants between 1997 and 2006, bringing the total to 10 000; it quadrupled the number of resource teachers between 1998 and 2008 and raised the number of teachers working with students with disabilities by 300%. Sums allocated to the Fund for Students with Disabilities have increased by 42% since 2005, to EUR 2 953 per student, with amounts varying depending on the type of impairment. In the further education sector, allocations in 2007-08 averaged EUR 19 000 per student with a hearing impairment, EUR 16 000 per student

with multiple disabilities, EUR 14 000 per student with a visual impairment, EUR 10 000 per student with an autistic disorder, EUR 3 500 per student with a learning difficulty, and EUR 2 000 per student with a psychological disorder (Higher Education Authority, 2009).

Very little information is available on funding for educating children with disabilities in other countries participating in the project. Norway could not identify resources specifically devoted to their education and training; these amounts are included in the lump-sum allocations to municipalities and counties based on their demographic profile and are not identifiable as such. The report indicates, however, that spending on the national system of special education amounted to nearly EUR 77 million in 2009 and funding to private institutions for the education of students with disabilities stood at EUR 18 million, while EUR 1 million went to training centres enrolling apprentices with disabilities.

Denmark provided no data on financing for the education of children and young adults with disabilities. Its report noted however that the budget for support to students with disabilities in tertiary education rose by 23% between 2004 and 2006 to EUR 6 million. In 2006, the handicap supplement amounted to EUR 7.3 million.

Promoting equity: a responsibility of educational institutions

An educational approach to disability

The growing number of students with disabilities in tertiary education reflects initiatives to make the education system more equitable and to allow every individual's active participation in facilitating social and professional inclusion. The equity requirement reflects a gradual shift away from the diagnostic approach to disability, which emphasises what children with disabilities and young adults cannot achieve, in favour of an educational perspective which relates disability to the capacity of the education system to place every student, regardless of his or her particular circumstances, on an equal footing in terms of access, outcomes and prospects (UNESCO, 1994; WHO, 2001; UN, 2006). In Ireland, the definition of disability in the *Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act* emphasises the means to be mobilised to allow a person with a disability or a specific learning difficulty to exercise his or her legally recognised right to education; the *Disability Act* of 2005 requires secondary and tertiary education institutions to ensure that meeting students' educational needs is an integral component of their activity. In Norway, the 2001 White Paper entitled *From User to Citizen* considers disability in terms of the barriers that make it difficult for persons with disabilities to access education and employment and thus hinder their full participation; it gives priority to ensuring accessibility rather than focusing on impairment. The Danish agency responsible for allocating support to tertiary education students with disabilities considers disability a functional or psychological limitation that temporarily or permanently denies children and young adults equal opportunities of access to and success in secondary or tertiary education.

France's law of 11 February 2005 adopted a definition of disability: "a disability is any limitation on activity or restriction on participation in social life that a person suffers in his or her environment because of a substantial, lasting or definitive damage in one or more physical, sensory, mental, cognitive or psychological functions, a multiple disability, or a long-term health problem". The Czech Republic, where inclusion policies are even more recent, retains a diagnostic approach, which considers disability as a

physical, mental, visual, auditory or multiple impairment, a language problem, an autistic disorder, a specific learning difficulty or a behavioural difficulty. In this way it refers the learning difficulties that students with disabilities may have to a medical condition, a long-term illness, or a minor impairment that hinders behavioural or learning capacities and must be taken into consideration from the educational point of view.

These differences affect the profiles of tertiary education students who are considered disabled. Countries in which the diagnostic approach of disability prevails (or which, like France, have moved beyond that approach only recently) mainly identify students with an impairment (motor or sensory) as having a disability. Countries that have adopted an educational approach to disability link it instead to the inaccessibility of the education system and identify for the most part as disabled those students with a specific learning disability.

Accessibility, a requirement for equity

The equity requirement means that the education system must adapt to the diversity of educational profiles and be pedagogically, physically, socially and psychologically accessible. In Denmark, schools must ensure that students with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities and treatment, and the Ministry of Education must provide the compensatory aids which a person with a disability needs in order to be able to follow the same courses as peers without disabilities and succeed academically. In France, schools are required to take positive measures for students with disabilities and to adapt academic pathways physically as well as pedagogically. In Ireland and Norway, schools must make arrangements to reduce as far as possible the impact of disability on a student's academic performance, and each tertiary education institution is expected to have a service that deals with disability issues. In the United States, the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires schools to provide reasonable accommodations or auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities. In Norway, schools must ensure that students with disabilities have the same chances of success as other students. In the Czech Republic, every school is required to have a pedagogical and career guidance counsellor, to provide the necessary teaching and technical aids, and to support students throughout their school career.

The accessibility requirement does not take the same form in tertiary education as in secondary education. They are usually under a legal obligation to make appropriate arrangements for persons with educational needs resulting from a disability or a specific learning difficulty which has been medically or psychologically certified. Nevertheless, they are expected to create an educational environment that will facilitate success for all students, particularly the most vulnerable. In many countries, they are asked to make disability issues part of their institutional policy and to prepare action plans backed by operational provisions and establish the services to implement them. In Norway, tertiary education institutions are required to observe standards of universal accessibility and to establish co-ordination units in which representatives of students with and without disabilities, ministries and the university can discuss disability issues three or four times a year. In the United States, universities must make reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. In Denmark, they are expected to ensure physical accessibility and to adapt the course of study to the needs of students with disabilities so that they receive the same education as the general population. They must take steps to identify the educational needs of students indicating a disability or a specific learning problem at the beginning of the academic year, after which they must apply for funds from the authorities responsible for financing support and make the necessary arrangements in

terms of examinations, teaching aids and technical support. In Ireland, as in Denmark, it is up to the university, as part of its responsibilities under the right to education, to submit an application on behalf of the student for financing from the Fund for Students with Disabilities: that application form includes a registration form, a document certifying the student's special education need or disability, and a statement of the assistance required.

The accessibility requirement takes different forms in different countries. In Norway and Denmark, accessibility is an integral part of the mission of schools and universities, which are required to be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities. These countries do not have legislation prohibiting discrimination or have only recently adopted an anti-discrimination law; in Norway, it came into force in 2009. This legislation associates lack of accessibility with a form of discrimination and requires schools as well as employers to make their premises accessible in accordance with universal design standards. Danish legislation does not formally prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities except for employment. However, it effectively bans discrimination in education by stipulating that students with disabilities must have the same opportunities as others for success. In this respect, transition to tertiary education depends on the ability of the education system to consider the diversity of educational profiles without ignoring the specific characteristics of children and young adults who have a disability, a long-term illness or a specific learning difficulty.

These countries differ from Ireland, France and the United States, which have adopted legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination based on disability and requiring institutions to take steps to give equal opportunities to upper secondary school students and young adults with disabilities. The French *Law on equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship for persons with disabilities* of 11 February 2005 requires schools to enrol any person with a disability or a long-term health problem residing in their catchment area and to take positive measures on that person's behalf. Irish law treats as discrimination any refusal or inability to make reasonable accommodation for the needs of persons with disabilities. American legislation is stricter, especially for schools. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) requires schools to ensure that students with a disability are on an equal footing in terms of access and academic success, while the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) of 1990 requires tertiary education institutions to make the necessary arrangements for accessibility at no cost to the student.

In this respect, these countries differ from the Czech Republic, which does not have very stringent anti-discrimination legislation. While the education law guarantees equal opportunity in education and prohibits any form of discrimination on grounds of health, the requirement applies only to public institutions of higher education. Moreover, a school director or principal may legally refuse to admit a child with a disability, but the decision must be justified.

These differences can affect the chances of young adults with disabilities to enter tertiary education. Their chances are greater in countries with laws that prohibit any form of discrimination because of a health problem or a disability and that oblige educational institutions to offer all students equal opportunities for success, than in countries where such legislation is weak or non-existent. In the Czech Republic, for example, students with disabilities enrolled in ISCED 5B tertiary education represent only 0.08% of the student body in that stream, while in the United States 11% of such students declared a disability (Horn and Nevill, 2006).

Anti-discrimination laws make secondary and tertiary education institutions responsible for including the diversity of educational needs in their mission, developing a strategy within their action plan, and offering, under more or less clearly defined conditions, the human, technical and financial resources needed to make them accessible to all students. By requiring schools to enrol all applicants presenting a disability, a specific learning difficulty or a long-term illness, the French *Law on equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of persons with disabilities* of 11 February 2005 has done much to strengthen their chances of access to education. The proportion of students with disabilities enrolled in lower and upper secondary education rose for example by 18% between 2006 and 2007. These anti-discrimination laws also prevent students with disabilities from being caught up in the diversity issue (ministère de l'Éducation nationale and ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, 2010). Danish and Norwegian student services do not always pay sufficient attention to students with disabilities as part of their concerns, and may thus deny them the support available to the population as a whole.

Empower high school students and high schools to ensure inclusion

The growing numbers of students with disabilities in tertiary education also reflect the technical, human and financial resources that countries have devoted to enabling secondary and tertiary education institutions to meet the demand for accessibility and to support young adults with disabilities in satisfying academic, social and professional requirements.

Give students with disabilities equal opportunities to succeed

The growing number of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education is closely related to the additional resources for ensuring that they have equal opportunities for access and success. Allocation of these resources depends on the learning needs identified during the pedagogical and psychological assessments conducted by the institutions or by specialised teams. They are supposed to be formalised in an individual education plan (IEP) which establishes the objectives pursued, the means allocated and the methods of evaluation.

These resources may be used to facilitate access to course content. In Ireland, they take the form of technical aids provided by the schools, transport and summer programmes. They also cover 84 education assistants for Roma students (nearly half of them), and support students with a hearing impairment (a third of them) and a visual impairment (16% of them). In Denmark, students with disabilities receive support in the form of a sign language or LPC¹ interpreter, while in France 8.4% of students with disabilities enrolled in mainstream education in 2006 had the services of a teacher's assistant, and 8% received adapted learning materials.

These resources also take the form of pedagogical arrangements to facilitate academic progress and success. These include a possible extension of the course of study. In the United States, for example, high school students with a disability can remain in secondary schooling through the age of 21. In Norway, upper secondary students with disabilities may extend the course by two years if included in their IEP. In France, examination candidates may be allowed to carry their marks over from one year to the next and spread

1. The LPC method (also named verbo-tonal method) is a technique associating movements of the hands and lips.

the tests over several sessions. These arrangements can also relate, as in Denmark, to the number of subjects studied, the timetable, or teaching practices.

Special examination arrangements are another form of support granted to upper secondary school students with disabilities. In Ireland, students with disabilities enrolled in upper secondary education are entitled to special arrangements in certificate examinations such as sign language interpreters, readers, scribes, adaptation of the format of questions, use of Braille, tape recorders and adaptive technology as well as exemptions. According to the country report, 54% of students with disabilities who prepared the leaving certificate in 2007 and 58% of those working for the applied leaving certificate were exempted from tests or were given spelling and grammar exemptions (Higher Education Authority, 2009). In addition, 27.9% of students and 30.8% of those preparing for the applied leaving certificate received reading support. According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2) in the United States, among students with disabilities who received assistance because of their disability, 68% of those benefiting from special arrangements, support and services had additional time to complete tests. In addition, the testing methods differed for 9% and 5% had different tests (Newman *et al.*, 2009).

Information on modes of funding provided in the reports varies in its scope and quality. However, the financing of these resources differs by country and destination. Support for secondary school students with disabilities may be funded from the institution's budget for legally required pedagogical accessibility, as in the United States. It may also be covered by funds specifically earmarked for the student's identified learning need in addition to the institution's budget. In Denmark, funding comes from the Danish educational support agency (*Styrelsen for Statens Uddannelsesstøtte*), which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In Norway, additional resources allocated to schools are proportionate to the number of students with special needs education. In France, pedagogical adaptations are financed by the local education authorities (*rectorats*) following procedures set out in the student's personalised academic programme and subject to validation by the Commission on the Rights and Autonomy of Persons with Disabilities (*Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées* – CDAPH) on the recommendation of the Departmental Offices for Persons with Disabilities (MDPH).

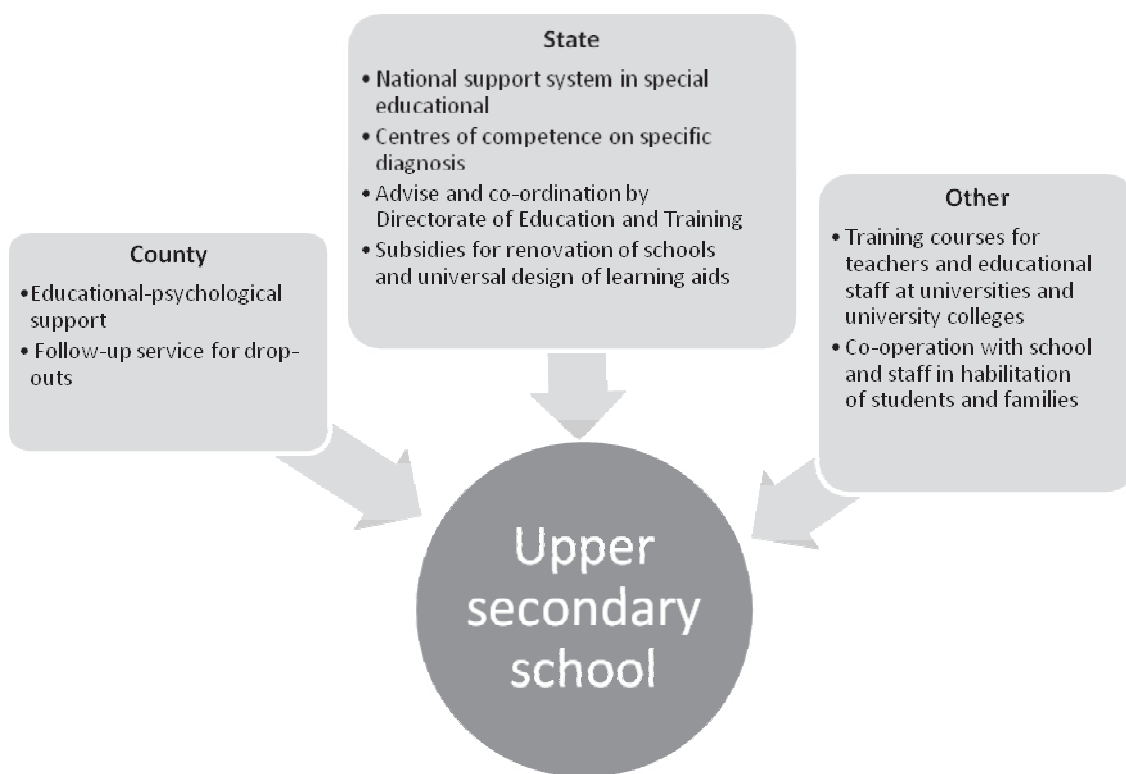
This support may also be correlated, as in Ireland, with the institutional profile, the number of students with disabilities enrolled, the type of disabilities and their degree of severity. For students with a “low-incidence disability”, schools benefit from a weekly “resource teaching” time allowance, depending on the type of disability. Four hours are allotted for students with a sensory impairment, three hours for those with a motor deficiency, and five hours for an autistic disorder or a severe specific learning disability.

When students have a high-incidence disability, schools allot 90 minutes of supplementary instruction, thereby ensuring a minimum of 2.5 hours of instruction in subgroups of students with the same support needs. Secondary schools with fewer than 600 students are provided with teaching support hours equivalent to 0.7 of a full-time teacher each week to meet the needs of students with difficulties in reading or maths, while those with a larger student body are eligible for teaching hours equivalent to 1.2 full-time teacher.

Mobilise schools to focus on the diversity of educational profiles

The growing proportion of upper secondary school students with disabilities applying for tertiary education is also attributable to the methodological support offered to institutions. In Norway, guidance services financed by the counties help to prevent dropouts, while the psycho-educational support services help to diversify pedagogical organisation and to differentiate teaching practices (Figure 2.5). The national special education support system, the specialised diagnostic centres, and the government-run councils co-ordinated by the education and training directorate provide support to the schools in assessing needs, in preparing the IEP, in adapting pedagogical practices and differentiating pedagogical organisation, and in co-ordinating support to students. In France, the Special Education and Home Care Services (SESSAD) provide support for students with disabilities, offering advice on specific aspects of their impairment and its pedagogical implications, making other children and parents aware of the importance of welcoming a child with disabilities, and thus making it easier for teachers, other children and parents to accept them. The academic authorities have instituted networks of “resource teachers” to counsel, assist and support teachers in upper secondary education. In Denmark special funding is available to schools for their assessment activities, pedagogical innovations, and research and dissemination of studies.

Figure 2.5. Support services provided to secondary schools enrolling students with disabilities in Norway

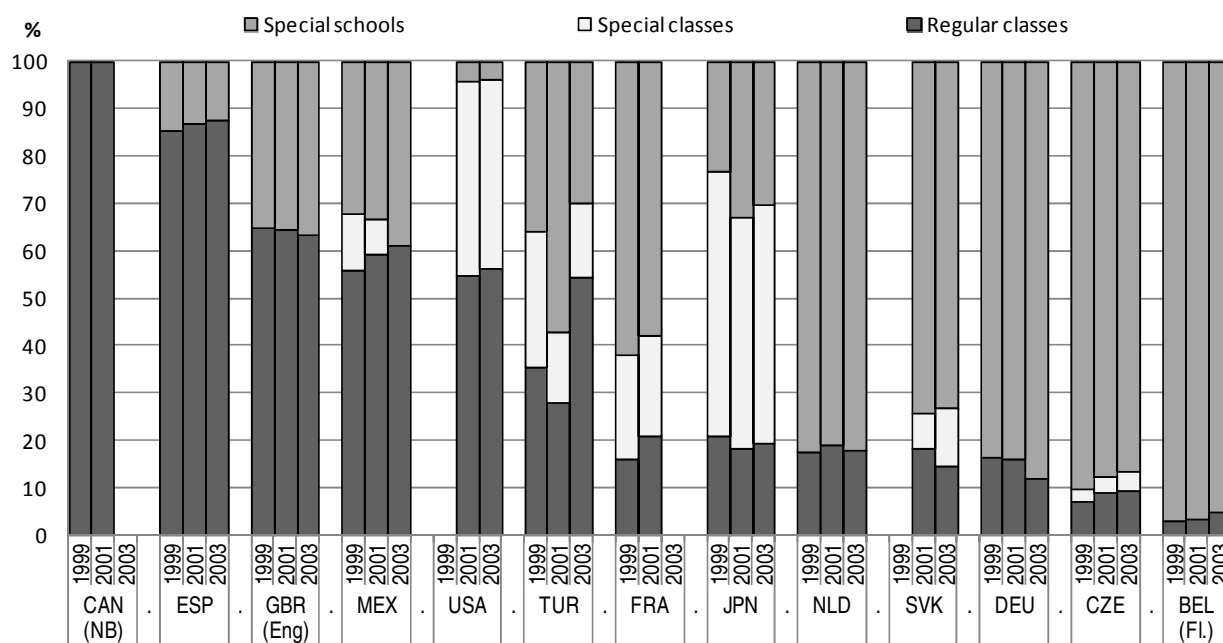


Source: Legard, S. (2009), “Pathways from Education to Work for Young People with Impairments and Learning Difficulties in Norway”, Work Research Institute, Oslo.

Training for teachers and principals is another form of support to schools. In Ireland, more than 15 000 teachers received professional training in 2007 from the Special Education Support Service. France has improved teacher training and made pedagogical and digital resources available. It has also created a training course for upper secondary school teachers and principals to help them work with students with disabilities.

Owing to the lack of statistics it is not possible to assess fully the impact of these resources on secondary school students with disabilities. However, joint action targeted at young adults with disabilities and schools is an important factor in opening institutions to diversity and in the empowerment of students and their families (OECD, 1999). Additional resources, particularly financial resources or resources for meeting examination requirements, are considered essential to their academic success by 40% of high school students with disabilities in Norway and by a majority of American students (Bjerkan and Veenstra, 2008; Newman *et al.*, 2009). In France, for example, the number of students with disabilities enrolled in upper secondary education rose by 10% between 2005 and 2007, and it quadrupled in the Czech Republic between 2006 and 2008 (ministère de l'Éducation nationale and ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche, 2010; Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic, 2009). As Figure 2.6 shows, the proportion of students with disabilities enrolled in regular classes and receiving additional resources for a disability increased between 1999 and 2003 in most OECD countries.

Figure 2.6. Students receiving additional resources for disability or illness, by type of schooling (CNC A) (2003)



Source: OECD (2007), *Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties and Disadvantages: Policies, Statistics and Indicators*, OECD, Paris.

In Ireland, 5 934 secondary school students requested pedagogical support in 2008, and 1 220 asked for the help of a special needs assistant. Students seeking pedagogical support in secondary school most often had a severe learning difficulty (24%), an emotional or behavioural disorder (14%), a moderate learning difficulty (13%), a slight learning difficulty (13%), a physical impairment (10%), or autism (8%). This distribution contrasts with that of students requesting the help of a special needs teacher, who most frequently had an emotional or behavioural disorder (21%), a mobility impairment (18%), autism (16%), or a slight learning difficulty (16%) (Higher Education Authority, 2009).

Mobilisation of tertiary education institutions and their students

Help students with disabilities to succeed in tertiary education

Generally speaking, students with disabilities in tertiary education are entitled to the same kinds of support as in secondary education. They have the right to technical and human aids provided by the bodies in charge of compensating for disability. It is the responsibility of the institution to provide them, as necessary, with mimeographs or photocopies of targeted courses and studies, tape recordings and transcriptions, or Braille documents, to lend them specialised materials or to provide them with tutors or note takers. In Ireland, the Fund for Students with Disabilities pays for adapted learning materials (computers, printers, scanners, dictaphones), human assistance (personal assistant, note taker, educational support, specific courses) and transport costs: 3 099 students received a total of more than EUR 13 million in 2007-08, up by 52% from 2005 (Higher Education Authority, 2009). Danish young adults eligible for special education support (SPS) are entitled to assistance and counselling in respect of needs assessment, technological aids, interpreters and note takers.

Norway uses financial incentives to encourage tertiary education institutions to provide alternative forms of examination and assessment and to step up monitoring during the course of study. It also asks them to have a disability support service specifically dedicated to students with disabilities, to provide them with the technical and pedagogical aids needed for their course of study and to make special examination arrangements. In countries where universities apply admissions tests, young adults with disabilities may ask for special arrangements: interviews during the site visit in the Czech Republic revealed that in 2008, 302 students with disabilities enrolled in the Masaryk University of Brno benefited from technical aids and special forms of communication for their entrance exams, and 10% of these had taken preparatory sessions offered by the disability support service before the tests.

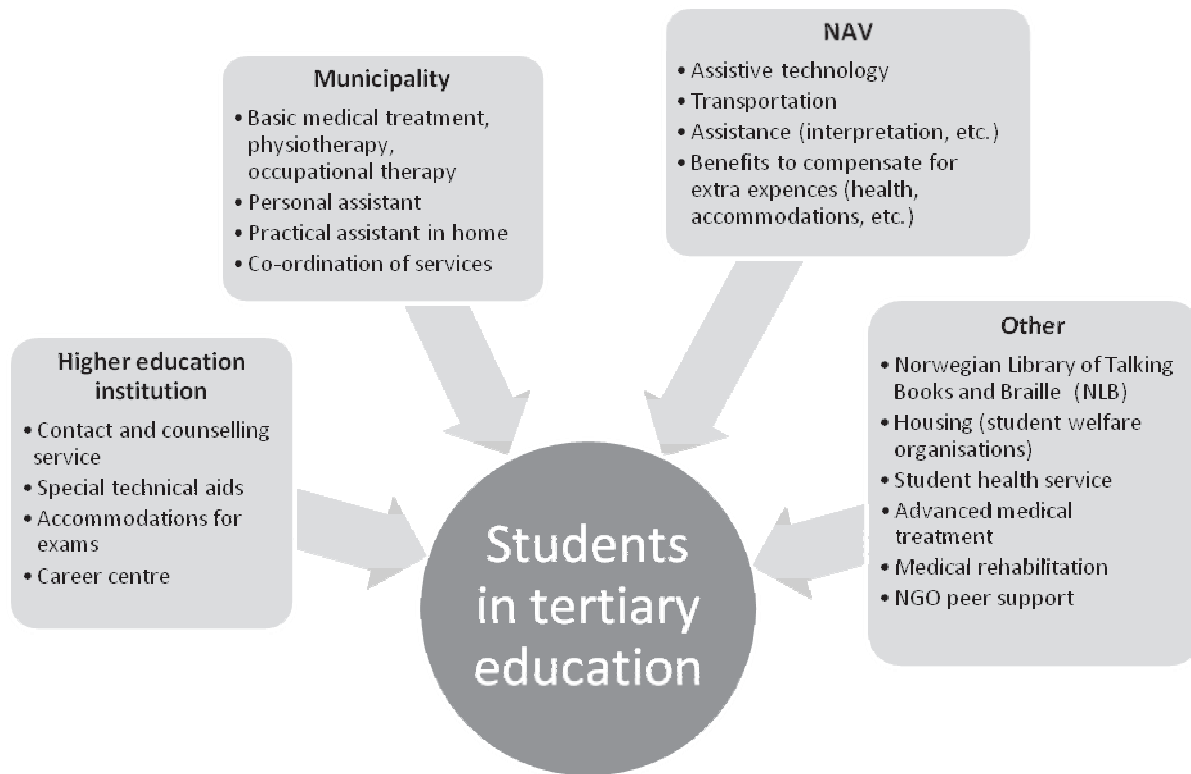
On the financial front, young adults with disabilities have access to the same financial support as the general student body. In Norway, they may, like other students, apply for a state-funded study loan or bursary (*statens lanekasse*), with the loan partially changed into a bursary if they pass their examinations. In the United States, full-time students can apply for bursaries, non-repayable grants, loans or state or federally funded allowances managed by the university. According to the country report, the Federal Pell Grant awards funding to undergraduate students and distributed nearly EUR 15 million in 2009, and the Federal Stafford Loan for undergraduate and graduate students gears the amount to the student's financial need. The loan is repaid at variable rates, with the federal government picking up the interest cost under exceptional circumstances. Students with disabilities may also apply for the allowances and loans offered by most states. For example, the Bank of America scholarship is awarded by the Learning Disabilities Associations of Arkansas and Iowa to high school seniors who plan a career in finance, commerce or

computer sciences, and a scholarship is offered by the National Center for Learning Disabilities to high school graduates with a specific learning difficulty whose qualities and conduct may serve as models to other young adults with disabilities. Young adults with disabilities may also be eligible for university-sponsored scholarships such as those offered by George Washington University in Washington, DC; these scholarships range from EUR 700 to EUR 7 000 and are awarded to 15 students with disabilities whose registration costs are paid by the vocational rehabilitation sector.

Young adults with disabilities are also entitled to funding to offset the extra costs of living with a disability or a specific learning difficulty. In Denmark, the “handicap supplement” compensates young adults eligible for the special education allowance for the loss of income linked to difficulties in accessing employment during university studies. In Norway, students with disabilities may extend their course of study by one year without jeopardising their loans or bursaries; if they are obliged to break off their studies, temporarily or not, for health reasons, their loan can be converted into a grant. Studies conducted in Norway indicate that 30% of students finance their studies with funding provided by the National Insurance Scheme by holding part-time jobs or through other arrangements (Bjerkan and Veenstra, 2008) (Figure 2.7). In France, bursaries available to students with disabilities are increased for a permanent disability or a mental health problem requiring permanent assistance by another person. Bursaries are not bound by an age limit for students whose disability is documented by the Commission for the rights and the autonomy of persons with disabilities (*Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées* – CDAPH); they can be combined with the financial resources received for their disability. Students with slight psychological disorders, a mobility impairment, or a visual, auditory or mental health problem, permanent or temporary, may apply for special bursaries on the recommendation of the Commission on the autonomy of persons with disabilities (*Commission des droits et de l'autonomie des personnes handicapées*). The award of a bursary exempts the recipient from registration fees.

Encourage universities to include disability issues in their institutional policy

The growing proportion of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education is closely linked to the resources provided to institutions (OECD, 2003). These resources may take the form of financial incentives designed to offset the additional costs that the presence of a student with special education needs may represent for the institution. Ireland devotes 1% of the annual tertiary education budget to accommodating disadvantaged groups (including students with disabilities), while the Higher Education Authority allocates EUR 42.50 an hour for additional learning support and has adopted a per capita financing formula for certain categories of disabilities to improve efficiency and enhance strategic use of the available resources in institutions. In 2009 the United States devoted 1.3% of its budget for persons with disabilities (transition, technical assistance, research, staff preparedness, services to persons with disabilities or financial assistance) to projects designed to support tertiary education. According to information provided by the report, in 2010, 78% of this budget went towards financing scholarships or loans which universities may allocate to the neediest students. In France, tertiary education institutions are given an annual budgetary envelope calculated in light of the costs of support and arrangements provided to students with disabilities.

Figure 2.7. Types of support to students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education in Norway

Source: Legard, S. (2009), "Pathways from Education to Work for Young People with Impairments and Learning Difficulties in Norway", Work Research Institute, Oslo.

Financial incentives may also seek to support pedagogical innovation, skills upgrading of institutional staff or research into tertiary education and training for young adults with disabilities in tertiary education. The US Department of Education supports model demonstration projects to ensure that students with disabilities receive a tertiary education experience of high quality. Grantees must develop effective teaching methods to enhance the skills and abilities of postsecondary faculty working with students with disabilities. Ireland's New Strategic Innovation Fund, created in 2006, finances projects that support an education policy to improve the quality of instruction and the academic level of students and to promote lifelong learning.

The incentives may also be methodological in nature. France encourages staff responsible for the admission and support of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education to share their practices and experience through networking; less frequently, it offers specific training courses. The United States has created a federal technical centre within the Department of Education to support efforts to improve the enrolment rate of students with disabilities in tertiary education, and it is planning to offer tools to universities in the form of good practice manuals identifying ways and means of improving the quality of admission and support. In addition, the Tertiary Education Commission of New Jersey administers a budget of USD 1.6 billion (EUR 1.2 billion) for the Special Needs Grant Programme, which is allocated to the regional centres that support the state's tertiary education institutions and their students. Norway has created a

resource centre based in Trondheim to inform young adults with disabilities about the degree of accessibility of institutions and to advise universities on matters such as universal design, teaching aids and special examination arrangements. In Ireland, the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) provides admissions and support staff help in exchanging information on problems and solutions. This network of advisors has drawn up a guide for university personnel to raise their awareness of disability issues and encourage them to take account of the diversity of student profiles.

These financial and methodological incentives have made universities more receptive to the diversity of educational profiles. In Ireland, the number of students with disabilities in tertiary education deemed eligible for support nearly doubled between 2005 and 2008, and spending rose by 42% to EUR 11.6 million. The number of young adults enrolled in further education courses benefiting from the Fund for Students with Disabilities quadrupled between 2003 and 2008 to 401 individuals, for an amount of more than EUR 3 million, *i.e.* a 400% increase (Higher Education Authority, 2009). The site visit revealed that the number of services provided to students with disabilities at Trinity College Dublin rose by 70% between 2006 and 2008, and involved primarily adaptation of books (28.9%), photocopy (25.4%), and training in the use of technical aids (13.1%).

In the United States, the number of tertiary education institutions accepting students with disabilities has risen by 90% since 1990 (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2000). According to the NLTS2 survey, in addition to the special examination arrangements described earlier, young adults with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education were granted tutors (31.0%), note takers (26.0%), technology aids (11.8%), readers or interpreters (10.1%), learning/behaviour management support (10.1%), early registration (6.6%), independent living support (3.9%), physical adaptations to classroom (3.1%), and books in Braille (Newman *et al.*, 2009). The country report from Denmark shows that the number of special education support beneficiaries rose from 0.5% to 0.7% of the total student population between 2004 and 2006; funds were allocated for interpretation services (30.6%), study support hours (19.1%), digital support services (16.7%), teaching materials (15.1%), support tools and instruction on their use (6.1%), educational needs assessment (5.3%), special workspace accommodation (1.7%) and courses (1.1%).

These initiatives have led tertiary education institutions to make disability a component of their institutional strategy, but with varying degrees of openness and commitment. In France, universities and the *grandes écoles* have signed a charter with the government which commits them to develop the individual and collective means needed to ensure equal opportunities for students with disabilities. The body of university presidents (*Conférence des Présidents d'Université*) and that of the *grandes écoles* (*Conférence des grandes écoles*) aim at improving the admission opportunities of young adults with disabilities. Some universities visited during the project, such as Trinity College Dublin, have adopted and implemented a policy of support for the entire university community and draw attention to initiatives to include disadvantaged students, including those with a disability or a learning difficulty. Other institutions raise awareness of the disability issue within the university community by asking each faculty to appoint a person responsible for assisting students with disabilities, for seeing that support and others arrangements are properly applied, and for maintaining links with colleagues, the administration and other students. Masaryk University in Brno has endeavoured to create a pedagogical environment accessible to students with disabilities, with an electronic study agenda, 55 specially equipped workstations with computer aids in laboratories and lecture rooms, personal assistants, tutors, note takers and sign language interpreters. It has

also developed a library with more than 1 000 volumes in Braille for students with a visual impairment.

Tertiary education institutions have also been developing special services for the admission and counselling of students with disabilities, so as to ensure a pedagogical environment that fosters their success and respects their rights (for Denmark, see Box 2.1). The University of Paris 8 has considerably expanded and upgraded the qualifications of the team working in its student disability support services, created in 2003, which define and implement admissions strategies. Personnel interviewed during the visit said they help candidates to fulfil administrative requirements, counsel them as necessary and carry out, when necessary, required administrative procedures. They also arrange for the necessary study aids and support: to this end they assess educational needs, identify the support required, mobilise the necessary personnel, and contact the teaching staff to ensure implementation.

Box 2.1. Guidance and support at Aarhus University, Denmark

The Counselling and Support Centre offers guidance and support to postsecondary students with a disability as well as those whose mother tongue is not Danish.

Its main responsibilities include:

1. Counselling and support services:
 - a) counselling and support for students encountering particular difficulties in their studies;
 - b) counselling and support in applying for aid.
2. Supply of special pedagogical support to students:
 - a) to apply for financing;
 - b) to implement supplemental measures;
 - c) general counselling and advice for students at the university and in other tertiary education institutions in Denmark;
 - d) guidance for persons responsible for special pedagogical support in other institutions in Denmark.
3. Research and development:
 - a) development of special counselling and support practices;
 - b) research in specific fields based on the centre's practice, such as counselling, dyslexia, inclusion of students in educational institutions and the labour market.
4. Creation of a skilled national guidance centre in adapted pedagogy:
 - a) establishment of a national pedagogical research and development centre to develop methods, gather experience and communicate knowledge on pedagogy adapted to the secondary and postsecondary school curricula in Denmark.

Source: Counselling and Support Centre, Aarhus University

These services also work closely with teachers who may need information or support in order to adapt their practice to the needs of students with disabilities. They may also pursue specific action with target groups such as students with mental health problems. For example, the disability support service of Trinity College Dublin devoted 46% of its

time in 2008 to assisting students with disabilities, 28% of its time to administrative tasks, 13% to defining and implementing projects, and 8% to computer technologies. It spent much less time at meetings outside the university (4%) and on staff training (1%).

In some countries, universities have developed special training courses for students with disabilities. In Ireland, Trinity College Dublin, in collaboration with University College Cork, has developed a certificate for students with an intellectual impairment, offering instruction in the plastic arts, applied arts and professional development. The Technology Institute Tallaght, in collaboration with the technology institutes of Blanchardstown, Carlow and Dun Laoghaire, has created a collaborative network for innovation in education and inclusive education focused on various aspects of inclusive education (learner and staff support, learning styles, problem-based learning, emotional competences, technical aids). In the United States, many tertiary education institutions have developed teaching programmes specifically geared to students with disabilities. Some specialise in a specific type of impairment, while others are more generic. When they are exclusively devoted to students with severe cognitive, intellectual or developmental problems, these programmes may teach behavioural skills and offer experience in selected jobs and functions (meal preparation) without conferring course credits. Other teaching programmes help young adults with disabilities to make contact with other students and to acquire work experience on or off campus. Still others include personalised support services (coaching, technical aids) so that the students can attend the same classes as others.

Adelphi University, for example, has a programme for young adults with specific learning difficulties designed to encourage their independence, assist them in realising their academic potential, and help dismantle barriers to their social and professional inclusion. The University of Arizona's Strategic Alternatives Learning Techniques Centre offers support to 550 postsecondary students with learning difficulties or attention deficit disorders for personalised learning strategies, educational planning, tutoring and technical aids. Institutions such as George Washington University offer remedial courses and help in finding a tutor.

Promote an education system that focuses on every student's success

Ensure transitions adapted to the diversity of students' educational needs

Beyond specific initiatives on their behalf, the growing number of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education can be attributed to the promotion of an education system that creates educational environments that are sufficiently flexible to adapt to the diversity of educational needs. Educating students with disabilities in secondary and tertiary education is an integral part of education reforms to promote equality of treatment for all students. Ireland recognises that most schools have students with special educational needs, and that an appropriate response will facilitate their success. The principles of equality and inclusion are at the core of Norway's reform of its education system. Reform 94 sought explicitly to facilitate access for students with disabilities to upper secondary school, while Reform 97 introduced individualised learning plans in secondary school. The Knowledge Promotion Reform encouraged schools to pay more attention to the diversity of educational needs. IDEA in the United States seeks to reduce dropout rates, improve academic outcomes, and enhance the cognitive and functional aptitudes of students with disabilities by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders and services in a school or district.

To achieve this, schools are encouraged to have as their goal the success of each student, regardless of his or her circumstances, social origin or ethnic group. In the United States the 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* requires education programmes to consider the potential and the prospects of every student, and to ensure that each student's knowledge is assessed (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, 2004). The Danish government expects that at least 85% of youngsters in any age group, including students with disabilities, to have an upper secondary school diploma by 2010. In France, the education monitoring team must ensure that each student's course of study is geared to learning goals consistent with the prescribed curricular content. Ireland includes students with serious difficulties in reading and maths among those eligible for additional resources, in order to encourage schools not to overlook the weakest students. This is also one of the objectives of Norway's Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006, in light of its PISA results, to induce schools to see themselves as learning organisations concerned with the success of each student, and to encourage tertiary education institutions to follow students more closely during their course of study and take measures (group work, less testing and written work) to improve their chances of success. In France, the *université/handicap* charter requires learning plans developed jointly by the institution and the student with disabilities to be both ambitious and realistic, based on concrete achievements consistent with the study path envisaged upon entry into tertiary education.

According to the reports, countries participating in the project were also committed to reducing absenteeism and the attendant risk of dropout to which upper secondary school students with disabilities are more exposed. Norway and Denmark have created monitoring services to ensure continuity into upper secondary school for the most vulnerable students (particularly those with impairments, behavioural problems or learning difficulties) and to avoid the risk of dropout. The Norwegian guidance services work with schools to encourage dropouts to return and complete secondary school. Danish high school students can, if they wish, receive weekly psychological counselling to help them overcome their difficulties or fears, and frequent absentees are called to the principal's office to discuss their situation. In the United States, the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities provides methodological support for building states' capacities to increase school completion rates.

Pedagogical flexibility also contributes to the success of every student, since the presence of students with disabilities is considered beneficial for the entire education system. Accessibility for all is generally based on establishing the conditions for the preparation, implementation and completion of an individual education plan. IDEA requires such plans to identify the ways in which the learning programmes will improve students' academic, developmental and functional aptitudes and facilitate the move to post-academic activities. As a way of increasing the success rate, Norway requires universities to establish an IEP for every student enrolled, whether or not that person has a special education need.

Excellence also requires secondary and tertiary education institutions to be accountable. Some countries have adopted a set of tools for tracking the performance of education systems. For example, in the United States IDEA obliges state education agencies to track the performance of their educational systems, and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) uses indicators to monitor their performance. Indicator No. 1 is the proportion of high school students with an IEP graduating with a regular diploma, while indicator No. 2 is the proportion of students with an IEP who have dropped out. School surveys have also been conducted to determine what students (including those with disabilities) have learned and the conditions under which students with disabilities

pursue their studies, as well as the impact of practices on their academic progress and success. Norway requires schools to report annually to the Ministry of Education on initiatives to enhance their accessibility and to maximise students' chances of success. In France, the law of 11 February 2005 provides for the regular evaluation of legislative measures such as those for education and access to employment.

The promotion of a school for all that is concerned for the success of all students, regardless of their circumstances, has been decisive in increasing access to postsecondary education. It has allowed a growing number of students with disabilities to go on to tertiary education and has strengthened equality of opportunity and treatment for such students. One result of Norway's tracking services is that 50% of students who have dropped out eventually finish their secondary school programme, and its "quality reform" is widely recognised as having reduced the postsecondary failure rate substantially. In the United States, the proportion of students with disabilities dropping out of high school fell by 20% between 1993 and 2003, and the percentage of those earning a high school diploma jumped 43% between 1996 and 2005 to 57% of all high school graduates. The proportion of young adults with disabilities leaving high school with a certificate rose by 6% over the same period (NCES, 2008).

Mobilise the education system around students' prospects

With the exception of the Czech Republic, where the transition to tertiary education and employment is not a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, countries participating in the project have (more or less recently) tasked their education systems with linking the education process to students' future prospects, their centres of interest and aptitudes, and to the various skills and qualities needed for their social and economic inclusion.

Denmark makes transition a component of school policies and students are required to draw up a transition plan at the end of primary school, setting out the future they see for themselves and the shape it might take. To this end, they receive coaching and support throughout secondary school in preparation for choosing an activity upon graduation, in line with their centres of interest and their capabilities and in light of the available offer. This monitoring may be provided in the context of bridging programmes that combine coaching and instruction during the last years of upper secondary school to encourage students to pursue their studies after graduation or to earn qualifications recognised by the labour market. In the United States, the individual education plans prepared by schools must include elements relating to the student's future, as of age 16 or earlier, in a transition plan that specifies the student's centres of interest, educational objectives, and ways of achieving them, as well as the monitoring arrangements proposed by the school.

In Norway, schools must provide counselling to students (including those with a disability or a specific learning difficulty) regarding their educational and career choices. France has recently begun to encourage active guidance counselling for all upper secondary education students to help them make informed choices based on objective information about the content and prerequisites of the programmes they wish to enter, the occupations to which this learning may lead, and their career opportunities. Along the lines of the transition year programme established for students after completion of lower secondary education and before the start of upper secondary education, Ireland has established an experimental transition year unit, piloted by the Higher Education Authority together with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). This year is meant to allow upper secondary school students to explore their university

and career options in light of their centres of interest and their aptitudes and to identify available support and services to meet their particular needs if they have a disadvantaged background or a disability.

Schools therefore now have staff responsible for making students aware of their future prospects, and many have a staff guidance counsellor to advise students on the conditions of access to tertiary education and the career opportunities for which education programmes prepare them. In Norway, for example, selected teachers are asked, in addition to their teaching duties, to help students with disabilities to prepare their transition to tertiary education or employment, to make the necessary arrangements to enter tertiary education as early as possible, and to integrate the issue of transition into the individual education plan as of the third year of secondary school. In France, providing active guidance to students with disabilities is the responsibility of the head teachers, the teachers in charge of the IEP, and to a lesser extent the guidance counsellors, whose role is to encourage high school students (including those with disabilities) to identify as soon as possible the university courses that correspond to their centres of interest, relying where necessary on information provided by the guidebook for tertiary education students with disabilities prepared by the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Research, and to obtain information from those responsible for university education. In the United States, teachers are expected to support high school students with disabilities in preparing their IEP, to participate in related meetings and to see that the necessary conditions are in place for achieving the objectives defined by the student, together with the players involved in the process (Department of Public Instruction, Department of Workforce Development, Department of Health Services, 2009).

Upper secondary schools are also encouraged to become integrated into their environment and to make students aware of labour market and tertiary education requirements. These linkages may be formal, as in Denmark, where they take the form of education programmes with a component that specifies academic and professional requirements or programmes that combine general and professional instruction in working internships to make students aware of labour market demands. As with the secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs) in the United States, these linkages may also take the form of education programmes that allow high school students to take university-level courses to prepare them for the requirements of tertiary education and even obtain course credits. These linkages may also take the form of networks, such as the Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology (DO-IT) programme at George Washington University to prepare high school students with disabilities for the demands of tertiary education and introduce them to the use of new technologies, the role played by peer support, and on-the-job learning. This programme provides young adults with disabilities with portable computers, software and technical aids which that they can use at home, at school or at work to network with their peers, members of their programme team and tutors. These linkages may also take the form, as in France, of meetings to exchange information during which secondary and postsecondary education personnel discuss their practices and, if necessary, find answers to problems encountered in the process of advancing to tertiary education.

Diversify educational opportunities

Mobilising the education system to deal with students' future prospects requires smoothing the way, for example by eliminating bureaucratic constraints that impede progress. In Ireland, for example, students in tertiary education may apply for support at

any time during the academic year and thus deal with disabilities or learning difficulties that may arise.

Smoothing the path is also made possible by the existence of bridges between the different education sectors and levels in order to diversify students' opportunities. Norway has authorised the transformation of a professional certificate into a university entrance certificate, thereby creating a bridge between general and professional programmes; students who have pursued ISCED 3B or 3C courses for two years are allowed to take a year of supplementary education validated by the university. The United States has various bridges in the form of alternative training programmes, "second chance" or alternative educational facilities, and horizontal programmes that facilitate access to tertiary education. Many universities also offer catch-up courses for young adults who fail the entry tests or cannot meet the prerequisites, and community colleges try to link their programmes to those of universities, thereby facilitating university recognition of students' course credits. Danish education programmes include internships in enterprises in the final year of upper secondary school to familiarise students with the demands of the labour market and working relations and make them more employable; students receive a skills certificate detailing outcomes and highlighting students' acquired skills. France offers university students who have taken ISCED 5A courses the possibility to switch to ISCED 5B courses and promotes validation of experience to facilitate employees' access to tertiary education and thereby strengthen the linkages between the worlds of work and education. Ireland validates knowledge acquired in ISCED 4 training, in the workplace or the voluntary sector, through the Further Education and Training Award (FETAC).

Ireland has also built new bridges between education sectors and levels in recent years. Thanks to the back-to-education allowance, 1 078 individuals (or 17.6% of programme beneficiaries) who had previously received a pension or allowance for a disability or long-term illness were able to improve their employability by strengthening their qualifications, two-thirds of them through postsecondary training (Higher Education Authority, 2009). The National Framework of Qualifications, established in 2003, facilitates the mobility of young adults seeking to extend their ISCED 4 or 5B training through courses at the ISCED 5A level by recognising the skills acquired at each stage of their educational or working career. The further education sector offers vocational education and training courses that facilitate access to employment as well as remedial instruction in preparation for tertiary education. In 2007, 331 young adults with disabilities took advantage of these arrangements, an increase of 143% over 2003, when they represented 0.07% of beneficiaries under a programme offered by this sector (Higher Education Authority, 2009).

The path can also be smoothed by special procedures or exemptions for disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities. Norway has created a special procedure whereby young adults with disabilities who lack a secondary school diploma can access tertiary education, with the proviso that they obtain this diploma during the first semester of university studies. They are also eligible for a special admissions procedure that allows them to register earlier than other students so that the necessary accommodations can be made in advance. In the United States, the *Higher Education Opportunity Act* of 2008 encourages access to tertiary education and employment for disadvantaged youth (including young adults with disabilities) by fostering partnerships between institutions serving primarily disadvantaged students and tertiary education institutions, as well as players in the business world and the labour market. Ireland has created the Supplementary Admissions Program under which young adults with

disabilities who do not fully fulfil admission requirements can have access to tertiary education; in 2006 135 individuals (or one-quarter of applicants) benefited from this provision. In France, the *handicap/grandes écoles* charter offers special treatment to young adults with disabilities and gives them access to the *grandes écoles*, while the *cordée de la réussite* (roughly “the lifeline to success”) seeks to remove the psychological and cultural obstacles that make it difficult for young adults from a low socio-economic background or enrolled in schools located in disadvantaged or rural areas to undertake the lengthy courses of study offered by the most reputable tertiary education institutions, in particular the *grandes écoles*.

Anchor students’ paths in integrated transition systems

Some countries supplement the efforts of education institutions with administrative services that are responsible for the co-ordination and coherence of the transition process. Ireland has entrusted part of this task to the Central Applications Office (CAO) which co-ordinates applications to tertiary education institutions. On their application form, students can indicate a disability which can make them eligible for the supplementary admission route if they meet the criteria. Once a student has indicated a disability, the appropriate institution is notified so that preparation for post-entry support can begin. Norway has entrusted this task to the University Admissions Service (*Samordna opptak*).

Other countries have created an institutional framework specifically for planning the transition and linking educational levels and sectors. Denmark has regional guidance centres (*ungdommens uddannelsesvejledning*) that work in conjunction with the institutions to help young adults (19-25 year-olds) as they move to tertiary education and employment, as well as regional guidance centres (*Studievalg*) specifically devoted to the transition to tertiary education. These centres encourage students to identify their centres of interest and to relate them to their aptitudes and skills and the existing offer of training or jobs. They also provide individual coaching for students who have trouble choosing a course of study adapted to their abilities and to the existing offer of training and employment. In France, the *enseignants référents* (teachers in charge of the IEP) co-ordinate and smooth the path between the different types of institutions that upper secondary students attend over the course of their academic career, including tertiary education and access to employment.

The United States would seem to be the only country among those participating in the project to have progressively aimed at developing an integrated transition system for young adults with disabilities. This transition system is based on performance indicators and statistics (such as those supplied by NLTS2) that encourage state and local authorities to include this dimension in their policies and to have at their disposal the data needed to evaluate policies and practices, information useful for local co-operation on a more or less formal basis, and the indicators needed for planning and guiding policies. Indicator No. 13 asks the states to ensure schools’ capacity to prepare upper secondary students for tertiary education, and indicator No. 14 gives the situation of students one year after leaving secondary school in terms of their access to tertiary education or employment. This transition system also supports state and institution policies by providing their agencies or authorities with the information and tools needed to optimise their transition practices and/or with the methodologies necessary for planning and implementing the transition process.

The United States has also focused some of its technical assistance for transition on co-ordinating bodies involving the states so as to create network opportunities and

national communities of practices in support of initiatives to encourage high school students with disabilities to go on to tertiary education. Networking among state and local players involved in the transition to tertiary education and employment makes it possible to share practical information about initiatives to empower young adults with disabilities and their families, such as peer learning or training for families and teachers. This transition system involves many stakeholders: in addition to teachers, parents and students, there are transition co-ordinators hired at the state level, academic advisors working in the schools, disability support services in universities, vocational rehabilitation counsellors, and employment specialists.

The move towards integrated transition systems

The transition to tertiary education remains difficult

Access to tertiary education still appears to be more difficult and uncertain for young adults with disabilities than for the general population. Growth in the number of students with disabilities is below that of the student population as a whole. While access to tertiary education rose by 8% in Ireland between 2000 and 2006, it increased by only 2.6% for students with disabilities. In the United States, only 45% of young adults with disabilities are in tertiary education four years after leaving secondary school, while the proportion for the general population is 53% (Newman *et al.*, 2009). The French country report indicates that the proportion of secondary school graduates with disabilities who enter tertiary education is only one-quarter that of the general population. In Ireland, young adults with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 29 are only half as likely as the general population of the same age to have a tertiary education diploma (8.3% versus 16%), and of the 1 713 young adults who applied in 2008 for the special arrangements provided by law, only 11.4% were deemed eligible (Higher Education Authority, 2009). In Germany, while enrolments in tertiary education rose by 5% between 2000 and 2006 for the general population, it increased by only 4% for young adults with disabilities (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007).

As Table 2.2 shows, access to tertiary education seems to be particularly difficult for young adults with a sensory, motor or intellectual impairment; the rise in the number of students with disabilities in tertiary education is due essentially to the rise in the number of students with learning difficulties. In Ireland, the proportion of students with specific learning difficulties recognised by the Fund for Students with Disabilities increased by nearly 2% between 2005 and 2007, to 67.1% of students classed as having a disability; in the United States the proportion of first-year students with a specific learning difficulty rose from 16% of students with disabilities in 1996 to 40% in 2004 (Florian and Rafal, 2008). In Denmark, the proportion with a specific learning difficulty among students receiving disability support rose by 5 percentage points between 2004 and 2006 to 66% of all students with disabilities. In Germany, the proportion of students with allergy problems increased from 52% of the group with health problems in 2000 to 60% in 2006, and the proportion of students with psychological disorders rose by 5% to 11% of the student body (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007).

Table 2.2. Evolution of the number of students with disabilities, by type of disability

	Denmark		France		Ireland	
	2004	2006	2005	2008	2005	2007
Specific learning difficulty ¹	61.2	66.0	5.4	11.5	64.5	67.1
Mobility impairment	20.2	17.2	20.1	20.5	10.1	7.7
Hearing impairment	6.9	5.4	9.9	8.7	7.0	5.2
Sight impairment	6.4	5.4	14.1	12.4	4.3	3.5
Health-related problems			23.0	19.0	4.7	5.2
Psychological disorders	3.5	4.3	11.2	9.9	1.4	3.1
Multiple disabilities					4.8	4.0
Temporary illness			4.2	4.4		
Other	1.7	1.5	12.1	12.6	3.2	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Denmark: students receiving special education support; France: students who declared a disability; Ireland: students who disclosed a disability.

1. This category corresponds to OECD category CNC B. See Box 1.1.

Source: Denmark: Danish Ministry of Education and Rambøll Management, (2009), "Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and Employment", Country background report, Copenhagen; France: Délégation ministérielle à l'emploi des personnes handicapées (2009), "Parcours des personnes handicapées vers l'enseignement supérieur et vers l'emploi", Country background report, ministère de l'Éducation nationale, Paris; Ireland: Higher Education Authority (2009), "OECD Project on Pathways for Disabled Students to Tertiary Education and to Employment", Country background report, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin.

By contrast, in Germany, the proportion of persons declaring a mobility impairment declined by 3% between 2000 and 2006 to 13% of the population of students with disabilities, and the proportion of those with a sensory defect dropped by 4% to 20% (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007). According to country background reports, a similar decline occurred in Denmark, where the proportion of persons receiving support for an impairment fell by 5% between 2004 and 2006, and in France, where the proportion of students indicating a specific impairment dropped by 6% between 2000 and 2006.

In the United States, the transition to tertiary education varies widely by type of disability. According to NLST2, those with a visual (78%) or hearing (72%) impairment are more likely to attend tertiary education than those with speech/language or other health problems (55%), mobility impairment (54%), learning disabilities (47%), multiple disabilities (35%), emotional disturbances (34%) or mental retardation (27%) (Newman *et al.*, 2009).

These difficulties show that, despite the efforts made, countries find it difficult to create an integrated transition system that:

- makes the move between education levels and sectors part of the mission of secondary schools and universities;
- ensures co-ordination among the levels and sectors of intervention;

- provides financial and methodological incentives as regards transition and empowers young adults with disabilities, institutions and stakeholders involved in the transition process;
- equips stakeholders and systems to take innovative action and pay due attention to the students' future prospects;
- enables young adults with disabilities to meet the demands of tertiary education and employment;
- provides mechanisms and tools for planning, co-ordinating and piloting transition policies and processes.
- is organised within an institutional framework devoted to the transition issue.

Reinforce synergies among actors involved in the transition process

Transition to tertiary education is hindered by a lack of synergies among actors involved in the transition process, owing to the compartmentalisation of the different education levels and of the education and other systems involved in the transition of young adults with disabilities to tertiary education. The lack of linkages between secondary and postsecondary institutions is a major obstacle to the continuity and coherence of their academic career. High schools rarely give universities information about their students, and linkages between institutions often depend on individual initiatives; these may be too sporadic to ensure the co-ordination of institutional strategies needed to build lasting bridges. In Ireland, only two technology institutes in five, for example, have systems for contacting students with disabilities in upper secondary school, and only one in five holds “open house” days targeted specifically at secondary school students with disabilities (Mulvihill, 2005).

This lack of synergies is also related to the absence of co-operation between universities' internal advisory and support services and external support structures, and with families (Newman, 2005; Commission for Social Care Inspection, 2007; Ebersold, 2005; Dee, 2006). This lack of co-operation reinforces the sharp break between administrations dealing with children and adolescents with disabilities and those responsible for supporting and assisting adults. It reinforces the compartmentalisation of those responsible for accessibility at secondary and tertiary education levels and those who define the aid and support related to the compensation of an impairment or to non-academic activities. As a result, stakeholders in the transition process lack an overall vision of the modalities of transition; young adults with disabilities and their families, as noted by Denmark, are obliged to contact many agencies and structures in order to establish the conditions necessary for their studies.

This compartmentalisation may also be linked to a lack of co-ordination at the local level, which makes it difficult to overcome the obstacles raised by the division of responsibilities between sectors and ministries. In Denmark, for example, it impedes co-operation between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Science, although in fact the responsibility for support and special arrangements in tertiary education falls to the former ministry rather than the latter. Compartmentalisation can also be attributed, as noted by Ireland, to a lack of co-operation between health and/or social affairs ministries and ministries of education or tertiary education. This compartmentalisation may also result, as noted by Norway, from poor territorial integration of co-ordination units or services. It can also be generated, as in the United

States, by a lack of financing, so that vocational rehabilitation agencies lack the resources to provide the aid and support students need to pursue their studies or to find employment upon leaving secondary school.

Optimise training opportunities for actors in the education system

Transition to tertiary education is hampered by a lack of awareness raising and training of the actors involved in the transition process. The initial training of secondary school teachers pays little attention to inclusiveness and pedagogical differentiation. While teachers are for the most part eager to adapt to a diversity of education profiles, they do not always feel well equipped to respond to the pedagogical challenges raised by students with disabilities (OECD, 2009b). The training of Czech teachers is extremely limited in this regard. In Ireland, training for first- and second-level teachers lacks a module on inclusive education. Inclusiveness training is provided essentially through continuing training and is targeted mainly at teachers interested in the issue, as part of the Special Education Support Service (SESS) created by the Department of Education and Skills or as part of the master's programme in special education needs, or through graduate courses offered by certain universities. The continuing training programme for teachers established for 2009-12 places relatively little emphasis on issues or subjects relating to the education of students and young adults with disabilities or specific learning difficulties. While France offers relatively thorough training on inclusive education issues as part of continuing teacher training, initial training of lower and upper secondary teachers devotes very few hours to the education of students with disabilities, so that many teachers feel insufficiently prepared in this area.

Initial and continuing training for personnel involved in the transition of young adults with disabilities from secondary to tertiary education and to employment contains little specific instruction relating to transition mechanisms. The United States is the only participating country to have mentioned training programmes dealing with transitions and targeted at teachers, specialised educators, rehabilitation staff, and guidance counsellors. Their aim is to reinforce their knowledge about transition services, job coaching, vocational education and training courses, competence assessments, partnership co-operation, or working with a special education curriculum that includes transition. By contrast, the inclusive education specialty that France offers secondary school teachers barely touches on transitions, and when it does so it deals primarily with transition to ISCED 3C or 4 courses. The training offered by the Ministries of Health and of Social Affairs to staff in the social and health sectors makes little or no mention of the issues involved in educating students with disabilities or in the pursuit of the training in tertiary education.

This lack of training in inclusive education exposes young adults with disabilities to prejudices on the part of teachers and may deny them the academic skills needed for tertiary education. For example, as noted by Norway and Ireland, teachers may be reluctant to change their teaching practices, especially when they have trouble identifying students with specific learning difficulties as persons who need special pedagogical arrangements and support. Their expectations for students with disabilities may be lower than for other students so that the diploma they obtain may not reflect their actual level of knowledge. In the Czech Republic, several persons interviewed saw this as a major source of these students' failure when they take university entrance examinations and felt that the support and special arrangements for sitting the examinations did not allow for overcoming the academic gap.

As a result of the lack of training in inclusive education, transition to tertiary education may be undermined by the prejudices of professionals involved in defining and implementing the transition process. Some tertiary education students interviewed said, for example, that they had been strongly encouraged to enrol in the humanities and social sciences in order to capitalise on the experience of living with their particular disability rather than to pursue their centres of interest. Others complained that their advisors had lower expectations of them than of other students and had encouraged them to look for a job immediately or to select a professionally less promising course of study.

Increase the incentives offered by funding modes

Transition to tertiary education is also hindered by modes of funding that offer insufficient incentives. By tying eligibility for support and special arrangements to full-time registration, they tend to exclude young adults with more severe and disabling impairments. Moreover, they do not always make it possible to cover accurately the extra costs occasioned by disability, long-term illness, or a specific learning difficulty. They may for example take insufficient account of the additional time students may need or of a change in direction that may become necessary during their studies as a result of disability or illness (SER, 2007). The site visits also showed that access to allowances, bursaries or loans may be more difficult for students with disabilities and that the financial support covered only a portion of the extra costs associated with a disability or illness. In the United States, students with disabilities who are financially dependent on their parents are less likely than other students with disabilities to receive financial aid in the form of grants or loans (Horn and Berkold, 1999). In Germany, resources of students with disabilities in 2006 were close to those of students without disabilities, despite the extra costs implied by their disability or illness (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, 2007).

The funding that schools receive depends essentially on the academic success of their students to the detriment of their future prospects and the means of facilitating their progress to tertiary education or employment. Schools may thus be inclined to focus on earning a diploma and may not give career guidance counsellors the opportunity to work closely with students or to undertake the necessary multidisciplinary process.

Financial incentives do not always suffice to mobilise tertiary education institutions. Their funding allocations only marginally encourage admissions and support services for students with disabilities to become involved with their environment and to create bridges to actors in secondary schools, the employment sector, the social sector and, if necessary, the health sector in order to combine optimally the different sources of financing needed for the student's success. They may even, given the budgetary pressures generated by the recent economic crisis, be counterproductive. They tend to penalise the institutions that are most receptive to enrolling and supporting students with disabilities and that are particularly attractive to such students, since the funding such institutions receive may not cover the additional costs of enrolling students with disabilities. Opening up to diversity may then appear to be a costly strategy which weighs heavily on the institution's budget.

Their funding may also may not be sufficient to encourage them to invest the amounts needed to make their premises accessible and to ensure the full mobility of students with disabilities on campus. Moreover, the support to institutions does not always reflect the increase in the number of students, especially in tight financial times, and openness to disability may be viewed by institutions as creating a financial risk. In the Czech Republic, for example, the amount allocated to Mazaryk University in Brno for the

admission and support of students with disabilities dropped between 2000 and 2008, while the number of students with disabilities it received increased by a factor of six. In Ireland, resources earmarked for the admission and support of students with disabilities have stagnated, while the number of students has been rising on average by 20% a year. Moreover, centralised funding may mean that tertiary education institutions must pay in advance for the required pedagogical adaptations, thereby running a financial risk that some, particularly the smaller ones, can hardly afford. In France, for example the capping of financial assistance provides little incentive for institutions to address the situation of students with complex disabilities, particularly since the delays in the decision-making process of the Departmental Offices for Persons with Disabilities (MDPH) do not allow for identifying clearly the support to which the students are entitled.

Funding modes do not encourage structuring the education process to fit students' educational itinerary and to build the chain of accessibility needed to ensure its continuity and coherence. They offer only limited possibilities for co-ordinating support to compensate for disability or for extracurricular activities that do not fall under the Ministry of Education to the support for access to the institutions under its responsibility. They do not always facilitate access to courses of study that include internships or ensuring workplace adaptations for the internship, especially for short-term internships. This is the case in Norway where employment services and social services do not participate in workplace adaptations for internships. In France the agencies which manage the funds for employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector (*Association de gestion du fonds pour l'insertion professionnelle des personnes handicapées* – AGEFIPH) or the fund for employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service (*Fonds pour l'insertion des personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique* – FIPHFP) are not always ready to support access to internships for young adults with disabilities.

Develop distance learning

Transition to tertiary education is also hindered by the inadequate development of distance learning. This is a very valuable source of accessibility for students with disabilities; they can pursue their studies from home, from a hospital bed, or from a place of rehabilitation. It offers previously rare or non-existent opportunities. It is also a pedagogical resource that is essential to the continuity and success of the academic career, especially in the case of evolving pathologies (mental health problems, for example) that may temporarily interrupt the education process or its extension. Distance learning also constitutes a factor of social inclusion in that it allows students with disabilities to follow their studies from the region in which they live, where they can benefit from the support of family and friends who can help them to overcome the various obstacles they may face in daily life. Lastly, distance education reinforces access to education for those who are in employment or lacking in funds. In Ireland for example, the aim of distance learning is to allow those who are employed or unable to attend a tertiary education institution in the traditional way to have meaningful opportunities to participate.

Yet distance learning seems to have little place in tertiary education institutions' strategies. Few countries mentioned distance learning as a part of their transition policies, and in Norway the number of students engaged in distance learning declined by nearly 40% between 2003 and 2007. In France, the National Centre for Distance Education (CNED) is a public institution that offers academic and professional education to students who cannot attend a regular institution, including those with disabilities. Enrolment is

possible at any time of the year; study courses are adapted to the student's needs and the student may obtain pedagogical support from a teacher paid by the agency.

Develop reliable and comparable statistics

Transition to tertiary education is also hindered by policies that take very little account of the future prospects of young adults with disabilities. Countries rarely collect the same data for young adults with disabilities that they collect for young adults without disabilities, making it difficult to determine the impact of anti-discrimination legislation or the effectiveness of the education system's efforts for this group. Few countries have data on the rate of access of young adults with disabilities to secondary or tertiary education, their success rates, their employment upon graduation from secondary or tertiary education, or the social marginalisation of those who are neither in education nor in employment. Where they exist, such data are not always useful for comparison purposes. In the United States, for example, the 26th annual report to Congress indicated that the criteria used to calculate the success rate for secondary school students with disabilities and its trend over time are not the same as those used for students without disabilities (US Department of Education, 2004).

Moreover, few countries know how effective their technical and human support is. Most of the available data shed little light on the academic achievements and future prospects of students enrolled in secondary or tertiary education or on the enabling effect of the additional pedagogical, financial, technical and human resources allocated to them. While it is possible, for example, to identify the additional resources available to high school students with disabilities in Denmark, it is not possible to assess their effectiveness; deaf students or those with hearing problems may therefore be disadvantaged in the education process if the sign language interpreter is poor and cannot be changed during the course of the school year. While French data indicate the number of students with disabilities supported by teacher's assistants, it is not possible to evaluate what they add, so that stakeholders lack the information that would allow them to identify students' progress and the degree of complementarity between the assistants and the teacher.

This lack of data makes it difficult to correlate the allocation of additional resources with the demands of the individual education plan and the support needs identified. In Norway, inadequacies in the definition and implementation of the IEP lead to almost automatic prolongation of secondary schooling for certain types of students with disabilities, even if their educational needs do not justify it. In France and in Ireland, the assignment of a special needs assistant is not always sufficiently correlated with a properly identified educational need, and it is often difficult to assess the assistant's work. In Ireland, the absence of an IEP makes it impossible to relate schooling to precise goals or to determine the impact of the support and special arrangements stipulated by law in terms of learning outcomes or effectiveness. In the Czech Republic, the type of schooling is not explicitly linked to a precise evaluation of students' support needs and this makes the education of students with disabilities more difficult.

Today most countries are unable to identify the quality of the educational paths of young adults with disabilities and the conditions of their access to tertiary education and employment. With the exception of the United States, no country has conducted longitudinal studies to determine the impact of policies on individual academic careers. Identifying individual itineraries and contributing factors is also compromised by differences in the definition of disability between children and adults as well as by the

different methods of collecting data. Most often the data collected relate to students who have specifically advised their university of a disability or an educational need rather than to the entire population of university students with special education needs. The understanding of individual itineraries is also compromised by mismatched or overlapping population samples, since the administrative concept of disability used by countries may lead to definitions that vary depending on the administrative authority or educational sector concerned. Indeed, in many cases each authority or body responsible for delivering resources or support to persons with disabilities or institutions defines disability and groups of persons with disabilities in light of the eligibility criteria on which the provision of support depends. In France, data on children and young adults with disabilities correspond to decisions made by the relevant bodies, whereas data on students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education reflect the number of individuals disclosing their disability or difficulty. This eliminates all those who may need assistance but have not identified themselves, either through ignorance or refusal to be labelled in a particular way.

This lack of data is a serious obstacle to defining and implementing efficient transition policies that require optimisation of resources. The lack of accurate knowledge about the number and the profile of young adults with disabilities creates uncertainty regarding the use of the funding allocated to their education. The lack of data on the impact of policies and the career paths of young adults with disabilities precludes any appreciation of the value added by inclusion policies and the quality of teaching and support practices, and consequently the optimisation of the conditions of admission and support for students with disabilities. Barriers hindering the transition to tertiary education and employment only become very indirectly apparent, via the increase in the number of young adults with disabilities who receive income allowances, or the rise in the number of unemployed persons with disabilities who no longer look for jobs (OECD, 2006). Barriers may also bring to light information that is primarily qualitative, unsystematic or even anecdotal, as when teachers and support staff see the failure of students with disabilities as a result of a lack of the necessary adaptations or support.

According to the Center on Education Policy, the need for reliable data is particularly important in the United States where high school students will be required, as of 2012, to validate their secondary education by passing an “exit exam” that will be common to all students. Despite accommodations and/or alternate assessment opportunities, the examination may be more demanding than current ones and could lead to academic failure for disadvantaged students (Center on Education Policy, 2007).

Develop new piloting tools and improve those that exist

Transition to tertiary education is also hampered by the lack of tools for piloting the transition process or the inadequacy of those that exist. The centralisation of university enrolment applications is not sufficient to co-ordinate and pilot the transition process, which is not always based on an IEP. With the exception of Denmark and the United States, no country requires secondary schools to include the transition issue in their individual education plans, and institutions are thus deprived of a valuable piloting tool.

Including a transition plan in the IEP encourages institutions to make transition a component of their institutional policy and to integrate it pragmatically into their approach to the curriculum, their evaluation methods, and their guidance counselling. It also encourages institutions to be open to their environment and to take initiatives to obtain the information needed to provide support and coaching for students with

disabilities, to make those responsible for transition aware of the specific characteristics of students with disabilities, to encourage university personnel to become involved in support work, and perhaps to include in their course of study a component directly related to transition. They can develop strategies combining the educational approach to disability promoted by the social model of disability with the diagnostic approach and involving, if necessary, the disability service providers that may contribute to the student's transition plan. As noted in Norway, such strategies help to avoid overly automatic extensions of course duration for students with disabilities.

The existence of a transition plan encourages students with disabilities to think about their future at an early stage and to consider what is needed to achieve their goal. It also serves to formalise the different stages in the transition process and to mobilise appropriately the actors who contribute at different moments to the continuity and coherence of their itinerary. It also makes it possible, if necessary, to enlist parents' interest in the future of their child and to encourage them to participate in meetings, to consider the role they may play, and to acquire the skills they may need. In addition, a transition plan allows for mobilising the tools and methodologies for supporting young adults with disabilities in their career and for equipping them with a document specifying their skills and giving information about their impairment and the arrangements and support required in tertiary education.

Piloting the transition process is also hindered by the absence of an institutional framework specifically devoted to the transition issue or, as observed for Denmark's municipal and regional guidance services, by an institutional framework that takes sufficient account of the particularities of young adults with disabilities. The agencies responsible for co-ordinating the education process do not always address the question of transition. For instance, in Ireland, the special education needs organisers generally have little contact with tertiary education institutions, and in France the student advisors (*enseignants référents*) have too many students with disabilities to look after to be able to fully cover transition issues as a part of their work. The methodological tools and guides prepared for institutions and students with disabilities and their families do not always suffice to ensure that all those involved in the transition process are working towards the same objectives and co-ordinating their actions. Multidisciplinary co-ordination structures are not always able to organise the transition process around precise and measurable objectives in terms of outcomes and the piloting tools to ensure them.

Services specifically dedicated to the transition issue can also supplement the information provided by methodological guides and tools and support institutions as well as students with disabilities throughout the process. Where they exist, these services make it easier to work with the persons most in need of guidance. Teachers responsible for transition do not always have the time to ensure the flow of information among those involved in the transition plan. These services may also act as resource centres to help students with disabilities to disclose their disability or their specific learning difficulty, to ensure the continuity of support, and to work towards the commitment and involvement of all those concerned by the transition process.

Conclusion

The opportunities for access to tertiary education for young adults with disabilities have improved noticeably in recent years as a result of the inclusion policies which have allowed a growing number of pupils with disabilities or a specific learning difficulty to obtain the level of education required to enter tertiary education. Inclusion policies forbid discrimination based on disability and promote an educational approach to disability which focuses on the ability of education systems to meet the needs of young adults with disabilities. They have encouraged secondary and tertiary education institutions to include disability issues in their policies. They have also mobilised technical, human and financial resources so that institutions can ensure accessibility and young adults with disabilities can have the same access and opportunities to succeed as their non-disabled peers.

The increasing numbers of students with disabilities enrolled in tertiary education also results from policies requiring education systems to focus on each student's success, to create flexible educational environments adapted to the diversity of educational needs, to fight dropout and to include quality assurance issues in their policies. It reflects, in addition, the growing mobilisation of education systems around students' prospects as a result of the creation of services focused on transition issues and of the multiplication of bridges between educational levels and sectors.

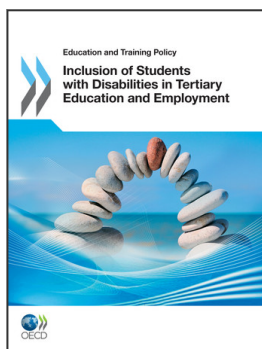
However, policies face difficulties for dealing with the careers of young adults with disabilities beyond secondary education, as their opportunities for access to tertiary education are more uncertain, especially for those with sensory, motor or cognitive impairments. These difficulties suggest that, despite progress made, education policies could be improved by developing integrated transition systems to encourage schools to be aware of each pupil's prospects, by empowering stakeholders and systems, by facilitating the development of bridges between educational levels and sectors and of local synergies so as to mobilise young adults with disabilities around their future.

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