

# Foreword

Higher education plays a more prominent role in OECD member and partner countries today than it did a half-century ago. It educates many more learners and is increasingly expected to make key contributions to innovation, economic development and lifelong learning. As the scope of higher education activities has increased – and societal expectations have grown – policy makers and institutional leaders have faced significant challenges in deciding how best to mobilise, allocate and deploy resources in higher education in ways that are both effective and efficient. Large exogenous shocks to economies and public budgets – such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic – make appropriate choices about how to invest in higher education all the more crucial.

The OECD initiated the Resourcing Higher Education Project to support member countries in narrowing the gap between domestic policy making in the area of higher education resourcing and international evidence on the subject. The project seeks to do this by analysing policy approaches that affect the mobilisation, allocation and deployment of financial and human resources in higher education and sharing lessons learned about the effects of these approaches.

As part of the project, the OECD Higher Education Policy Team has worked closely with OECD and partner jurisdictions to examine key aspects of their higher education resourcing policies; to compare these with policies in other, similar jurisdictions and to identify, where possible, international evidence that can support and guide future policy development. System-specific analyses covering multiple aspects of resourcing policy are developed and published as “resourcing country reviews”, which draw on wide-ranging, in-country stakeholder consultation, as well as local and international evidence sources. More targeted analyses of specific aspects of national higher education resourcing policies have been developed and published in a series of thematic policy briefs.

Portugal was one of the first OECD jurisdictions to participate in a review of higher education resourcing. This report presents the findings and recommendations emerging from this review, undertaken by the OECD Higher Education Policy Team. In line with the terms of reference agreed in advance with Portugal’s Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education, the review has a strong focus on core operating funding for public higher education institutions, where there is a broad consensus that a more transparent and rational allocation model must be restored. The review also focuses on policies to improve the strategic funding of the higher education system and introduce steering and accountability mechanisms that can support the system to adapt to changing demographic and economic conditions, as well as policies to promote widened access to higher education. The review team hopes that the analysis in this report captures the many strengths of Portugal’s higher education system, but equally supports public authorities, higher education institutions and stakeholders as they refine resourcing policies in the coming years.

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