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Guidelines for Quality  
Provision in Cross-Border  
Higher Education: Where  
Do We Stand?

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## DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION

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**GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY PROVISION IN CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION: WHERE DO WE STAND?****OECD Education Working Paper No. 70****Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin and Sebastian Pfothenauer**

*The Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education were developed and adopted to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the Guidelines are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers (that is, degree and accreditation mills) as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. Based on a survey about the main recommendations of the Guidelines, this report monitors the extent to which OECD countries and a few non-member partners complied with its recommendations in 2011. Twenty-three responses were obtained from 22 Members.*

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## SUMMARY

The *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* were developed and adopted to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the *Guidelines* are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers (that is, degree and accreditation mills) as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. The *Guidelines* are not legally binding and member countries are expected to implement them as appropriate in their national context.

Based on a survey about the main recommendations of the *Guidelines*, this report monitors the extent to which OECD countries and a few non-member countries comply with its recommendations. The Survey was sent out in June 2010 to all OECD countries. The Secretariat has also collaborated with the UNESCO Secretariat to have the questionnaire sent to all UNESCO non-OECD country delegations. Twenty-three responses were obtained from 22 Members: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French communities), Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States; and 9 non-Members: Bulgaria, Colombia, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Oman, Rwanda. Government representatives were asked to co-ordinate with the other stakeholders covered to answer the survey.

The main conclusion of the survey is that (responding) countries report a high level of compliance with the *Guidelines* recommendations. On average, responding OECD countries conform to 72% of the main recommendations made to governments, tertiary education institutions, and quality assurance and accreditation agencies. The level of compliance decreases to 67% when recommendations to student bodies are included, but the level of missing information, and thus uncertainty about actual compliance, increases significantly.

Tertiary education institutions are the group of stakeholders that follow the most the recommendations of the *Guidelines*, with an average compliance index of 0.80 (80%). Governments and quality assurance and accreditation bodies comply on average with 76% and 61% of the guidelines, respectively. Student bodies only conform to 51% of the recommendations – with the caveat that information about their activities was generally scant in the survey answers.

The objectives or desirable practices emphasised by the *Guidelines* are: 1) the inclusion of cross-border higher education in countries' regulatory framework, 2) the comprehensive coverage of all forms of cross-border higher education, 3) student and customer protection, 4) transparency in procedures (for providers), 5) information access and dissemination (for potential international students), 6) collaboration.

Four of these objectives are largely met on average: countries have regulatory frameworks or arrangements in place, cover different forms of cross-border higher education comprehensively, are transparent in their procedures, and are engaged in national and international collaboration. The current main weaknesses in compliance lie in easy access to information and the level of student and customer protection.

While there is probably no need for a revision of the *Guidelines*, countries should continue to disseminate and implement their recommendations. The main areas of improvement lie in measures to improve student and customer protection as well as the transparency in procedures of assessment, registration, and licensing for providers. Further progress in the ease of access of information for students would also be welcome. Paradoxically, quality assurance and accreditation bodies comply less with the *Guidelines* than governments and tertiary education institutions.

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## ***GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY PROVISION IN CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION: WHERE DO WE STAND?***

Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin and Sebastian Pfotenhauer\*

### **Introduction: the *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education***

#### ***Purpose of the Guidelines***

The *Guidelines* were developed and adopted to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The purposes of the *Guidelines* are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers (that is, degree and accreditation mills) as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs. The *Guidelines* are not legally binding and member countries are expected to implement them as appropriate in their national context.

#### ***Rationale for the Guidelines***

Since the 1980s, cross-border higher education through the mobility of students, academic staff, programmes/institutions and professionals has grown considerably. In parallel, new delivery modes and cross-border providers have appeared, such as campuses abroad, electronic delivery of higher education and for-profit providers (OECD, 2004a, 2009, 2010a). These new forms of cross-border higher education offer increased opportunities for improving the skills and competencies of individual students, the quality of national higher education systems, and also an engine for innovation and capacity development, provided they aim at benefiting the human, social, economic and cultural development of the receiving country (OECD/World Bank, 2007; OECD, 2010b).

While in some countries the national frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications take into account cross-border higher education, in many countries they were still not geared to addressing the challenges of cross-border provision when the *Guidelines* were developed. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive frameworks for co-ordinating various initiatives at the international level, together with the diversity and unevenness of the quality assurance and accreditation systems at the national level, create gaps in the quality assurance of cross-border higher education, leaving some cross-border higher education provision outside any framework of quality assurance and accreditation. This makes students and other stakeholders more vulnerable to low-quality provision and disreputable providers (also called “degree mills”) of cross-border higher education.

The challenge faced by quality assurance and accreditation systems is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers and programmes (in addition to national providers and programmes) in order to maximise the benefits and limit the potential drawbacks of the internationalisation

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of higher education. At the same time, the increase in cross-border student, academic staff, researcher and professional mobility has put the issue of the recognition of academic and professional qualifications high on the international cooperation agenda (OECD, 2004b, 2008).

The *Guidelines* addressed a need for additional national initiatives, strengthened international co-operation and networking, and more transparent information on procedures and systems of quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications. These efforts should have a global range and should emphasise supporting the needs of developing countries to establish robust higher education systems. Given that some countries lack comprehensive frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications, capacity building should form an important part of the overall strengthening and co-ordination of national and international initiatives. In this light, the UNESCO Secretariat and the OECD have worked closely together to develop the *Guidelines*. Their implementation could serve as a first step in the capacity building process, although other complementary options have been proposed meanwhile (OECD/World Bank, 2007).

The quality of a country's higher education sector and its assessment and monitoring is key to its social and economic well-being, and it is also a determining factor affecting the status of that higher education system at the international level. The establishment of quality assurance systems has become a necessity, not only for monitoring quality in higher education delivered within the country, but also for engaging in delivery of higher education internationally. As a consequence, there has been an impressive rise in the number of quality assurance and accreditation bodies for higher education in the past two decades. However, existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions.

The increased cross-border mobility of students, academic staff, professionals, programmes and providers presents challenges for existing national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks and bodies as well as for the systems for recognising foreign qualifications (OECD, 2004b). Some of these challenges are described below:

- National capacity for quality assurance and accreditation often does not cover cross-border higher education. This increases the risk of students falling victim to misleading guidance and information and disreputable providers, dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies and low-quality provision, leading to qualifications of limited validity.
- National systems and bodies for the recognition of qualifications may have limited knowledge and experience in dealing with cross-border higher education. In some cases, the challenge becomes more complicated as cross-border higher education providers may deliver qualifications that are not of comparable quality to those which they offer in their home country.
- The increasing need to obtain national recognition of foreign qualifications has posed challenges to national recognition bodies. This in turn, at times, leads to administrative and legal problems for the individuals concerned.
- The professions depend on trustworthy, high-quality qualifications. It is essential that users of professional services including employers have full confidence in the skills of qualified professionals. The increasing possibility of obtaining low-quality qualifications could harm the professions themselves, and might in the long run undermine confidence in professional qualifications.

## **Compliance with the *Guidelines*: where do we stand?**

A survey was designed by the Secretariat to measure the degree of compliance of countries and stakeholders with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* among OECD and non-OECD countries.

The Survey was sent out in June 2010 to all OECD countries. The Secretariat has also collaborated with the UNESCO Secretariat to have the questionnaire sent to all UNESCO non-OECD country delegations. Responses were received between October 2010 and February 2011. Twenty-three responses were obtained from 22 OECD member countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French communities), Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States; and 9 non-OECD countries: Bulgaria, Colombia, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Oman, Rwanda. Government representatives were asked to coordinate with the other stakeholders covered to answer the survey. The survey was also sent to regional networks of quality assurance agencies, international university associations and to the European Student Unions (ESU).

Instead of asking what countries have done to “implement and disseminate” the *Guidelines*, the survey assesses the degree of compliance of stakeholder practices with the recommendations made by the *Guidelines*. The survey comprised a total of 64 questions (mostly multiple choice questions, with the opportunity to comment and clarify responses). It was subdivided in four sections enquiring about the practices of four of the six main stakeholder groups addressed by the *Guidelines*: governments, tertiary education institutions (TEI), national quality assurance and accreditation agencies (QAA), and national student bodies. The remaining two stakeholder groups – academic recognition bodies and professional bodies – were omitted in the survey as more difficult to reach or to be accurately covered by government representatives.

This report presents the key findings of the survey. All information is self-reported by countries.

Compound indicators of compliance were constructed to synthesise the survey responses in a simple way and allow comparing the reported compliance with the recommendations and objectives of the *Guidelines*. To that end, survey questions were mapped on specific recommendations, and then weighted to reflect their contribution to a *Guidelines* recommendation or objective. The data are furthermore weighted according to the indicated implementation status (implemented, planned, not planned: see Appendix C for the full methodology). Despite some limitations, this approach allows for a straightforward comparative and visual presentation of key information. The robustness of the compound indicators has been checked by comparing the differences indexes of compliance as captured by an unweighted count of key recommendations and by the mentioned compound indicator approach: as the results are largely similar, one can be confident that the compound approach is not too sensitive to the chosen weighting. All countries were given the possibility to double-check and amend their answers, the methodology and the calculations.

The small number and heterogeneity of non-OECD respondents does not allow us to extrapolate about the situation in UNESCO, non-OECD countries.

### ***General overview***

The main conclusion of the survey is that (responding) countries report a high level of compliance with the *Guidelines* recommendations. On average, responding OECD countries conform to 72% of the main recommendations made to governments, tertiary education institutions, and quality assurance and

accreditation agencies.<sup>1</sup> However, given that one third of countries have not responded, this does not necessarily give a fair picture of implementation, as there might be a self-selection bias. The level of compliance decreases to 67% when recommendations to student bodies are included, but the level of missing information, and thus uncertainty about actual compliance, increases significantly.

Figure 1 shows the degree of compliance with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* for the stakeholder groups for which enough information is available, measured by a compound indicator between 0 and 1 for each stakeholder. An index of 3 thus corresponds to full compliance with the recommendations to the three stakeholders (government, tertiary education institutions, and quality assurance and accreditation agencies), while 0 means no compliance. The solid bars depict the minimum degree of compliance that is warranted by the survey responses. Because the actual degree of compliance may be higher than what the survey captures, either because of missing data or because of the inapplicability of specific questions to national systems, the level of uncertainty arising through data gaps is indicated by error bars: the end of the error bar indicates what the value would have been if all not answered or not applicable questions had received a positive answer. This represents the maximum possible degree of compliance for a country given information gaps and differences in countries' systems. Figure 2 shows the same information, but also displays recommendations to student bodies. Both figures only present countries for which the information uncertainty (or maximal possible error) remains below 33.3% of the index. The numeric values for all country indices are presented in Table 1 and all answers to the Survey are presented in Appendix D.

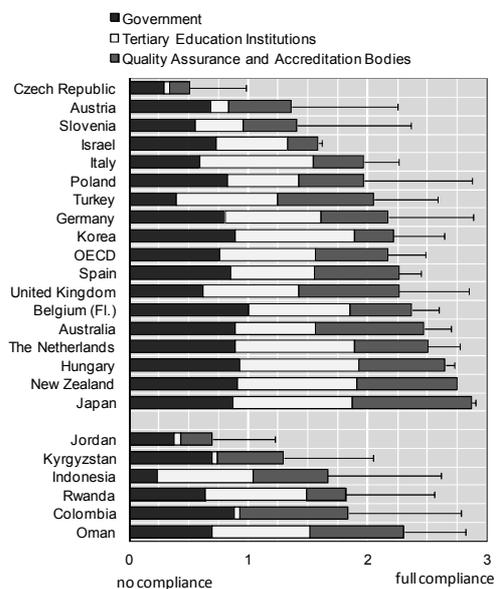
The degrees of implementation of the *Guidelines* varies strongly between countries, from 0.51 (17%) for Czech Republic to 2.87 (96%) for Japan. Note that the data uncertainty for some countries is comparably high (e.g. Austria, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom), so that cross-country comparisons must be made with caution. However, data uncertainty generally decreases with higher levels of compliance. This is not surprising given the emphasis on information of the *Guidelines*. Not being able to answer a question may correspond to a lack of compliance to all the recommendations related to easy access to information.

Of the non-OECD respondents, six provide enough answers to warrant comparison. On average, this highly heterogeneous group of countries implements 58% of the recommendations of the *Guidelines* in governments, tertiary education institutions, and quality assurance and accreditation agencies, and 53% when including student bodies, which is roughly a quarter of the total recommendations less than OECD countries. Differences among non-OECD respondents are considerable. For example, Oman complies with a larger share of recommendations than the OECD average.

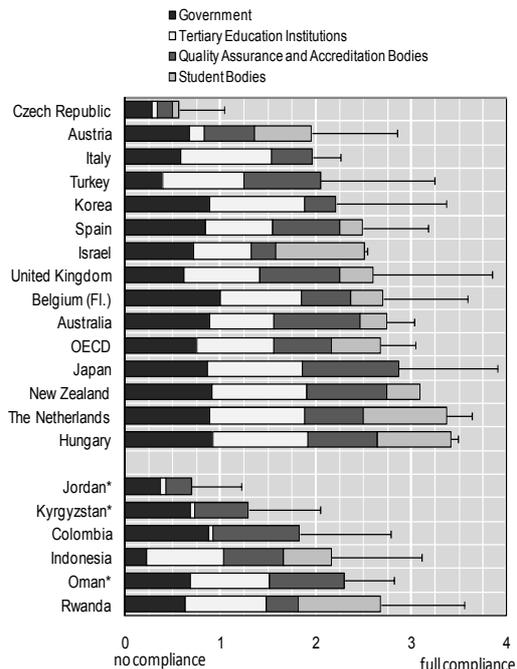
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1. In this report, except if otherwise indicated, percentages are based on the index constructs rather than on simple, unweighted counts of positive answers to the relevant questions. An index of 0.72 (out of 1) equals 72% of compliance with the surveyed recommendations after the application of the weights.

**Figure 1. Compliance with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* by country and stakeholder**



**Figure 2. Compliance with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* by country and stakeholder (including student bodies)**



Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

Table 1. Compliance with the *Guidelines* by stakeholder and country

	Government		Tertiary Education Institutions		Quality Assurance & Accreditation		Student Bodies		Compliance total (excluding student bodies)		Compliance total (including student bodies)	
	$\Delta$ (Gov)		$\Delta$ (TEI)		$\Delta$ (QAA)		$\Delta$ (STUD)		$\Delta$ (Gov,TEI,QAA)		$\Delta$ (Gov,TEI,QAA,Stud)	
<b>OECD</b>												
Australia	0.89	0.08	0.68	0.10	0.91	0.05	0.27	0.07	2.47	0.23	2.74	0.29
Austria	0.69	0.15	0.15	0.60	0.53	0.14	0.60	0.00	1.36	0.89	1.96	0.89
Belgium (Fl.)	1.00	0.00	0.85	0.10	0.52	0.13	0.34	0.66	2.37	0.23	2.71	0.89
Belgium (Fr.)	0.48	0.15	0.35	0.65	0.65	0.26	0.07	0.93	1.48	1.06	1.55	1.99
Czech Republic	0.29	0.35	0.05	0.10	0.16	0.03	0.07	0.00	0.51	0.48	0.57	0.48
Denmark	0.67	0.33	0.45	0.55	0.22	0.65	0.43	0.57	1.34	1.53	1.77	2.10
Finland	0.52	0.27	0.70	0.30	0.46	0.54	0.34	0.66	1.68	1.11	2.02	1.77
Germany	0.81	0.19	0.80	0.10	0.56	0.42	0.34	0.66	2.17	0.71	2.51	1.37
Hungary	0.93	0.08	1.00	0.00	0.72	0.00	0.77	0.00	2.65	0.08	3.41	0.08
Israel	0.73	0.03	0.60	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.93	0.00	1.58	0.03	2.52	0.03
Italy	0.60	0.00	0.95	0.00	0.42	0.29	0.00	0.00	1.97	0.29	1.97	0.29
Japan	0.87	0.03	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.87	0.03	2.87	1.03
Korea	0.89	0.11	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.31	0.00	0.73	2.22	0.42	2.22	1.15
New Zealand	0.91	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.84	0.00	0.34	0.00	2.75	0.00	3.09	0.00
Norway	0.76	0.24	0.33	0.60	0.57	0.43	0.70	0.30	1.65	1.27	2.36	1.57
Poland	0.83	0.06	0.60	0.40	0.54	0.45	0.00	0.73	1.97	0.91	1.97	1.64
Slovenia	0.56	0.25	0.40	0.55	0.45	0.16	0.07	0.93	1.41	0.96	1.48	1.89
Spain	0.85	0.06	0.70	0.00	0.71	0.13	0.23	0.50	2.26	0.19	2.49	0.68
Switzerland	0.78	0.23	0.05	0.95	0.61	0.16	0.07	0.93	1.44	1.33	1.51	2.26
The Netherlands	0.89	0.08	1.00	0.00	0.61	0.19	0.87	0.00	2.50	0.27	3.37	0.27
Turkey	0.40	0.36	0.85	0.05	0.80	0.13	0.00	0.66	2.05	0.54	2.05	1.20
United Kingdom	0.62	0.32	0.80	0.20	0.84	0.06	0.34	0.66	2.26	0.58	2.60	1.24
United States	0.48	0.52	0.40	0.60	0.25	0.75	0.17	0.84	1.13	1.87	1.30	2.70
<i>Country mean</i>	0.76	0.13	0.80	0.06	0.61	0.12	0.51	0.04	2.38	0.15	2.85	0.16
<b>NON OECD</b>												
Bulgaria	0.51	0.43	0.05	0.95	0.76	0.18	0.84	0.17	1.32	1.56	2.16	1.72
Colombia	0.88	0.00	0.05	0.95	0.90	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.83	0.95	1.83	0.95
Fiji	0.43	0.00	0.05	0.95	0.38	0.56	0.00	1.00	0.86	1.51	0.86	2.51
Indonesia	0.24	0.53	0.80	0.05	0.63	0.38	0.50	0.00	1.66	0.95	2.16	0.95
Jordan*	0.38	0.00	0.05	0.25	0.27	0.23	0.00	1.00	0.70	0.48	0.70	1.48
Kyrgyzstan*	0.69	0.21	0.40	0.55	0.56	0.29	0.00	0.00	1.65	1.05	1.65	1.05
Lithuania	0.64	0.12	0.05	0.30	0.00	1.00	0.87	0.07	0.69	1.42	1.56	1.49
Oman*	0.69	0.28	0.83	0.05	0.79	0.19	0.00	1.00	2.30	0.52	2.30	1.52
Rwanda	0.64	0.31	0.85	0.15	0.33	0.29	0.87	0.13	1.82	0.74	2.68	0.87

Note: The  $\Delta$  column presents the error margin, that is, the value that would have been added to the compliance index if questions that were answered "do not know" or "not applicable" had received a positive response.

Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

### ***Compliance by stakeholder***

Figures 1 and 2 show that countries differ significantly with respect to which stakeholders comply the most with the *Guidelines* and hence contribute to an environment of quality provision in cross-border higher education. For example, Turkey shows low compliance for the government recommendations, but its tertiary education institutions and its quality assurance and accreditation bodies conform to most recommendations. On the contrary, in Korea, the two first stakeholders show very high alignment with the recommended *Guidelines*, but there is only low compliance for quality assurance agencies. Japan, finally, shows high compliance across the three stakeholder groups, with almost no data gaps.

Tertiary education institutions are the group of stakeholders that follow the most the recommendations of the *Guidelines*, with an average compliance index of 0.80 (80%). Governments and quality assurance and accreditation bodies comply on average with 76% and 61% of the guidelines, respectively. Student bodies only conform to 51% of the recommendations – with the caveat that information about their activities was generally scant in the survey answers. Note furthermore that some of the non-OECD respondents do not possess autonomous student bodies.

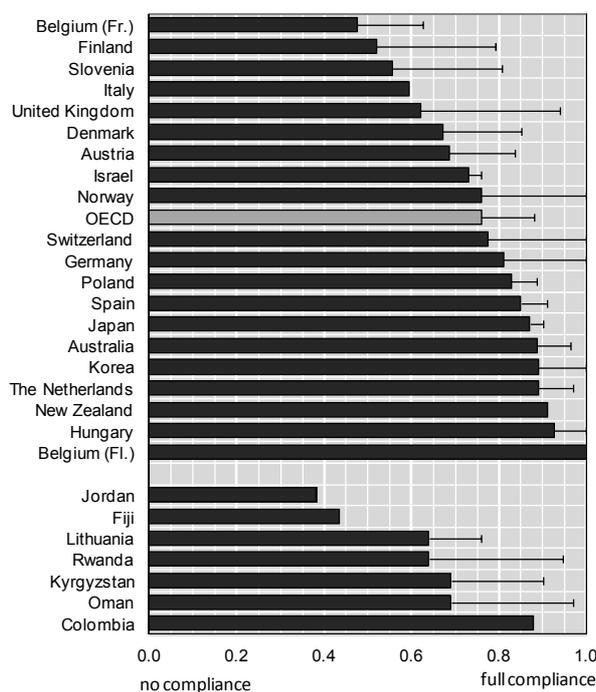
### ***Recommendations to governments***

Governments have a key responsibility in ensuring the quality of cross-border higher education as well as student and consumer protection, be it through regulation or incentives.

The index synthesising their compliance with the recommendations covers five dimensions: 1) whether governments have established or encouraged a comprehensive, fair and transparent system of registration or licensure for cross-border higher education; 2) whether comprehensive capacity for quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border provision has been created; 3) whether governments consult and coordinate amongst the various competent bodies for quality assurance and accreditation, both nationally and internationally; 4) whether governments provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria, standards and consequences of registration, licensure, quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border higher education; 5) whether governments participate in the UNESCO regional conventions on the recognition of qualifications and have established national information centres.

Figure 3 shows that governmental frameworks are largely aligned with the recommendations of the *Guidelines*, with an OECD country average compliance index of 0.76. Virtually all OECD countries have implemented more than 50% of the recommendations. Non-OECD respondents are more heterogeneous in their levels of compliance, with an average compliance index of 0.62. Colombia stands out with a high level of compliance, above the OECD average by 0.12 points and similar to Japan, Australia, the Netherlands, and Korea.

The major remaining gaps for governments lie in the establishment of a system of registration or licensing for incoming cross-border higher education providers (Belgium (Fr.), Czech Republic, Finland, Austria, Jordan), more consultation and collaboration between the various different national or international stakeholders (Italy, Poland, Fiji, Lithuania), and most notably in the enhancement of capacity for quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border education in its various modes, *i.e.* incoming and outgoing institutions and programmes, and distance education (Belgium (Fr.), Czech Republic, Finland, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Israel, Jordan, Fiji, Colombia).

**Figure 3. Compliance with recommendations made to governments**

#### *Recommendations to tertiary education institutions*

Tertiary education institutions have a direct responsibility in the quality of their provision of cross-border higher education, and can suffer indirectly from the cross-border activities of disreputable providers. Their practices have a direct and indirect impact on trust in cross-border higher education.

The indicator measuring their compliance with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* focuses primarily on three dimensions: 1) whether programmes delivered abroad are of comparable quality and degree status as in the institution's home country; 2) whether quality assurance and accreditation bodies of the receiving country are respected and consulted; 3) whether institutions provide complete description of programmes and qualifications, as well as accurate, reliable and accessible information on external/internal quality assurance and the academic/professional recognition of their offers. Other survey items covered by this indicator include the responsible use of agents, the maintenance of inter-institutional networks and their utilisation for sharing good practices, and the financial transparency of educational programmes. Respondents were asked to provide an "average picture of the practices of their institutions", but this was sometimes judged impossible and hence rejected.

Tertiary education institutions display an average compliance index of 0.80 for OECD respondents. This is the highest level of compliance among all stakeholder groups. Hungary, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and the Netherlands all show full compliance with the recommendations of the *Guidelines*, and this is also nearly the case for Italy, Turkey and Belgium (Fl.) (Figure 4). Among non-OECD respondents, a large disparity can be observed: Rwanda, Oman, and Indonesia are close to OECD compliance levels, whereas in Kyrgyzstan and Jordan tertiary education institutions still play a very limited role in ensuring quality provision in cross-border higher education.

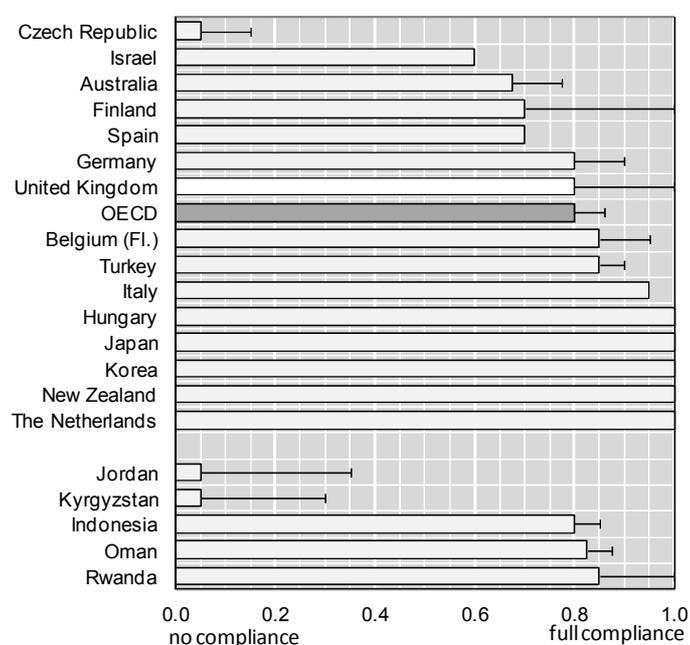
All but two OECD countries (Austria and Czech Republic) indicate that tertiary education institutions are explicitly committed to providing a comparable quality of education for delivery across borders and in

their home country, and that they deliver the same degrees irrespective of where the programme is delivered (as opposed to different degrees depending on the location of study).

Eight out of the 23 OECD respondents report that they use agents to recruit foreign students, but for most countries this information is not available. Even more scarce is information on whether institutions take full responsibility to ensure that the information and guidance provided by their agents is accurate. This information gap should be addressed in order to better understand practices and evaluate their associated quality risks. The use of agents has been (and possibly remains) one of the most controversial aspects of current business practices in the recruitment of international students.

Twelve OECD countries indicate that their tertiary institutions operate under the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving countries when delivering higher education across borders, including distance education. This high number is comforting, but points in turn to the responsibility of receiving countries to ensure that cross-border higher education arrangements are covered by their system.

**Figure 4. Compliance with recommendations to tertiary education institutions**



#### *Recommendations to quality assurance and accreditation bodies*

Quality assurance and accreditation bodies are responsible for assessing the quality of higher education provision, and the *Guidelines* recommended that they also cover cross-border higher education.

The compliance indicator for quality assurance and accreditation bodies covers several dimensions. First and most importantly, it measures the extent to which quality assurance and accreditation arrangements include cross-border education provision in its various modes (student mobility, programme mobility, institutional mobility, distance and e-learning). Secondly, it examines if and to which extent regional and international networks are being built, sustained, or strengthened, and if collaborations between the bodies of the sending country and the receiving country are underway. Thirdly, the indicator considers whether accurate and easily accessible information on the assessment standards, procedures, and consequences of quality assessment and its results is provided. Fourthly, it scrutinises the compliance with current international documents on cross-border higher education, such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*. Fifthly, the indicator takes into

account the existence of mutual recognition agreements with other bodies, internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, and the use of international peer review panels and benchmarking procedures.

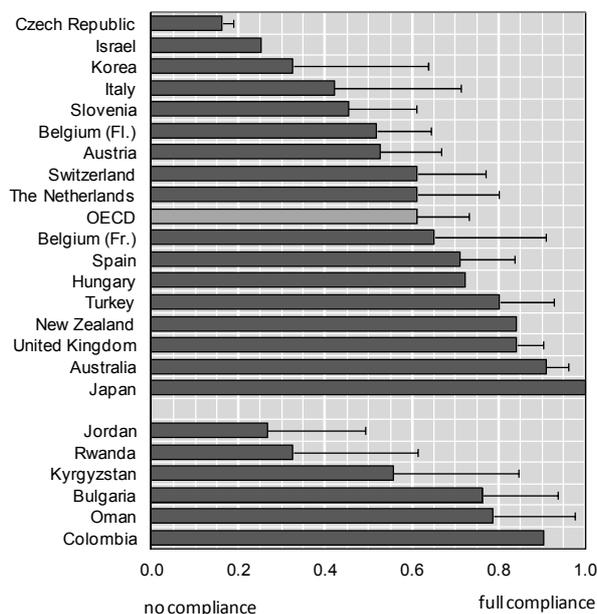
On average, quality assurance and accreditation bodies comply less with the recommendations of the *Guidelines* addressed to them than governments and tertiary education institutions. They have an average compliance index of 0.61 in OECD countries, which is more or less equal to the average index of non-OECD respondents (0.60).

The variance in compliance across countries is much higher than for the previous two stakeholder groups. Figure 5 shows that compliance levels for OECD countries range from 0.16 for Czech Republic to 1 for Japan. Moreover, the degree of data uncertainty is noticeably higher than for the previous stakeholders, indicating that information about the activities of quality assurance and accreditation bodies is not as abundant (or that they took less interest in responding to the survey). Again, non-OECD respondents do not differ significantly from OECD respondents: Colombia, Oman, and Bulgaria report similar levels of compliance as Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Turkey.

Australia, Germany (not displayed), Japan, New Zealand, Turkey, and the United Kingdom as well as Bulgaria, Indonesia (not displayed) and Oman report comprehensive quality coverage of the four main strands of cross-border higher activity (student mobility, programme mobility, institutional mobility, distance and e-learning) through their quality assurance and accreditation agencies. Three more countries (Slovenia, the Netherlands, Rwanda) plan to cover all these forms of cross-border higher education within the coming 24 months. Czech Republic, Israel, Korea, Jordan, and Belgium (Fl.) report no or very limited capacity of quality assurance with respect to these different forms.

All OECD countries but Korea indicate that their quality assurance bodies are part of existing regional and international networks, which in turn have arrangements to improve awareness of disreputable providers and dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies.

Almost all quality assurance agencies within OECD countries have internal quality assurance procedures in place, with the exception of Czech Republic, Israel and Slovenia. Similarly, an overarching majority of OECD quality assurance bodies undergo regular external evaluation, except Czech Republic, Israel, New Zealand, Slovenia, and Turkey.

**Figure 5. Compliance with recommendations to quality assurance & accreditation bodies**

### *Recommendations to student bodies*

Students are the direct recipients of cross-border higher education. Student bodies were thus considered to bear the responsibility of helping students and potential students enrolled in cross-border higher education to carefully scrutinise the information available for their decision making process.

The compound indicator capturing the compliance of student bodies with the *Guidelines* covers three components: 1) whether they are involved as active partners at the international, national and institutional levels in the development, monitoring and maintenance of quality provision for cross-border higher education; 2) whether they are actively raising the awareness of students of the potential risks of misleading information, low-quality provision, and disreputable providers, e.g. by guiding students to accurate and reliable information sources; 3) whether they empower students to ask appropriate questions when enrolling in cross-border higher education programmes, including through the supply of a list of relevant questions.

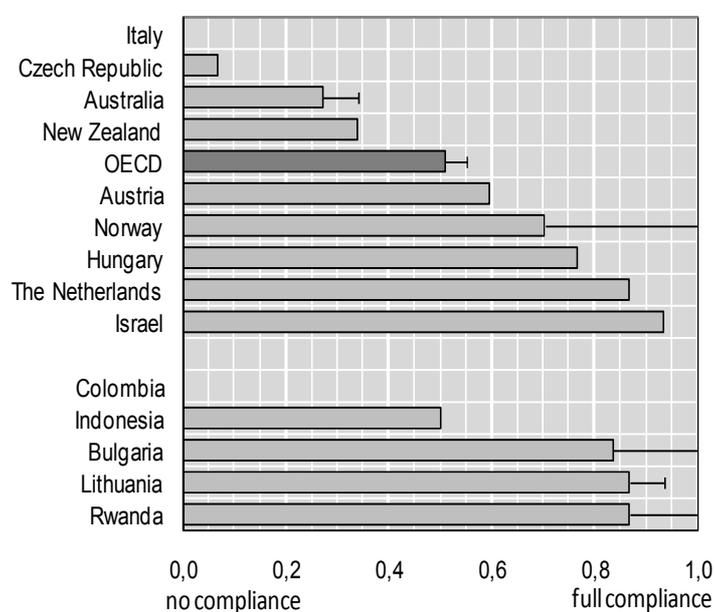
Student bodies appear to follow a small share of the recommendations addressed to them. In OECD countries, student bodies achieve an average compliance level of 0.51 (Figure 5), significantly less than any other stakeholder. However, sparse information about their activities was actually reported in the survey (hence the large number of countries absent from Figure 6). Student bodies are the only stakeholder group for which non-OECD respondents conform to more recommendations on average than OECD countries, with a compliance index of 0.61 – but the comparison is of limited value given the small sample on both sides.

Rwanda, Lithuania, and Bulgaria show high degrees of compliance, and so do Israel and the Netherlands. Performance gaps among student bodies are mostly owed to an under-utilisation of information possibilities for students, and weak integration into networks. In Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, and Oman, the gap comes from the inexistence of autonomous student unions.

Student bodies comply the most with the *Guidelines* in Israel, which contrasts with the comparatively low compliance of all other stakeholders in this country. The relatively strong role of Israeli student unions

perhaps compensates in part for existing gaps in other types of quality assurance for cross-border higher education, and places Israel at the OECD average in total comparison when taking into account this stakeholder group (Table 1).

**Figure 6. Compliance with recommendations to student bodies**



### *Compliance by key objective*

Although the *Guidelines* addressed its recommendations to specific stakeholders, it is worthwhile examining the extent to which countries comply with the main objectives or action principles put forth by the *Guidelines*. The analysis by stakeholder may hide some overlap in responsibilities: for example, if in a country tertiary education institutions or student unions have put in place transparent information about all aspects of cross-border higher education, other stakeholders may not need to do the same. Countries may thus show a different mix of stakeholder compliance to achieve the same degree of conformity with the spirit, if not the letter, of the *Guidelines*.

The objectives or desirable practices emphasised by the *Guidelines* are: 1) the inclusion of cross-border higher education in countries' regulatory framework, 2) the comprehensive coverage of all forms of cross-border higher education, 3) student and customer protection, 4) transparency in procedures (for providers), 5) information access and dissemination (for potential international students), 6) collaboration.

Four of these objectives are largely met on average: countries have regulatory frameworks or arrangements in place, cover different forms of cross-border higher education comprehensively, are transparent in their procedures, and are engaged in national and international collaboration. The current main weaknesses in compliance lie in easy access to information and the level of student and customer protection. Table 2 presents the indices' numeric values by key objectives for all countries.

Table 2. Compliance with the *Guidelines* by objective and country

	Comprehensiveness		Customer Protection		Transparency (providers)		Easy Access to Info (students)		Collaboration		Regulatory Framework		Implementation total	
	$\Delta$ (Com)		$\Delta$ (CP)		$\Delta$ (TRA)		$\Delta$ (EAI)		$\Delta$ (Coll)		$\Delta$ (RF)		$\Delta$ (Com, CP, TRA, EAI, Coll, RF)	
<b>OECD</b>														
Australia	1.00	0.00	0.45	0.00	0.84	0.00	0.54	0.00	0.36	0.48	1.00	0.00	4.19	0.48
Austria	0.80	0.00	0.45	0.25	0.15	0.65	0.53	0.38	0.53	0.37	0.85	0.00	3.31	1.65
Belgium (Fl.)	0.80	0.00	0.50	0.35	0.90	0.00	0.70	0.25	0.73	0.20	0.90	0.00	4.53	0.80
Belgium (Fr.)	0.50	0.40	0.35	0.60	0.50	0.50	0.70	0.25	0.68	0.25	0.75	0.10	3.48	2.10
Czech Republic	0.30	0.20	0.20	0.15	0.20	0.43	0.28	0.06	0.40	0.05	0.15	0.00	1.53	0.89
Denmark	0.40	0.60	0.40	0.60	0.35	0.25	0.48	0.28	0.57	0.43	0.60	0.40	2.80	2.56
Finland	0.20	0.80	0.55	0.40	0.60	0.40	0.70	0.30	0.83	0.12	0.50	0.30	3.38	2.32
Germany	1.00	0.00	0.50	0.40	0.28	0.60	0.34	0.55	0.66	0.32	1.00	0.00	3.77	1.87
Hungary	1.00	0.00	0.88	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.88	0.00	0.79	0.10	1.00	0.00	5.54	0.10
Israel	0.30	0.00	0.75	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.90	0.05	0.64	0.00	0.45	0.00	4.04	0.05
Italy	0.60	0.20	0.45	0.05	0.90	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.64	0.09	0.60	0.30	3.94	0.64
Japan	1.00	0.00	0.75	0.25	0.80	0.20	0.70	0.25	0.75	0.15	0.70	0.00	4.70	0.85
Korea	0.60	0.40	0.65	0.35	1.00	0.00	0.70	0.30	0.75	0.18	0.80	0.20	4.50	1.43
New Zealand	0.80	0.00	0.63	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.92	0.00	0.90	0.00	5.00	0.00
Norway	0.80	0.20	0.63	0.35	0.69	0.30	0.82	0.15	0.65	0.25	0.90	0.10	4.48	1.35
Poland	0.60	0.40	0.60	0.40	0.80	0.20	0.70	0.25	0.39	0.40	0.90	0.10	3.99	1.75
Slovenia	0.60	0.00	0.33	0.58	0.60	0.10	0.13	0.70	0.45	0.40	0.70	0.00	2.80	1.78
Spain	1.00	0.00	0.60	0.25	0.60	0.20	0.75	0.20	0.84	0.00	1.00	0.00	4.79	0.65
Switzerland	0.70	0.30	0.15	0.80	0.40	0.60	0.45	0.50	0.60	0.40	0.85	0.15	3.15	2.75
The Netherlands	0.80	0.00	0.75	0.10	0.80	0.20	0.90	0.00	0.90	0.10	1.00	0.00	5.15	0.40
Turkey	0.80	0.20	0.48	0.45	0.46	0.40	0.54	0.25	0.70	0.05	0.75	0.20	3.73	1.55
United Kingdom	1.00	0.00	0.55	0.30	0.68	0.33	0.56	0.44	0.51	0.45	1.00	0.00	4.30	1.51
United States	0.60	0.40	0.35	0.65	0.50	0.50	0.45	0.55	0.37	0.63	0.70	0.30	2.97	3.03
<i>Country mean</i>	<i>0.78</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>0.59</i>	<i>0.12</i>	<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.12</i>	<i>0.69</i>	<i>0.15</i>	<i>0.72</i>	<i>0.12</i>	<i>0.80</i>	<i>0.08</i>	<i>4.38</i>	<i>0.66</i>
<b>NON OECD</b>														
Bulgaria	1.00	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.60	0.20	0.60	0.35	0.32	0.66	1.00	0.00	3.92	1.66
Colombia	1.00	0.00	0.38	0.35	0.80	0.20	0.45	0.25	0.46	0.35	0.95	0.00	4.04	1.15
Fiji	0.50	0.50	0.28	0.65	0.60	0.20	0.33	0.50	0.10	0.60	0.55	0.45	2.35	2.90
Indonesia	0.80	0.20	0.50	0.25	0.04	0.90	0.32	0.25	0.63	0.15	0.90	0.00	3.18	1.75
Jordan*	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.40	0.60	0.00	0.40	0.25	0.37	0.20	0.00	0.10	1.57	1.15
Kyrgyzstan*	0.60	0.40	0.50	0.15	0.50	0.40	0.46	0.18	0.57	0.13	0.50	0.20	3.13	1.46
Lithuania	0.60	0.40	0.35	0.45	0.40	0.60	0.35	0.55	0.31	0.22	0.60	0.40	2.61	2.62
Oman*	1.00	0.00	0.48	0.45	0.69	0.00	0.62	0.30	0.60	0.25	0.75	0.00	4.13	1.00
Rwanda	0.60	0.35	0.68	0.33	0.75	0.05	0.58	0.23	0.53	0.43	0.60	0.38	3.73	1.75

Note: The  $\Delta$  column presents the error margin, that is, the value that would have been added to the compliance index if questions that were answered "do not know" or "not applicable" had received a positive response.

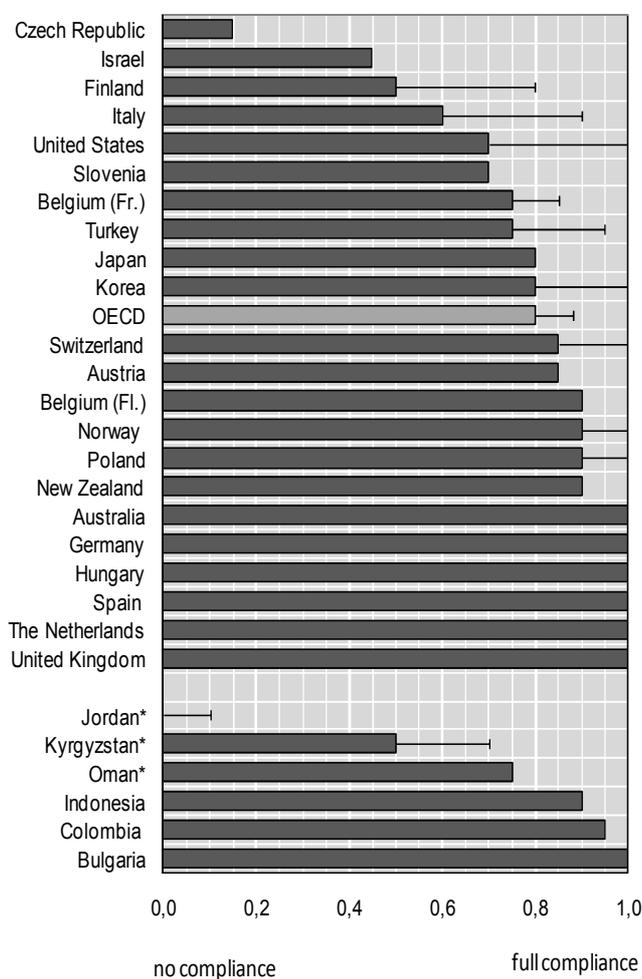
Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

### Regulatory framework

The *Guidelines* recommend that countries put in place systems of quality assurance and accreditation for cross-border higher education, and make it clear under which conditions, if any, foreign educational providers and programmes can operate in the country. This can be a shared responsibility across several groups, most notably governments and quality assurance and accreditation bodies.

The compliance index for regulatory framework measures whether a system of registration and licensing for cross-border higher education providers is in place, and which types of cross-border activity are covered by the system – irrespective of which part of the system is covering which function (*i.e.* government or quality assurance bodies). It also takes into account whether internal quality assurance and external evaluation procedures are enforced in national quality assurance and accreditation bodies; and whether autonomous student bodies are established as recommended.

**Figure 7. Development of regulatory framework for quality provision in cross-border higher education**



Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

Recommendations about regulatory frameworks are well followed, with an average compliance index of 0.80 for OECD countries, and of 0.68 for the non-OECD respondents. Seven countries report full compliance with the related recommendations (covered by survey items) (Figure 7).

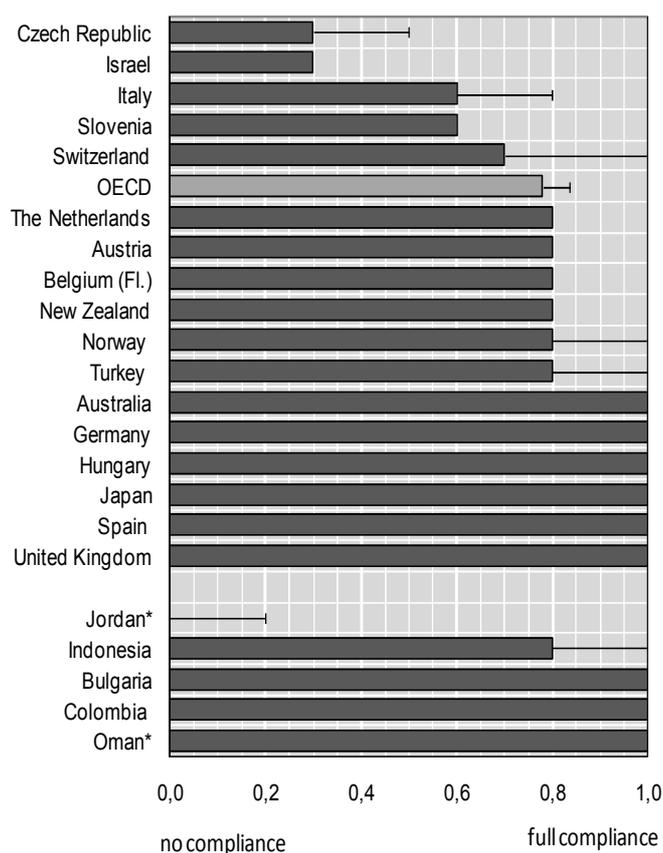
Non-compliance in the regulatory framework of OECD countries occurs sometimes because no system of registration or licensing for cross-border higher education exists (Czech Republic, Finland, Belgium (Fr.)), no systems of internal quality assurance or external evaluation are in place (Czech Republic, Israel, Italy), and because no or only a partial quality framework for the various modes of cross-border higher education exists, particularly at the government level (Czech Republic, Finland, Israel, Italy, Slovenia). Note Jordan's outlier role in the non-OECD respondent group.

### *Comprehensiveness*

The *Guidelines* recommend that existing frameworks and arrangements for cross-border higher education be *comprehensive* and cover cross-border higher education in all its forms (people mobility, programme and institution mobility, distance and e-learning) and for both public and private provision.

The index of comprehensiveness measures the scope of the system put in place by governments and quality assurance and accreditation bodies. It measures the extent to which different types of cross-border educational provision are covered by this system (*e.g.* incoming or outgoing programs, institutions, or distance learning), allowing for complementarities between stakeholders for the coverage.

**Figure 8. Comprehensiveness of cross-border quality assurance systems in place**



Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

Overall, countries report high levels of comprehensiveness of their systems. The average comprehensiveness index for OECD countries is of 0.78, and it is similar for the non-OECD respondents (0.76). Nine countries report full compliance for this dimension, as captured by the corresponding survey items. Again, there is a high variance between countries (Figure 8).

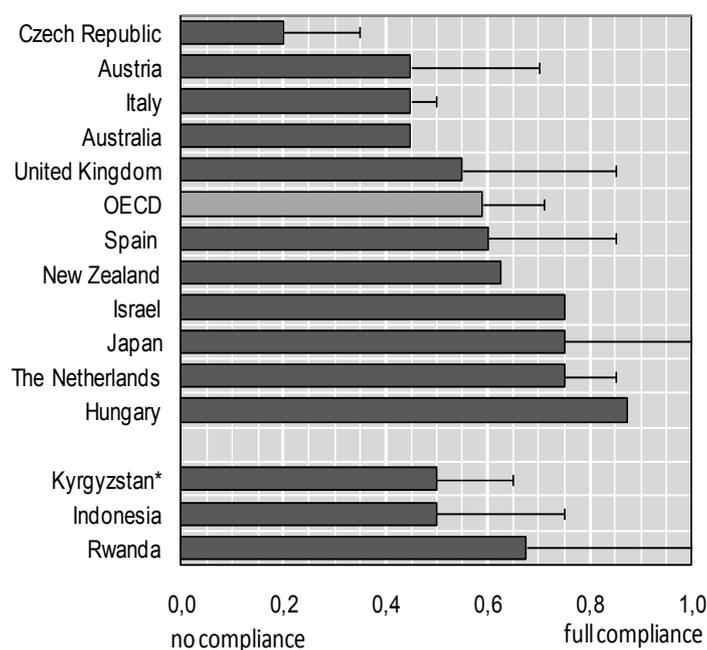
Low levels of comprehensiveness typically correspond to situations in which neither the government nor quality assurance and accreditation bodies have a comprehensive monitoring capacity for cross-border higher education (Czech Republic, Israel, Italy, Slovenia) or when they do not cover all types of institutions (Netherlands, Austria). Note that the slightly lower compliance of non-OECD respondents is again mostly due to Jordan's outlier role.

### *Student and consumer protection*

Student and consumer protection is one of the key objectives of the *Guidelines*. Many of the provisions of the *Guidelines* are meant to limit the possible risks of misinformation that cross-border provision can entail for students, but also other stakeholders (parents, employers, consumers of professional services, etc.).

The student and customer protection index takes into account answers from all four stakeholder groups, with particular emphasis on the activities of tertiary education institutions. It measures whether institutions provide comparable education at home and abroad, whether they acknowledge local quality assurance systems, whether they use agents responsibly, and whether they provide complete and easily accessible information about their programmes, their qualifications, the academic and professional recognition of their qualifications, and their internal quality assurance processes. For government, quality assurance bodies and student bodies, the covered items relate to the ease of access to information on existing providers.

**Figure 9. Student/customer protection**



Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

Compliance with recommendations about student and customer protection is relatively low, with an average index of 0.59 for OECD countries, and 0.56 for non-OECD respondents (Figure 9). Information is missing for a large number of countries. While the overall picture might be more positive with a more complete data set, the observed lack of easily available information is more likely to indicate a lack of (effective) provisions to meet this objective.

Where large compliance gaps are observed, systems tend to lack comprehensive capacity to identify and raise awareness of possible disreputable providers (Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, Australia, United Kingdom). Student bodies – arguably an easy direct access point to international students – do frequently not participate in providing information on quality provisions (Czech Republic, Italy, Australia, New Zealand). While data gaps may have some confounding influence (a majority of countries had to be excluded because of missing information), there is little evidence that the recommendations of the *Guidelines* about customer protection are met yet.

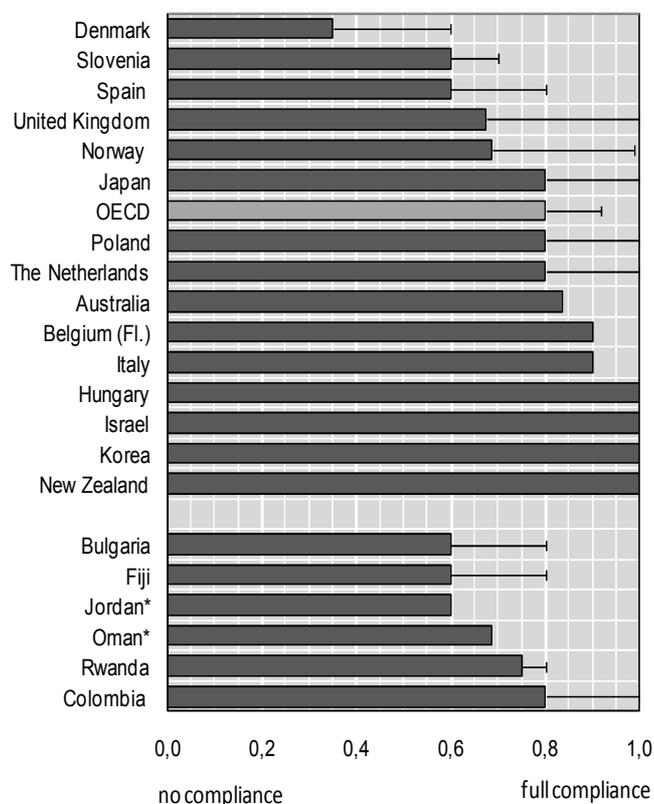
### *Transparency*

Another important principle put forth by the *Guidelines* is that countries should be transparent about their cross-border higher education frameworks and arrangements. Here, transparency refers to the publication or ease of access of information for foreign providers interested in delivering cross-border higher education in a country and, to a lesser extent, the predictability of the outcomes of the framework.

The transparency index is based on answers to questions about the consistency and fairness in procedure for providers who wish to operate under a foreign system. The provisions mainly address governments and quality assurance agencies. The index measures public availability of information on the conditions for registration and licensure, the discretionary character or not of these conditions, the availability of information on assessment standards, procedures, on the consequences of quality assurance mechanisms on the funding of students, as well as on the results of the assessment. To a minor extent, the indicator also measures information provision by tertiary education institutions and their external and internal quality assurance mechanisms.

OECD countries have an average index of transparency of 0.80, while the non OECD respondents follow less than half of the recommendations about transparency, with an average index of 0.67. While there is some polarisation between countries with high and low levels of transparency, the uncertainty about the situation in countries with apparently low compliance invites to caution, especially as the index includes relatively few items (and thus could easily lead to polarisation) (Figure 10).

All OECD countries report that they have published, or plan to publish, their criteria and standards for registration or licensure (when they have such registration or licensure in place). The remaining gaps arise mainly from questions about the discretionary nature of licensure conditions. Spain reports some discretionary treatment, whereas other respondents report differential treatment for EU and non-EU countries (Italy) or do not have the knowledge about the actual conditions (*e.g.* Germany, Poland, United States). For non-OECD respondents, the largest gaps arise through the unavailability of public information on the conditions of registration and licensure (Jordan, Oman), and the variable/discretionary character of these conditions (Bulgaria, Jordan, Oman).

**Figure 10. Transparency of procedure in place**

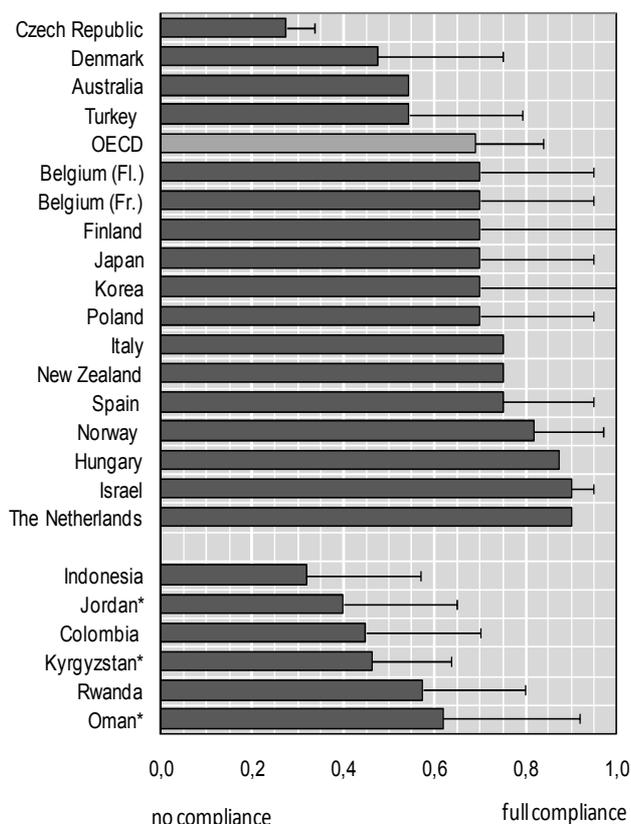
Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

### *Information access and dissemination*

In a complementary spirit to consumer protection and in line with the transparency objective for providers, the *Guidelines* recommend to make information about tertiary education institutions, accreditation and quality assurance bodies easily accessible to potential international students, including the procedures and outcomes of their assessment.

The index for information access measures how much and how easily information is available to students seeking to enrol in a cross-border education programme, at home or abroad. The indicator covers equally all four stakeholders, and particularly scrutinises practices that could lead to the easier identification of disreputable providers. It furthermore takes into account whether national contact points or information centres have been established as stipulated by the 77th session of the Education Committee and the UNESCO conventions, respectively, which aim at making information easily available in a central place.

OECD countries have an average level of compliance of 0.69, which is relatively low compared to other objectives but contrasts with the much lower compliance level of the non-OECD respondents with an average index of 0.47 (Figure 11). The Netherlands, Israel, Hungary and Norway have particularly high standards of information dissemination by this indicator.

**Figure 11. Access to information for students**

Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

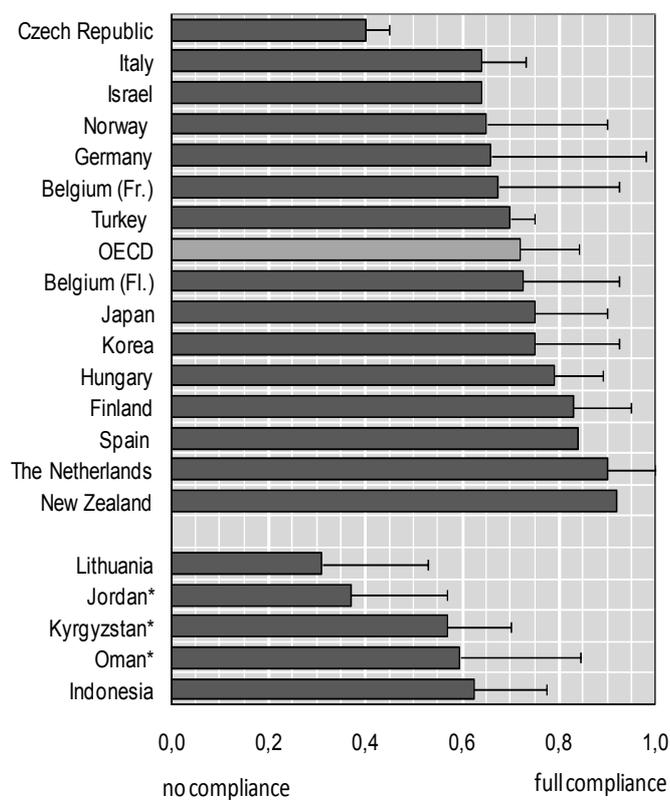
Existing gaps typically originate from differences in access to information about assessment standards, procedures and outcomes, as well as on their effects on the funding of students, institutions or programmes (Czech Republic, Denmark, Turkey); the absence of national contact points (Australia, Czech Republic, Turkey, Belgium (Fl. and Fr.)); the under-provision of information from the institutional side (Australia, Czech Republic); and the lack of involvement of student bodies in information collection and dissemination. Once again, knowledge about practices of student bodies is generally scarce, indicating a probable lack of participation of student bodies in relevant discussions and networks, and pointing towards potential levers of improvement.

UNESCO is developing a Portal on higher education institutions which partially meets this objective. This ongoing project aims to provide students, employers and other interested parties with access to authoritative and up-to-date information on the status of higher education institutions and quality assurance mechanisms in participating countries. The objective is to respond to the increase in the number of dubious and/or fraudulent providers of higher education, while encouraging the development of quality cross-border higher education. As of April 2011, the Portal covered 34 countries and was available at <http://www.unesco.org/education/portal/hed-institutions>.

### Collaboration

A final objective of the *Guidelines* is to encourage national and international collaboration between all stakeholders, in order to foster better mutual understanding, trust, capacity development, and, ultimately, a better recognition of qualifications.

**Figure 12. Collaboration among stakeholders and competent bodies (national and international)**



Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

The Survey included multiple questions about collaborative activity of the different stakeholders. The collaboration index synthesises the level of interaction and networking between the various bodies and stakeholder groups. The indicator includes measures of whether governments facilitate consultation between the various existing bodies (both nationally and internationally), whether they contribute to the development and/or updating of the UNESCO regional conventions on recognition of qualifications, or whether they entertain bilateral recognition agreements. It takes into account answers to questions about whether tertiary education institutions account for quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country, participate in sector organisations and inter-institutional networks (nationally and internationally), and maintain partnerships with other institutions to facilitate processes of mutual recognition. Thirdly, the indicator covers the organisation of student bodies both at a national and international level. Finally, it comprises answers to questions about whether quality assurance bodies are organised in regional or international networks, whether there is collaboration between these bodies in sending and receiving country (*e.g.* through mutual recognition agreements), and if these bodies have engaged in various collaborative modes types of quality assurance, such as international peer review, international benchmarking, or the use of peer review panels.

The collaboration index for OECD countries amount to 0.72, corresponding to a good level of compliance. Non-OECD respondents collaborate much less, with an index of 0.49. OECD countries are clearly taking better advantage of collaboration and networks, at the national and international levels. While some countries stand out for their strong networking (New Zealand, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland), even countries with less collaboration (Israel, Italy) comply with 64% of the recommendations about collaboration, with the exception of Czech Republic (Figure 12).

The gaps in compliance correspond to a lack of collaboration and mutual recognition agreements with other bodies or lack of knowledge thereof (Czech Republic, Italy, Norway); limited participation in or knowledge about inter-institutional networks (Czech Republic, Israel, Norway, Germany), as well as missing participation of student bodies; and absence of national contact points or information centers as mentioned above.

### ***National contact points***

While not a recommendation of the *Guidelines* per se, the OECD Council recommended the establishment of a national contact or coordination point to coordinate the implementation of the *Guidelines* across the different stakeholders. Nine out of the 23 OECD respondents report that they have established national contact points or a National Coordinator as recommended by the 77th session of the Education Committee. These countries are: Austria, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. None of the non-OECD respondent has established a contact point yet. There may be several explanations for the low compliance with this recommendation, including the possibility that countries have several entry points for international students and providers. Even if it were the case, this arguably makes access to relevant information more difficult to domestic and foreign students and providers. National contact points are listed in Appendix E.

### **Reported progress and plans**

The survey was not designed to measure the impact of the *Guidelines*. However, it asks respondents whether their practices were already in place in 2004, that is, when the drafting process of the *Guidelines* was more or less completed, as well as the countries' implementation plans over the next 24 months. Thus, it grants some (limited) insight about the dynamics of the adoption of quality assurance measures in cross-border higher education.

The OECD activity on the internationalisation of higher education carried out by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) started in 2001, and included a range of activities, including the provision of an international discussion platform for different stakeholders, notably through international *Fora* on trade in education services. Arguably, the drafting process of the *Guidelines* and the overall activity was an integral part of the impact of the project, and the related raise in awareness possibly led to changes in internationalisation policies even before the *Guidelines* were actually adopted. A better cut-off point to assess "impact" would thus have been to ask whether practices dated back from before 2000 (and even then, one would miss the counterfactual). Many other related guidelines and codes of good practice were released over this period, such as the *Code of good practice* (2003) of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) or the policy statement by the International Association of Universities (IAU) on "Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders" (2005).

Has there been much evolution since 2004? The survey reveals that, with the possible exception of student bodies, a wide range of recent measures were adopted after 2004 by all stakeholders. OECD countries have implemented on average close to 10 new measures out of the 62 surveyed items within governments, tertiary education institutions and quality assurance and accreditation bodies. The countries that have moved the most in terms of installing new provisions are Spain (39 changes), Korea (23), Belgium (Fr.) (22), and Turkey (18). While Spain, Belgium (Fr.), and Turkey complied to less than 50% of the recommendations before 2004, all three countries had similar levels of compliance as other OECD respondents in 2011.

A lack of progress since 2004 does not necessarily mean low compliance with the *Guidelines*. In fact, many OECD countries conformed to the *Guidelines* already before 2004: 8 out of the 22 OECD

respondents had 50% or more of the proposed measures in place before 2004 (excluding student bodies): New Zealand, the Netherlands, Australia, Hungary, Norway, United Kingdom, Germany, Poland. With the exception of Germany and Poland, the same holds true also when one includes student bodies in the picture.

Quality assurance and accreditation bodies have made the most changes in alignment with the *Guidelines* since 2004. On average, 5 of the 10 new quality provision items have been implemented by this stakeholder group alone, with Spain (14), Belgium (Fr.) (11), and Turkey (11) displaying the most activity. By far, the least change is observed for recommendations to student bodies: for OECD countries with autonomous student bodies, in spite of a relatively low alignment with the *Guidelines* recommendations, less than 1 change per country was observed on average for this stakeholder group.

For non-OECD respondents, the obtained picture is again more diverse. A large initial gap existed between OECD and non-OECD respondents. Before 2004, non-OECD respondents complied on average with only one sixth of the recommendations (excluding student bodies), with none of them having more than a third of the surveyed items in place. However, non-OECD respondents have been catching up rapidly since 2004. More than 11 changes per country were implemented on average across the systems. In particular, Indonesia (19) and Oman (16) have made significant changes aligned with the recommendations. Like for the OECD countries, quality assurance and accreditation bodies have implemented the most changes, with an average of 6 changes per country, whereas student bodies have remained relatively static with approximately one change per country.

When looking forward, the data shows that non-OECD countries are also planning more changes within the next 24 months than OECD countries. On average, 6 new measures are planned by non-OECD respondents – more than twice as many as by OECD countries, who plan slightly less than 3 (including student bodies). Again, the larger number of planned measures by non-member countries might be attributable to the head start of OECD countries rather than to underperformance. However, it also points to the great catching-up potential that can be leveraged through close international collaboration. Slovenia and Turkey stand out among the OECD respondents with respect to the number of changes in progress (25 and 11, respectively). Among non-OECD respondents, the major movers are Indonesia (16), Fiji (8), Oman (8) and Rwanda (8).

### **Conclusion: no need for revision, but need for further compliance**

The internationalisation of higher education and growth of cross-border higher education, in its different forms, has largely continued since the publication of the *Guidelines*. There are good reasons to believe that this will continue over the next decades (OECD, 2009). People mobility will likely continue to represent the bulk of cross-border higher education, followed by programme mobility, and institution mobility. This third form of cross-border higher education has increased less than first anticipated, probably because of the associated business risks.

Four new trends are noteworthy in this area. First, foreign campuses are increasingly part of regional clusters, as part of a regional innovation or knowledge economy development strategy. An example of this model is the Knowledge Village (Dubai), the Education City (Qatar) as well as other educational areas currently being developed such as the Kuala Lumpur Education City supported by the Malaysian government (and due to open in 2011). Second, the financing models of campuses abroad have changed. While most of the initial foreign campuses self-financed their move abroad, they are currently increasingly funded by local partners (government or industrial companies) who provide them with a campus or even subsidise them. Third, research objectives become increasingly an objective of cross-border higher education, as part of capacity development strategies. Fourth, cross-border higher education activities between non-OECD countries are growing, especially as emerging countries develop proactive strategies

to “export” their education services (that is, attract international students and send their educational programmes and institutions abroad).

None of these new developments makes the challenges addressed by the *Guidelines* less relevant.

In December 2008, a workshop organised by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) examined whether the *Guidelines* needed some rewording or revision (ENQA, 2010). The main conclusion was that the recommendations of the *Guidelines* need *no revision* yet and are largely in line with most codes of good practice used by networks and associations of quality assurance agencies in Latin America, in the Asia-Pacific region, in North America, and in Europe including the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* adopted by the Ministers of the Bologna Process in Bergen in May 2005. It was also argued that revising the *Guidelines* too soon would hinder rather than further their implementation and impact. While they are not always explicitly mentioned in countries, they are largely reflected in the main documents that are used to set standards and guidelines in the different regions of the world, for example in international or regional associations of quality assurance agencies.

The main recommendation of the workshop participants was to make it explicit in other existing standards and guidelines for quality assurance that cross-border higher education should be subject to the same guidelines as are applied to any other educational programme.

In Europe, this materialised in a statement in the *Communiqué* of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education (2009) saying: “transnational education should be governed by the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance as applicable within the European Higher Education Area and be in line with the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.”

While there is probably no need for a revision of the *Guidelines*, countries should continue to disseminate and implement their recommendations. The main areas of improvement lie in measures to improve student and customer protection as well as the transparency in procedures of assessment, registration, and licensing for providers. Further progress in the ease of access of information for students would also be welcome. Paradoxically, quality assurance and accreditation bodies comply less with the *Guidelines* than governments and tertiary education institutions.

The report did not manage to get a clear picture of compliance in non-OECD countries, as the number of non-OECD respondents was too small and not really representative of any group of countries.

After discussion of these conclusions by the OECD Education Policy Committee, the OECD Council has recommended to continue current efforts:

- to promote quality provision in cross-border higher education, notably a) by improving measures for student and customer protection, b) by enhancing their transparency in procedures of assessment, registration, and licensing for providers, and c) to provide easy access of information for students;
- to encourage quality assurance and accreditation bodies to comply with the *Guidelines* and be more explicit about their coverage of cross-border higher education;
- to raise awareness of the *Guidelines* nationally and internationally.

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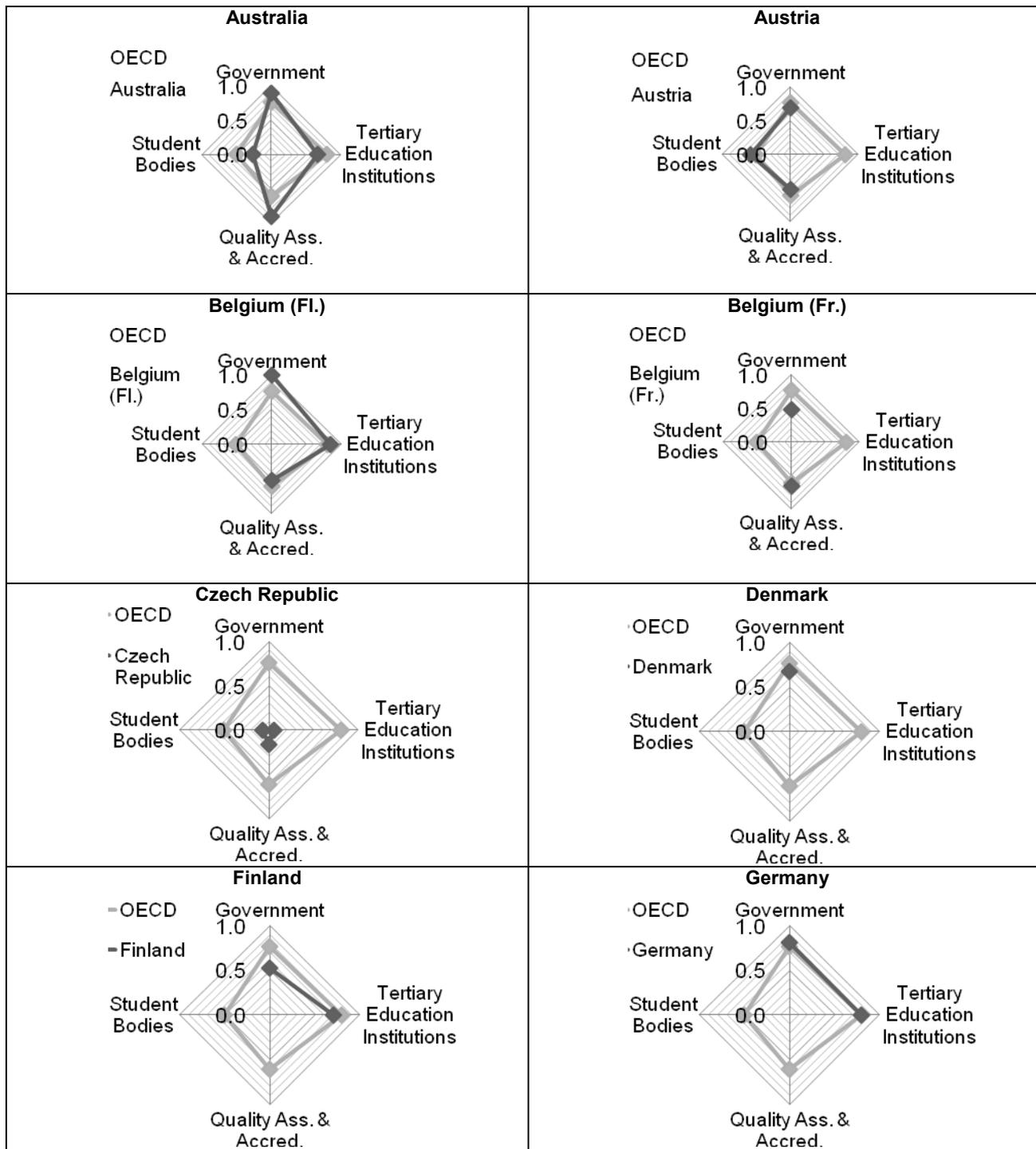
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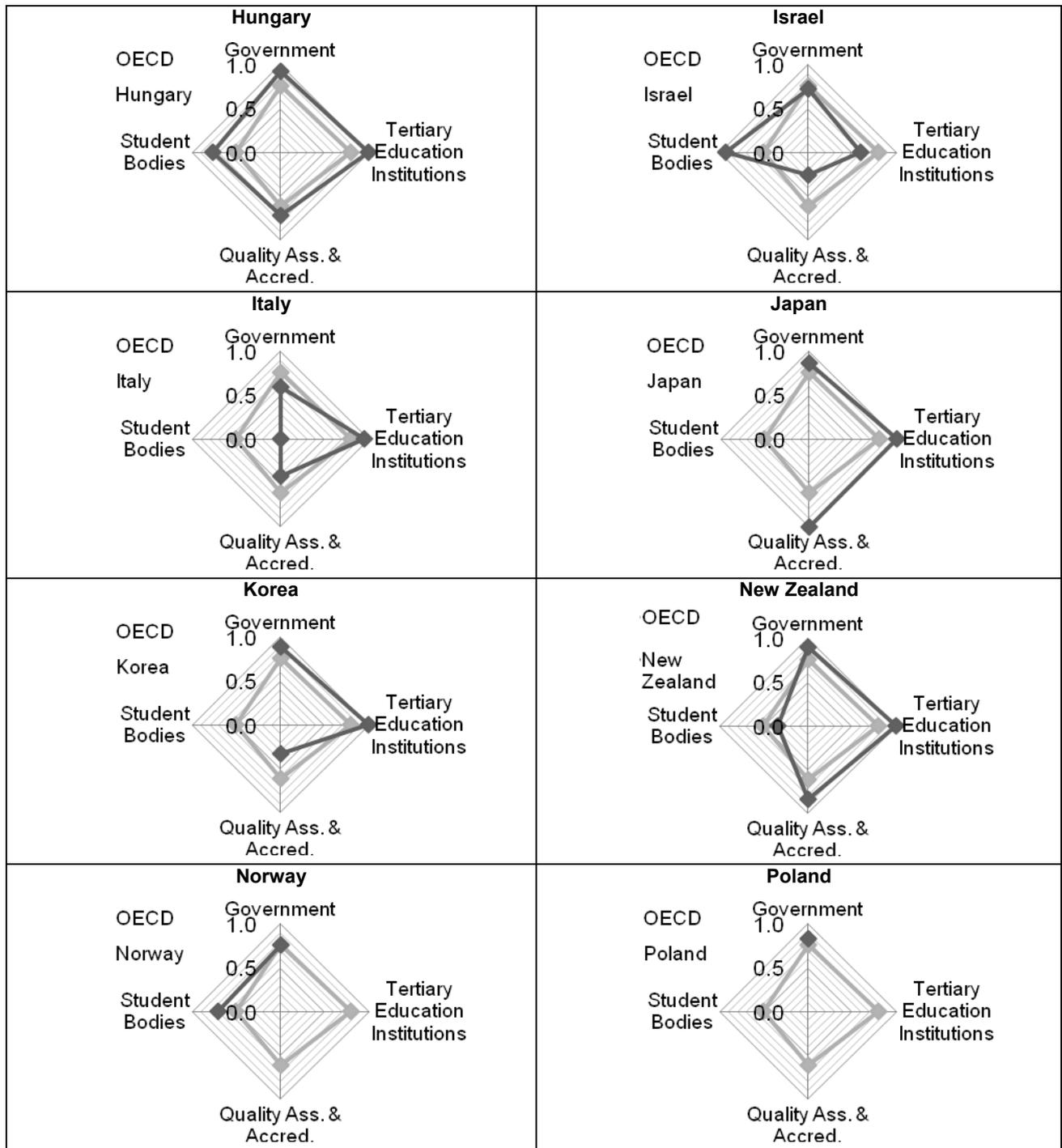
**APPENDIX A**  
**COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE LEVELS WITH THE *GUIDELINES***  
**FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS**

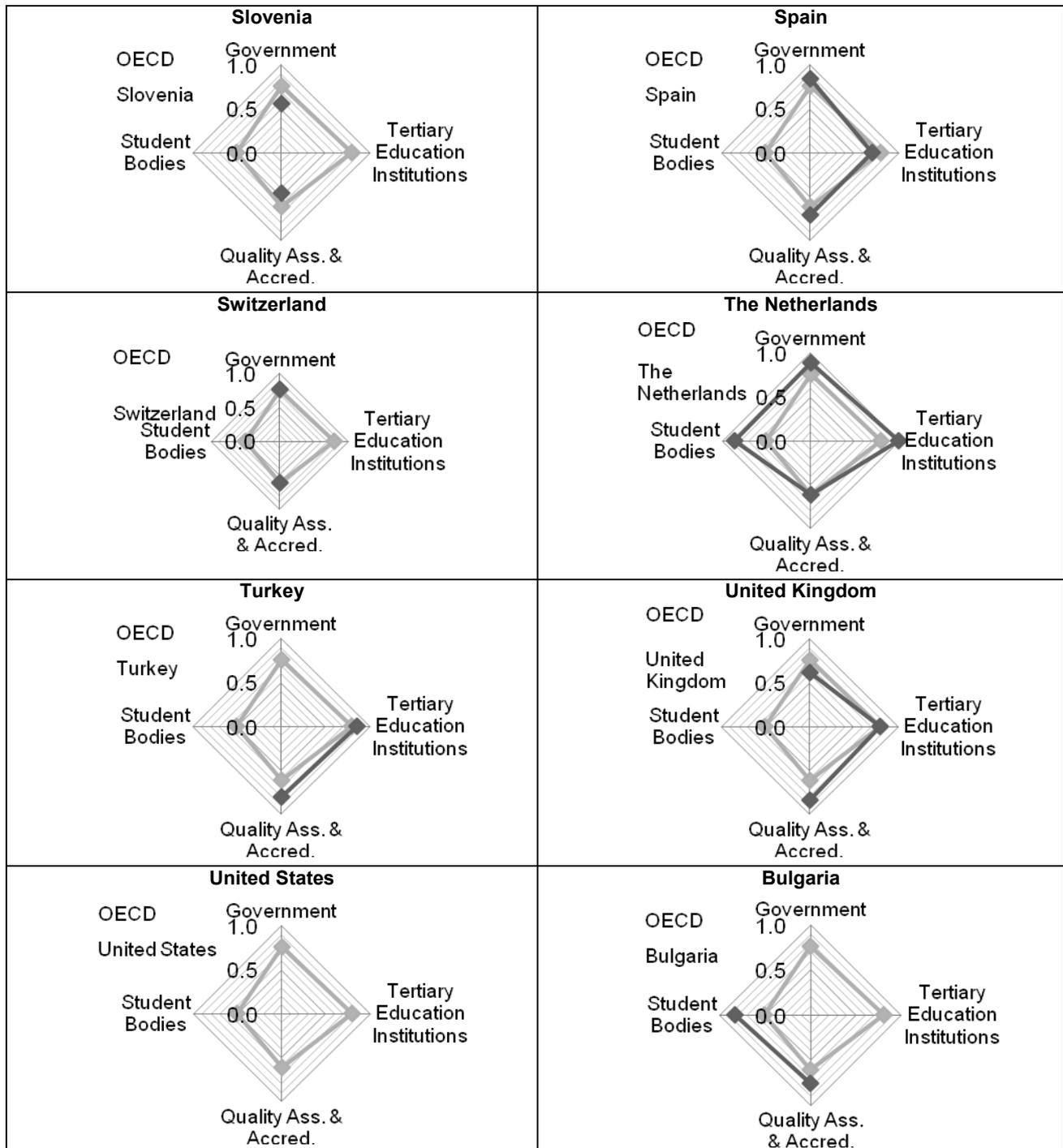
The Figures in this Appendix show how each group of stakeholders compare with the OECD average in each country. For the sake of readability, only the minimum assured levels of implementation are displayed in this configuration: error bars have been omitted. If stakeholder groups have been excluded from the analysis due to missing data, the data point is also missing in the corresponding radar chart.

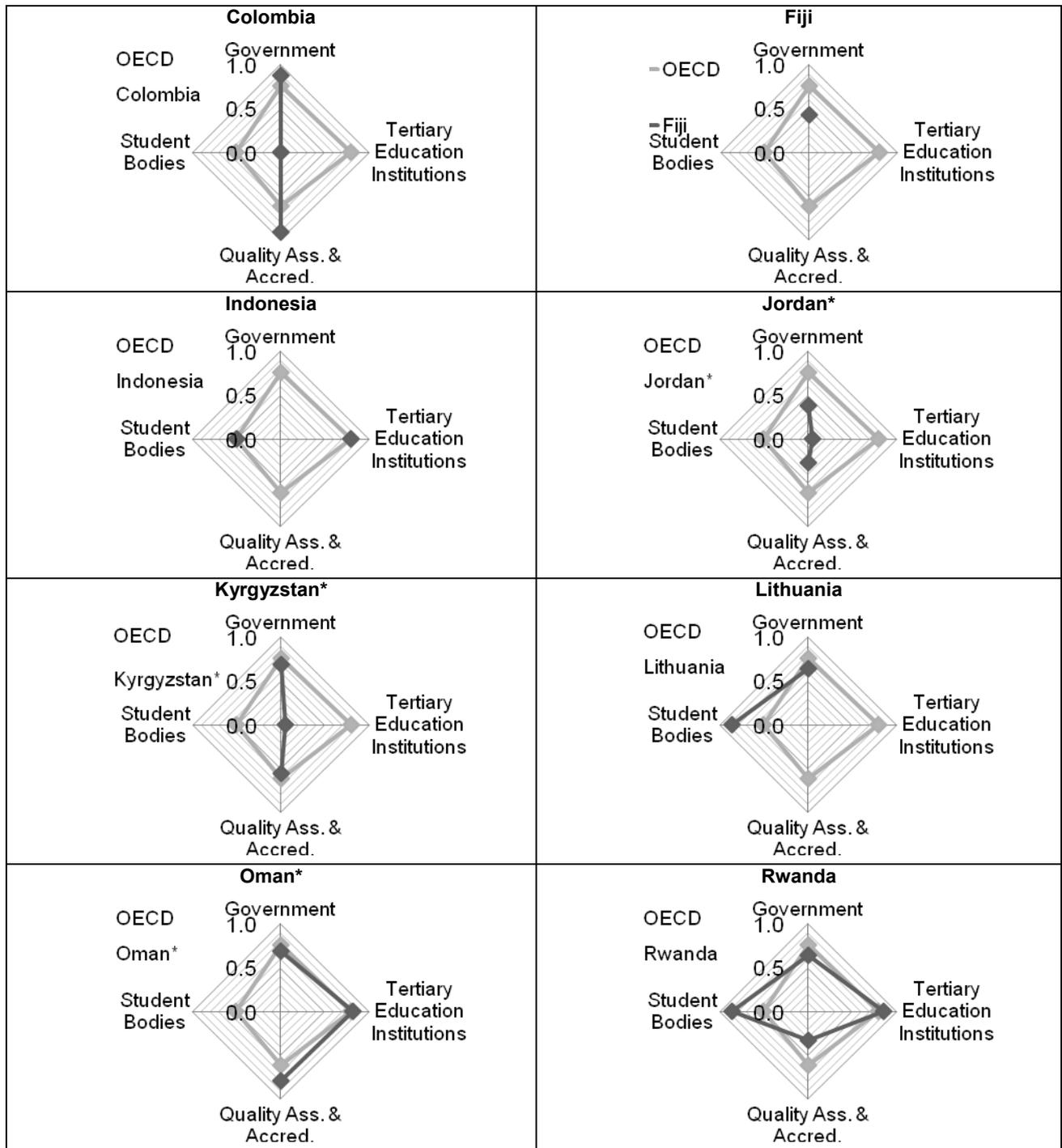
While some countries show uniformly high or low levels of compliance with the *Guidelines* (e.g. Hungary, Japan, the Netherlands, Jordan), this country focus also demonstrates a certain heterogeneity in compliance. Israel, for example, follows relatively few recommendations to tertiary education institutions and quality assurance bodies; however, its student unions stand out as a positive hallmark. In Korea and New Zealand only one stakeholder group shows sub-OECD compliance level (quality assurance bodies and student bodies, respectively). Australia, on the other hand, scores significantly above and significantly below the OECD average with two stakeholder groups each.

The Figures display the same information as Figures 3 to 6, but from a country (or system) perspective. Note that data points have been omitted in the radar chart if the uncertainty arising through missing data exceeds 33.3%.









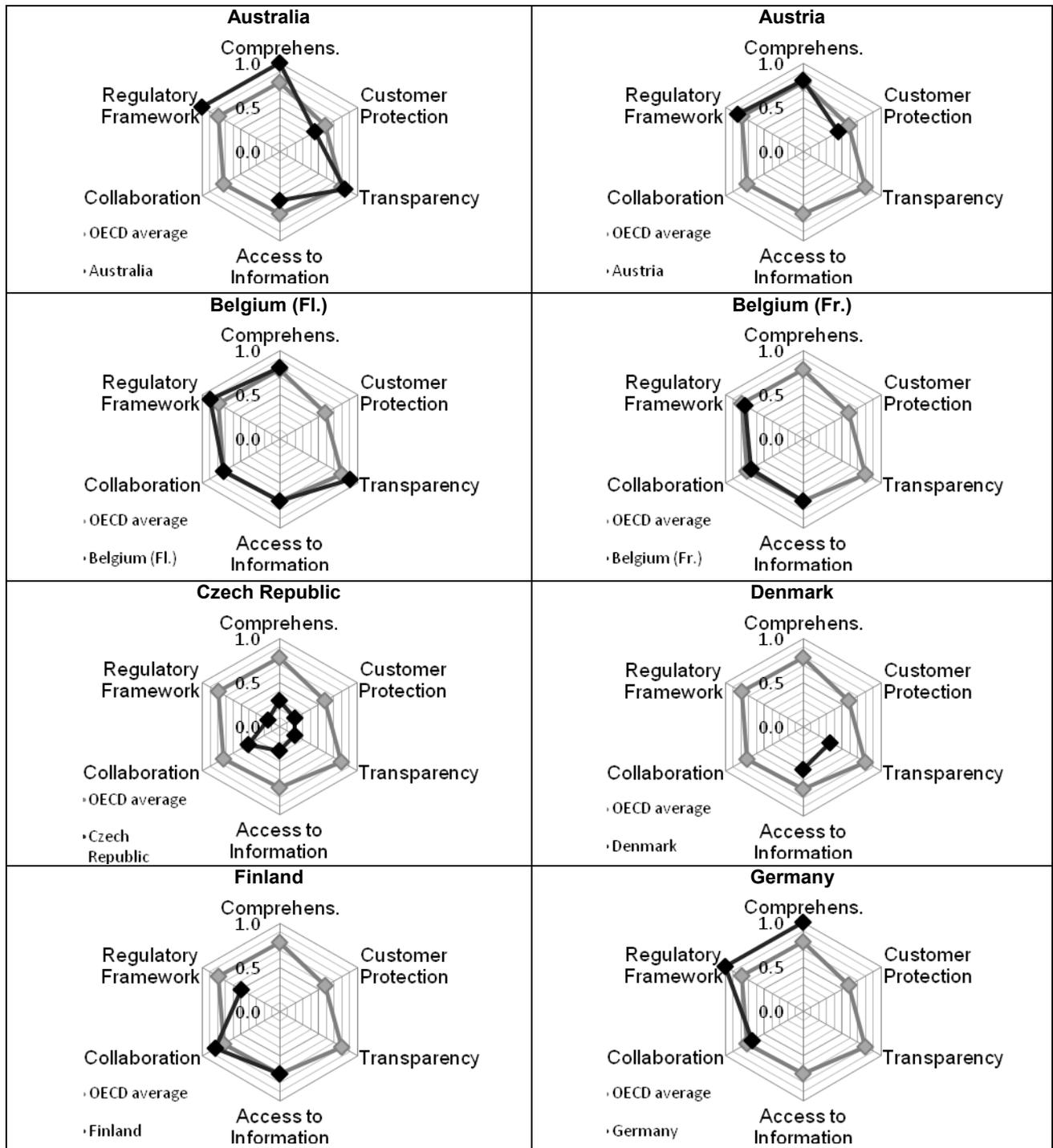
Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

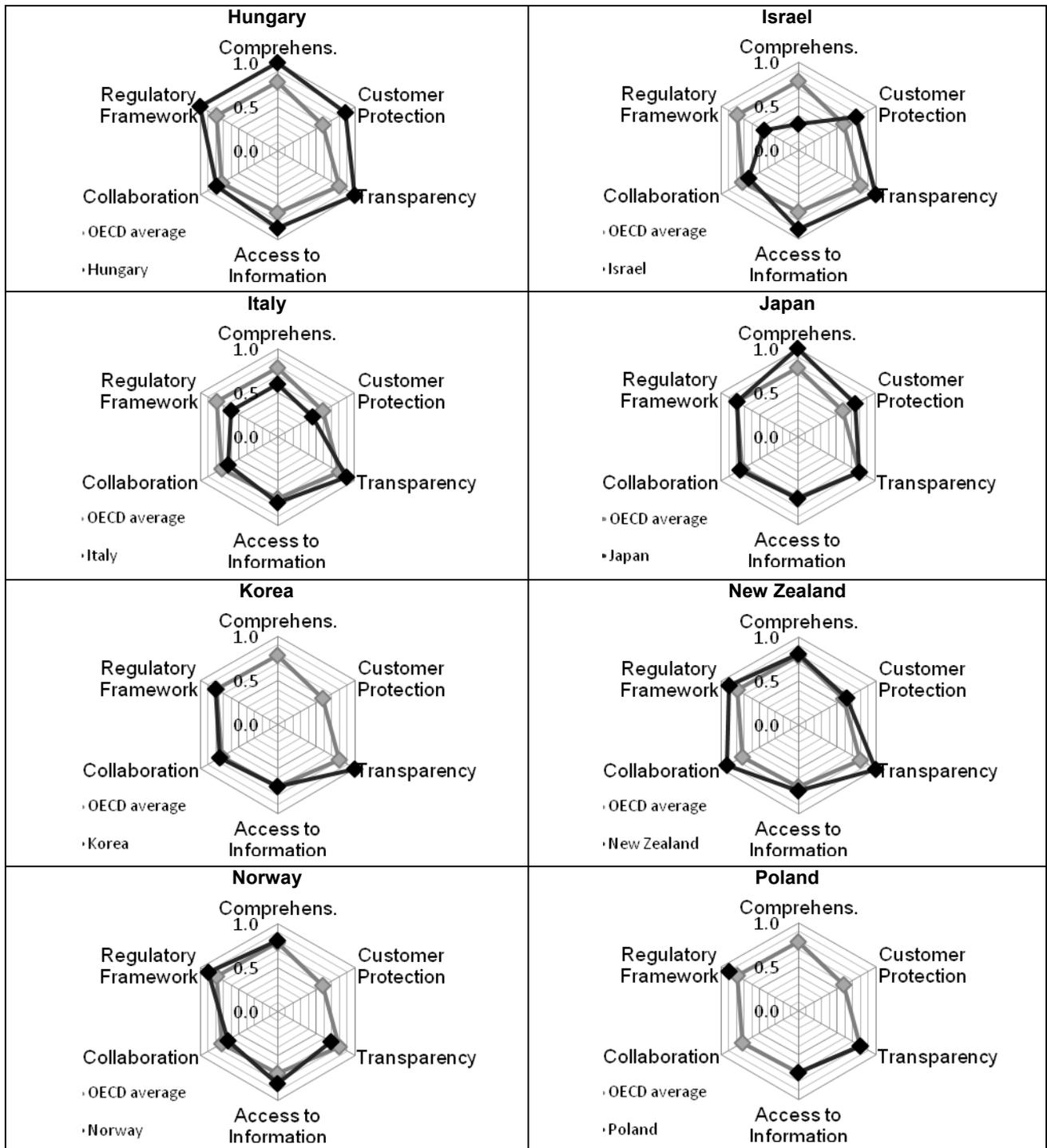
**APPENDIX B**  
**COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE LEVELS**  
**WITH SIX KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE *GUIDELINES***

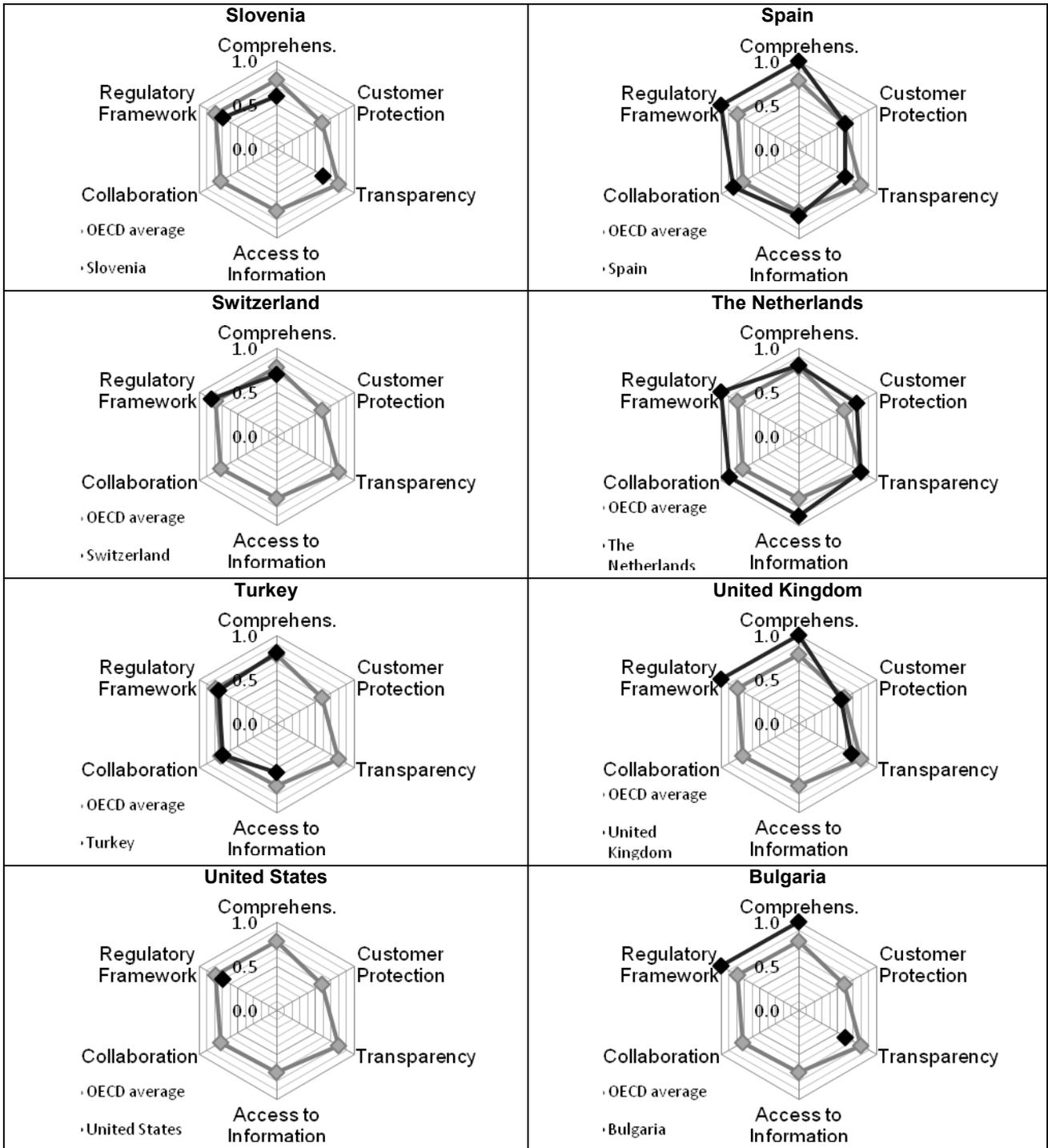
The Figures in this Appendix compares, for each country, the levels of compliance with the six analysed objectives and the OECD average: (1) the development of the regulatory framework, (2) its comprehensiveness in coverage of cross-border higher education, (3) student/customer protection, (4) transparency (mainly for providers), (4) information access and dissemination (mainly for students), (5) collaboration, and (6) regulatory framework exchange and collaboration.

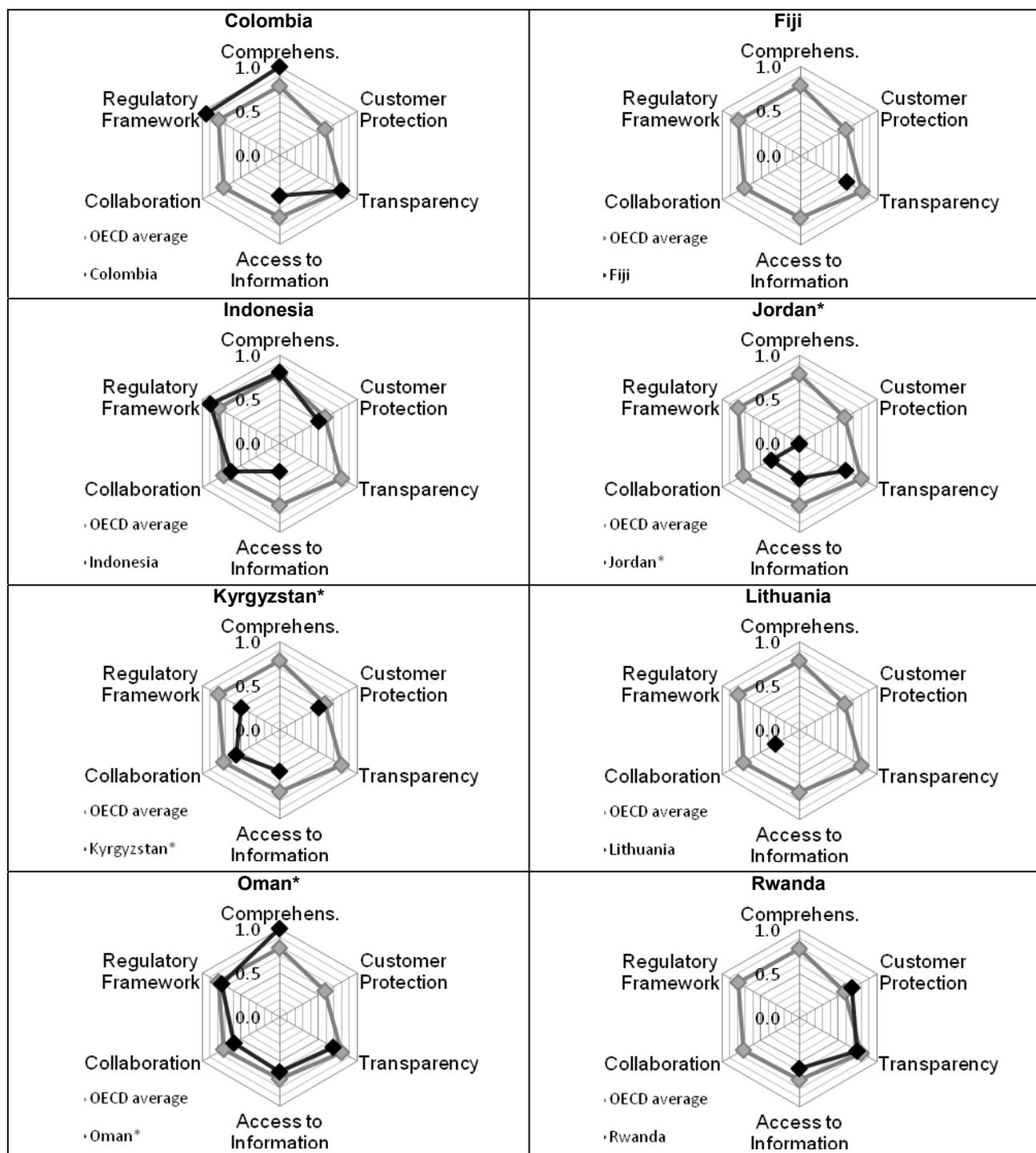
For the sake of readability, only the minimum assured levels of implementation are displayed in this presentation: error bars have been omitted. If stakeholder groups have been excluded from the analysis due to missing data, the data point is also missing in the corresponding radar chart.

The Figures display the same information as Figures 7 to 12, but from a country (or system) perspective. Note that data points have been omitted in the radar chart if the uncertainty arising through missing data exceeds 33.3%.









Note: \* Country with no autonomous student body

## APPENDIX C METHODOLOGY

This report makes repeated use of compound indicators that capture country compliance with the *Guidelines* across whole stakeholder groups or for specific objectives. The compound indicators were developed by mapping the relevant survey questions on the specific recommendations of the *Guidelines* addressing a stakeholder group or a specific objective. The answers were then weighted according to their importance for the achievement of the recommendation, as some questions were asked to clarify or precise some main questions.

The data are furthermore weighted according to the implementation status reported by the countries. All measures currently in place are weighted with a factor of 1.0, independent of whether they have been established before or after 2004. Measures that are planned within the next 24 months are weighted with a factor of 0.5. No current or planned implementation receives the weight 0.

All compound indicators range between 0 and 1. A value of 0 indicates no compliance, and 1 indicates full compliance with the related recommendations of the *Guidelines*. This appendix provides the breakdown of the individual indicators, with survey questions given in bold font and numbered in accordance with survey question numbers of the Tables of Appendix D. Parentheses indicate where several survey questions have been subsumed to match one single recommendation or objective. A conditional operator  $C$  has been introduced that attains the value of a previous question to account for situations where the answer of one question hinges on the answer of another one. For example,  $C_{1001} = 1$  if question **1001** attains a value of 1, and  $C_{1001} = 0$  if question **1001** has the value 0. Moreover, a disjunctive operator  $Max$  has been introduced that attains the maximum of two sub-sets of questions (separated by a semicolon) to account for situations where it does not matter which stakeholder has implemented a specific recommendation as long as the recommendation is met. For example,  $Max(\mathbf{1001}; \mathbf{1002} + \mathbf{1003})$  produces an output that is equal to the maximum of the value of question **1001** and the sum of the values of questions **1002** and **1003**.

The formulas of the different compound indicators used in this report are displayed below.

Government

$$Y_{Gov} = 0.3(0.5 * \mathbf{1001} + 0.1(\mathbf{1002} + \mathbf{1003} + \mathbf{1006} + \mathbf{1007} + \mathbf{1008}) + 0.25 * (1 - C_{1001}) * \mathbf{1010}) + 0.3(0.2(\mathbf{2001} + \mathbf{2002} + \mathbf{2003} + \mathbf{2004} + \mathbf{2008})) + 0.15(0.5(\mathbf{2009} + \mathbf{2010})) + 0.15 * \mathbf{2014} + 0.1(0.5(\mathbf{2011} + \mathbf{2012}))$$

Tertiary education institutions

$$Y_{TEI} = 0.25(0.8 * \mathbf{3001} + 0.2(\mathbf{3002}) + 0.05 * C_{3003} * \mathbf{3004}) + 0.05 * \mathbf{3005} + 0.05 * \mathbf{3006} + 0.05 * \mathbf{3007} + 0.25(0.2(\mathbf{3008} + \mathbf{3009} + \mathbf{3010} + \mathbf{3011} + \mathbf{3012})) + 0.05 * \mathbf{3013}$$

Quality assurance and accreditation bodies:

$$Y_{QAA} = 0.4(0.25(5001 + 5002 + 5003 + 5004)) + 0.125(0.5 * 5005 + 0.25 * (1 - C_{5005}) * 5006 + 0.25 * C_{5005}(5007 + 5008)) + 0.125 * 5009 + 0.125 * 0.5(5010 + 5011) + 0.125 * 5012 + 0.05(0.33(5013 + 5014 + 5015)) + 0.05(0.33(5017 + 5018 + 5019))$$

Student bodies

$$Y_{Stud} = 0.33 * C_{4001}((0.2 * 4002 + 0.8 * 4003) + (0.5 * 4004 + 0.5 * 4005)) + (0.6 * 4006 + 0.2 * 4007 + 0.2 * 4008)$$

Regulatory framework

$$Y_{Reg} = 0.2 * 1001 + 0.1 * (1 - C_{1001}) * 1010 + Max(0.05(2001 + 2002 + 2003 + 2004 + 2005 + 2006 + 2007 + 2008); 0.1(5001 + 5002 + 5003 + 5004)) + 0.2 * 4001 + 0.1 * 0.5(5014 + 5015)$$

Comprehensiveness

$$Y_{Compr} = 0.2 * 1002 + Max(0.1(2001 + 2002 + 2003 + 2004 + 2005 + 2006 + 2007 + 2008); 0.2(5001 + 5002 + 5003 + 5004))$$

Student/customer protection

$$Y_{Cust} = 0.05(1001 + 1002 + 2014) + 0.05(3001 + 3002 + 3004 + 3005 + 3009 + 3010 + 3011 + 3013) + 0.05 * Max(3008; 5011) + 0.05(4004 + 4005 + 4006 + 4007 + 4008) + 0.05(C_{5005}(5007 + 5008) + 5012)$$

Transparency (providers)

$$Y_{Trans} = 0.2(1003 + 1008) + 0.025(3008 + 3009 + 3010 + 3011) + 0.1 * 3013 + 0.2(5010 + 5011)$$

Access to information (students)

$$Y_{Info} = 0.05 * 0001 + 0.05 * 2012 + 0.15 * 2014 + 0.0625(3008 + 3009 + 3010 + 3011) + 0.05(4004 + 4005 + 4006 + 4007 + 4008) + 0.125(5010 + 5011)$$

Collaboration

$$Y_{coll} = 0.1(2009 + 2010) + 0.05(2011 + 2013) + 0.05 * 3005 + 0.1(3006 + 3007 + 3012) + 0.1 * 4002 + 0.05 * 4003 + 0.05 * (5005 + 5006 + 5009) + 0.02(5013 + 5016 + 5017 + 5018 + 5019)$$

**APPENDIX D**  
**COUNTRY ANSWERS TO THE SURVEY**

This Appendix presents the reported answers to all questions of the Survey. The numbers above each question correspond to the question numbers in the original questionnaire and are also the same as the question numbers used in Appendix C in the calculation of the indices.

Table D.1. Survey responses – Government

	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006	1007	1008	1010
	Do you have a system of registration or licensing for cross-border higher education providers wishing to operate in your territory?	Does this licensing or registration system cover all types of institutions?	Are the criteria and standards for registration or licensure public?	Is registration or licensure mandatory?	Do the criteria and standards for registration or licensure have consequences on the funding of students, institutions or programmes?	Are the conditions similar for all providers?	Are the conditions similar for private local and foreign providers?	Are the conditions non-discretionary?	Have you taken initiatives to encourage the establishment of such a system?
<b>OECD</b>									
Australia	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓
Austria	P	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓
Belgium (Fr.)	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓
Belgium (Fl.)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓
Czech Republic	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	x
Denmark	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	x	x
Finland	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	x
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓
Hungary	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	x
Israel	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	n/a	x	✓
Italy	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	✓✓	x	x
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓
Korea	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x
New Zealand	✓✓	x	✓✓	x	✓✓	x	x	x	✓
Norway	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	x
Poland	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓
Slovenia	✓	✓	P	x	x	x	✓	x	x
Spain	✓	✓	n/a	✓	x	n/k	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓
The Netherlands	n/a	n/a	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓
Turkey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	x
United Kingdom	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	✓
United States	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	x
<b>NON OECD</b>									
Bulgaria	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	x	✓✓	x
Colombia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Fiji	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indonesia	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓
Jordan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	x
Lithuania	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x
Oman	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓
Rwanda	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.1 Survey responses – Government (continued)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	Do you have a capacity for QAA of cross-border higher education provision: For foreign incoming institutions?	...For foreign incoming programmes?	...For domestic institutions operating abroad?	...For domestic programmes operating abroad?	...For public cross-border activities?	...For private not-for-profit cross-border activities?	...For private for-profit cross-border activities?	...For domestic distance education programmes?
<b>OECD</b>								
Australia	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Austria	P	P	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Belgium (Fr.)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Belgium (Fl.)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	✓✓
Czech Republic	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	✓✓
Denmark	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓✓	x	x	✓✓
Finland	P	P	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓	✓✓	x	x	✓✓
Hungary	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Israel	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓
Italy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓
Korea	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Zealand	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Norway	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a
Poland	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓
Slovenia	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Spain	P	P	✓	✓	✓	n/k	n/k	✓
Switzerland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓
The Netherlands	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Turkey	x	x	n/a	x	n/k	n/k	n/a	x
United Kingdom	n/a	x	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
United States	n/a	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
<b>NON OECD</b>								
Bulgaria	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Colombia	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x	✓✓
Fiji	P	P	x	x	P	P	P	P
Indonesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jordan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓	✓
Lithuania	✓✓	P	n/a	n/a	P	P	P	✓✓
Oman	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rwanda	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/k	n/k	P

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.1 Survey responses – Government (continued)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Do you facilitate consultation and coordination between the various competent bodies for QAA: ...Nationally?	...Internationally?	Are you party to and contribute to the development and/or updating of the UNESCO regional convention on recognition of qualifications?	Have you established a national information centre as stipulated by the UNESCO conventions?	Are you part of bilateral or multilateral recognition agreements for academic degrees?	Do you provide easily accessible information on recognised higher education institutions/providers in your country?
<b>OECD</b>						
Australia	P	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Austria	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Belgium (Fr.)	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	P	✓✓
Belgium (Fl.)	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	P	✓✓
Czech Republic	✓✓	P	n/k	x	✓✓	✓✓
Denmark	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Finland	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓
Hungary	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Israel	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓
Italy	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	✓✓
Korea	✓	✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓
New Zealand	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Norway	n/a	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Poland	P	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Slovenia	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
The Netherlands	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Turkey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
United Kingdom	n/a	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
United States	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/a	✓
<b>NON OECD</b>						
Bulgaria	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓
Colombia	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Fiji	x	x	x	x	x	P
Indonesia	P	n/a	P	P	P	P
Jordan	✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓	✓
Kyrgyzstan	✓	✓	x	x	✓✓	✓✓
Lithuania	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Oman	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	P	✓
Rwanda	✓✓	n/a	n/k	P	n/k	✓✓

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.2 Survey responses – Tertiary education institutions

	3001	3002	3003	3004	3005	3006	3007	3008	3009	3010	3011	3012	3013
	Are higher education institutions/providers delivering cross-border higher education explicitly committed to a comparable quality of educational delivery across borders and in their home country?	Do they deliver the same degrees irrespective of where the programme is delivered (as opposed to different degrees depending on the location of study)?	Do they use agents to recruit foreign students?	If yes, do they take full responsibility to ensure that the information and guidance provided by their agents is accurate?	Do they operate under the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country when delivering higher education across borders, including distance education?	Do they participate in sector organisations and inter-institutional networks at national and international levels?	Do they develop and maintain networks and partnerships with other higher education institutions to facilitate the process of recognition by acknowledging each other's qualifications as equivalent or comparable?	Do they provide easily accessible information on their criteria and procedures of external and internal quality assurance?	Do they provide easily accessible information on the academic and professional recognition of qualifications they deliver?	Do they provide complete descriptions of programmes and qualifications?	Do these descriptions include the descriptions of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a successful student should acquire?	Do they collaborate with quality assurance and accreditation bodies and with student bodies to facilitate the dissemination of this information?	Do they provide public information on the financial status of their institution and/or educational programme offered?
<b>OECD</b>													
Australia	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	P	P	P	x	x	x
Austria	x	n/a	x	n/a	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓	✓	n/k	x
Belgium (Fr.)	n/a	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/k	n/k
Belgium (Fl.)	✓	✓	n/k	n/a	✓	n/k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/k	x
Czech Republic	x	n/k	n/k	n/a	x	x	x	n/k	x	x	x	x	x
Denmark	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓✓
Finland	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/a	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/a	✓✓	n/k	✓✓	✓	x	✓	✓	n/k	x
Hungary	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Israel	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓
Italy	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Korea	✓✓	✓✓	x	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Zealand	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Norway	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/a	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	P	x	n/a
Poland	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/a	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓✓
Slovenia	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	x	✓
Spain	✓	✓	n/k	n/a	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Netherlands	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Turkey	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	P	P	P	P	✓✓
United Kingdom	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k
United States	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/a	n/k	n/k	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓
<b>NON OECD</b>													
Bulgaria	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Colombia	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Fiji	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Indonesia	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	x	P	P	P	P	n/a
Kyrgyzstan	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lithuania	n/a	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Jordan	x	x	x	n/a	x	x	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oman	✓✓	n/a	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓	P	✓	✓	✓✓	P	P	x
Rwanda	✓	✓	n/k	n/a	✓	n/k	✓	n/k	n/k	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.3 Survey responses – Quality assurance and accreditation bodies

	5001	5002	5003	5004	5005	5006	5007	5008	5009
	Do quality assurance and accreditation arrangements of QAA bodies include cross-border education provision in its various modes: ... Student mobility?	... Programme mobility?	... Institutional mobility?	... Distance and e-learning?	Are QAA bodies in your country part of existing regional and international networks?	Are they in the process of establishing regional networks (if no regional network currently exists)?	Do these international networks have arrangements to improve awareness of disreputable providers and dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies?	Do they have monitoring and reporting systems that can lead to their identification?	Is there collaboration between the bodies of the sending country and the receiving country?
<b>OECD</b>									
Australia	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	x	✓✓
Austria	✓	✓	✓	P	✓✓	P	✓	x	x
Belgium (Fr.)	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	P	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	n/a	n/a
Belgium (Fl.)	✓	✓	x	x	✓	n/a	✓	x	x
Czech Republic	x	x	x	x	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	x
Denmark	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Finland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	n/k
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	n/k	n/k
Hungary	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	x
Israel	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	x
Italy	n/k	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x	n/k
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Korea	✓✓	x	x	x	x	n/k	n/a	✓	n/k
New Zealand	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	x	✓✓
Norway	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	n/k	✓✓
Poland	✓	n/k	n/k	✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓	n/k
Slovenia	P	P	P	P	✓	P	n/k	P	n/k
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	x	x
Switzerland	✓✓	x	x	✓✓	✓	x	x	n/a	✓✓
The Netherlands	P	P	P	P	✓✓	n/a	n/k	n/k	n/k
Turkey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a
United Kingdom	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	x	x	✓✓
United States	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	n/k	n/k
<b>NON OECD</b>									
Bulgaria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓
Colombia	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Fiji	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓
Indonesia	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a
Jordan	x	x	x	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k
Lithuania	✓	✓	n/a	x	✓✓	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Kyrgyzstan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/k	n/k	n/k
Rwanda	P	P	P	P	n/a	✓✓	n/k	n/k	x

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.3. Survey responses – Quality assurance and accreditation bodies (continued)

	5010	5011	5012	5013	5014	5015	5016	5017	5018	5019
	Is information on the assessment standards, procedures, and effects of the quality assurance mechanisms on the funding of students, institutions or programmes easily accessible?	Are the results of the assessment of institutions easily accessible?	Do they apply the principles reflected in current international documents on cross-border higher education such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe 'Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education'?	Do they have mutual recognition agreements with other bodies in place?	Do they have systems of internal quality assurance?	Do they regularly undergo external evaluations?	Have they undertaken experiments in international evaluation or peer reviews of quality assurance and accreditation bodies?	Have they experimented or adopted procedures for the international composition of peer review panels?	Have they experimented or adopted procedures for the international benchmarking of standards, criteria and assessment procedures?	Have they experimented or undertaken joint assessment projects with foreign quality assurance and accreditation bodies?
<b>OECD</b>										
Australia	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	P	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Austria	n/a	n/a	x	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Belgium (Fr.)	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	P
Belgium (Fl.)	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Czech Republic	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Denmark	x	x	✓	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k
Finland	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Germany	n/k	n/k	n/k	x	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓
Hungary	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	✓
Israel	✓	✓	x	x	x	x	x	✓	✓	x
Italy	✓	✓	x	n/k	n/k	n/k	x	✓	✓	n/k
Japan	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Korea	✓	✓	n/k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Zealand	✓✓	✓	P	✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x
Norway	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Poland	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P	✓
Slovenia	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Spain	✓	✓	n/k	P	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switzerland	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓
The Netherlands	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Turkey	✓	P	✓	P	✓	P	P	P	P	P
United Kingdom	n/a	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x
United States	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k
<b>NON OECD</b>										
Bulgaria	✓	✓	n/k	✓	✓	✓	x	n/k	n/k	n/k
Colombia	✓✓	✓✓	P	✓	✓	P	P	x	P	✓
Fiji	✓	✓	P	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Indonesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jordan	✓	✓✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lithuania	P	n/a	n/a	✓	P	P	P	✓✓	✓✓	P
Kyrgyzstan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oman	✓	✓	✓	P	✓	P	P	✓	✓	P
Rwanda	P	P	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004;

P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

Table D.4 Survey responses – Student bodies

	4001	4002	4003	4004	4005	4006	4007	4008
	Does your country have autonomous local or national student bodies?	Are your domestic student bodies members of international student bodies?	Are they involved as active partners in the development, monitoring and maintenance of the quality provision of cross-border higher education?	Do they guide students to accurate and reliable information sources on cross-border higher education?	Do they take action to increase the awareness of the students of the potential risks such as misleading guidance and information, low-quality provision leading to qualifications of limited validity, and disreputable providers?	Do they help and encourage students and potential students to ask appropriate questions when enrolling in cross-border higher education programmes?	Have they established a list of relevant questions for students willing to participate in cross-border higher education?	Does this list include the following questions: whether the foreign provider is recognised or accredited and whether the qualifications delivered by the foreign provider are recognised in the students' home country?
<b>OECD</b>								
Australia	✓✓	n/k	✓	x	x	x	x	x
Austria	✓✓	✓✓	x	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x
Belgium (Fr.)	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Belgium (Fl.)	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Czech Republic	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x	x
Denmark	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k
Finland	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Germany	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Hungary	✓✓	✓✓	P-✓✓	✓	✓-x	✓✓-✓	P-x	x-n/a
Israel	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	P	P
Italy	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Japan	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Korea	✓✓	n/k	x	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/a
New Zealand	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x	x	x	x
Norway	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	✓	✓	n/k	n/a
Poland	✓✓	n/k	x	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Slovenia	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Spain	✓	✓	x	n/k	✓	n/k	n/k	n/a
Switzerland	✓✓	✓✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The Netherlands	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	x	x
Turkey	✓	x	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
United Kingdom	✓✓	✓✓	✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
United States	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k
<b>NON OECD</b>								
Bulgaria	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	n/k	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Colombia	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Fiji	✓✓	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Indonesia	✓	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jordan	x	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k	n/k
Kyrgyzstan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lithuania	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	x	n/a
Oman	x	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rwanda	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	n/k	n/k

Note: QAA - Quality Assurance and Accreditation; TEI - Tertiary Education Institutions; ✓✓ - Yes, before 2004; ✓ - Yes, after 2004; P - Planned within the next 24 months; X - No; n/k - do not know; n/a - not applicable. Hungary has two student unions. The table features both answers, first the responses by the National Students' Union, followed by the responses of Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Students.

Source: Guidelines on quality provision in cross-border higher education survey (2010)

**APPENDIX E**  
**OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS**

<b>Country</b>	<b>National contact point</b>
<b>Austria</b>	Wilhelm Brandstätter Teinfaltstraße 8 1010 Vienna +43 1 5312077200 <a href="mailto:wilhelm.brandstaetter@bmwf.gv.at">wilhelm.brandstaetter@bmwf.gv.at</a>
<b>Denmark</b>	Troels Breindal Ministry of Education Copenhagen +45 33925300 <a href="mailto:troels.breindal@uvm.dk">troels.breindal@uvm.dk</a>
<b>Italy</b>	Francesca Brotto Viale Trastevere 76 1 00153 ROMA +39 0658492804 <a href="mailto:dgai.segretec@istruzione.it">dgai.segretec@istruzione.it</a>
<b>Japan</b>	Himiya Naoki 3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo 100-8959 +81 3 6734 2060 <a href="mailto:kotokoku@mext.go.jp">kotokoku@mext.go.jp</a>
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<b>Norway</b>	Ms. Tone Flood Strøm Ministry of Education and Research, Department of Higher Reducation P.O. Box 8119 Dep 0032 Oslo +47 22 24 77 54 <a href="mailto:ffs@kd.dep.no">ffs@kd.dep.no</a>
<b>The Netherlands</b>	Ms. Marlies Leegwater Ministry of Education, Culture & Science P.O. Box 16375 2500 BJ The Hague + 31 70 412 2904 <a href="mailto:m.e.leegwater@minocw.nl">m.e.leegwater@minocw.nl</a>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Jonathan PIGGINS Joint International Unit 2C Caxton House, Tothill Street London Sw1H 9NA +44 (0)207 340 4344 <a href="mailto:jonathan.piggins@jiu.qsi.gov.uk">jonathan.piggins@jiu.qsi.gov.uk</a>

## APPENDIX F *GUIDELINES*<sup>1</sup> FOR QUALITY PROVISION IN CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

### Introduction

#### *Purpose of the Guidelines*

The *Guidelines* aim to support and encourage international cooperation and enhance the understanding of the importance of quality provision in cross-border higher education<sup>2</sup>. The purposes of the *Guidelines* are to protect students and other stakeholders from low-quality provision and disreputable providers<sup>3</sup> as well as to encourage the development of quality cross-border higher education that meets human, social, economic and cultural needs.

#### *Rationale for the Guidelines*

Since the 1980s, cross-border higher education through the mobility of students, academic staff, programmes/institutions and professionals has grown considerably. In parallel, new delivery modes and cross-border providers have appeared, such as campuses abroad, electronic delivery of higher education and for-profit providers. These new forms of cross-border higher education offer increased opportunities for improving the skills and competencies of individual students and the quality of national higher education systems, provided they aim at benefiting the human, social, economic and cultural development of the receiving country.

While in some countries the national frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications take into account cross-border higher education, in many countries they are still not geared to addressing the challenges of cross-border provision. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive frameworks for co-ordinating various initiatives at the international level, together with the diversity and unevenness of the quality assurance and accreditation systems at the national level, create gaps in the quality assurance of cross-border higher education, leaving some cross-border higher education provision outside any framework of quality assurance and accreditation. This makes students and other stakeholders more vulnerable to low-quality provision and disreputable providers<sup>4</sup> of cross-border higher education. The challenge faced by current quality assurance and accreditation systems is to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover foreign providers and programmes (in addition to national

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<sup>1</sup> These *Guidelines* are not legally binding and Member countries are expected to implement the *Guidelines* as appropriate in their national context.

<sup>2</sup> In these *Guidelines*, cross-border higher education includes higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border higher education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities, in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning).

<sup>3</sup> In this context 'disreputable providers' refers to degree and accreditation mills.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote number 3.

providers and programmes) in order to maximise the benefits and limit the potential drawbacks of the internationalisation of higher education. At the same time, the increase in cross-border student, academic staff, researcher and professional mobility has put the issue of the recognition of academic and professional qualifications high on the international cooperation agenda.

There is therefore a need for additional national initiatives, strengthened international co-operation and networking, and more transparent information on procedures and systems of quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications. These efforts should have a global range and should emphasise supporting the needs of developing countries to establish robust higher education systems. Given that some countries lack comprehensive frameworks for quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications, capacity building should form an important part of the overall strengthening and co-ordination of national and international initiatives. In this light, UNESCO Secretariat and the OECD have worked closely together in the development of these *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education* (“*Guidelines*”). The implementation of these *Guidelines* could serve as a first step in the capacity building process.

The quality of a country’s higher education sector and its assessment and monitoring is not only key to its social and economic well-being, it is also a determining factor affecting the status of that higher education system at the international level. The establishment of quality assurance systems has become a necessity, not only for monitoring quality in higher education delivered within the country, but also for engaging in delivery of higher education internationally. As a consequence, there has been an impressive rise in the number of quality assurance and accreditation bodies for higher education in the past two decades. However, existing national quality assurance capacity often focuses exclusively on domestic delivery by domestic institutions.

The increased cross-border mobility of students, academic staff, professionals, programmes and providers presents challenges for existing national quality assurance and accreditation frameworks and bodies as well as for the systems for recognising foreign qualifications. Some of these challenges are described below:

- a) National capacity for quality assurance and accreditation often does not cover cross-border higher education. This increases the risk of students falling victim to misleading guidance and information and disreputable providers, dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies and low-quality provision, leading to qualifications of limited validity.
- b) National systems and bodies for the recognition of qualifications may have limited knowledge and experience in dealing with cross-border higher education. In some cases, the challenge becomes more complicated as cross-border higher education providers may deliver qualifications that are not of comparable quality to those which they offer in their home country.
- c) The increasing need to obtain national recognition of foreign qualifications has posed challenges to national recognition bodies. This in turn, at times, leads to administrative and legal problems for the individuals concerned.
- d) The professions depend on trustworthy, high-quality qualifications. It is essential that users of professional services including employers have full confidence in the skills of qualified professionals. The increasing possibility of obtaining low-quality qualifications could harm the professions themselves, and might in the long run undermine confidence in professional qualifications.

### ***Scope of the Guidelines***

The *Guidelines* aim to provide an international framework for quality provision in cross-border higher education that responds to the above-mentioned challenges.

The *Guidelines* are based on the principle of mutual trust and respect among countries and on the recognition of the importance of international collaboration in higher education. They also recognise the importance of national authority and the diversity of higher education systems. Countries attach a high importance to national sovereignty over higher education. Higher education is a vital means for expressing a country's linguistic and cultural diversity and also for nurturing its economic development and social cohesion. It is therefore recognized that policy-making in higher education reflects national priorities. At the same time, it is recognized that in some countries, there are several competent authorities in higher education.

The effectiveness of the *Guidelines* largely depends on the possibility of strengthening the capacity of national systems to assure the quality of higher education. The development and implementation of the UNESCO regional conventions and further support to the ongoing capacity building initiatives of UNESCO, other multilateral organisations and bilateral donors in this area will sustain and be complementary to the *Guidelines*. These initiatives should be supported by strong regional and national partners.

The *Guidelines* acknowledge the important role of non-governmental organisations such as higher education associations, student bodies, academic staff associations, networks of quality assurance and accreditation bodies, recognition and credential evaluation bodies and professional bodies in strengthening international co-operation for quality provision in cross-border higher education. The *Guidelines* aim to encourage the strengthening and co-ordination of existing initiatives by enhancing dialogue and collaboration among various bodies.

Cross-border higher education encompasses a wide range of modalities that range from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning). In implementing the *Guidelines*, consideration should be given to the variety of provision and its different demands for quality assurance.

### **Guidelines for Higher Education Stakeholders**

With due regard to the specific division of responsibilities in each country, the *Guidelines* recommend actions to six stakeholders<sup>5</sup>: governments; higher education institutions/providers including academic staff; student bodies; quality assurance and accreditation bodies; academic recognition bodies<sup>6</sup>; and professional bodies.

#### ***Guidelines for governments***

Governments can be influential, if not responsible, in promoting adequate quality assurance, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications. They undertake the role of policy coordination in most higher education systems. However, it is acknowledged throughout these *Guidelines* that in some

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<sup>5</sup> In the *Guidelines*, the distinctions among these stakeholders are made based on the functions and it is recognized that the different functions do not necessarily belong to separate bodies.

<sup>6</sup> Academic recognition bodies include qualification recognition bodies, credential evaluation bodies, and advisory/information centres.

countries, the authority for overseeing quality assurance lies with sub-national government bodies or with non-governmental organisations.

In this context, it is recommended that governments:

- a) Establish, or encourage the establishment of a comprehensive, fair and transparent system of registration or licensing for cross-border higher education providers wishing to operate in their territory.
- b) Establish, or encourage the establishment of a comprehensive capacity for reliable quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border higher education provision, recognising that quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border higher education provision involves both sending and receiving countries.
- c) Consult and coordinate amongst the various competent bodies for quality assurance and accreditation both nationally and internationally.
- d) Provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria and standards for registration, licensure, quality assurance and accreditation of cross-border higher education, their consequences on the funding of students, institutions or programmes, where applicable and their voluntary or mandatory nature.
- e) Consider becoming party to and contribute to the development and/or updating of the appropriate UNESCO regional conventions on recognition of qualifications and establish national information centres as stipulated by the conventions.
- f) Where appropriate develop or encourage bilateral or multilateral recognition agreements, facilitating the recognition or equivalence of each country's qualifications based on the procedures and criteria included in mutual agreements.
- g) Contribute to efforts to improve the accessibility at the international level of up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information on recognised higher education institutions/providers.

### ***Guidelines for higher education institutions/providers***

Commitment to quality by all higher education institutions/providers is essential<sup>7</sup>. To this end, the active and constructive contributions of academic staff are indispensable. Higher education institutions are responsible for the quality as well as the social, cultural and linguistic relevance of education and the standards of qualifications provided in their name, no matter where or how it is delivered.

In this context, it is recommended that higher education institutions/providers delivering cross-border higher education:

- a) Ensure that the programmes they deliver across borders and in their home country are of comparable quality and that they also take into account the cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the receiving country. It is desirable that a commitment to this effect should be made public.

<sup>7</sup>

An important and relevant initiative for this is the statement "Sharing Quality Higher Education across Borders" by the International Association of Universities, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the American Council on Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation on behalf of higher education institutions worldwide.

- b) Recognise that quality teaching and research is made possible by the quality of faculty and the quality of their working conditions that foster independent and critical inquiry. The UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel*<sup>8</sup> and other relevant instruments need to be taken into account by all institutions and providers to support good working conditions and terms of service, collegial governance and academic freedom.
- c) Develop, maintain or review current internal quality management systems so that they make full use of the competencies of stakeholders such as academic staff, administrators, students and graduates and take full responsibility for delivering higher education qualifications comparable in standard in their home country and across borders. Furthermore, when promoting their programmes to potential students through agents, they should take full responsibility to ensure that the information and guidance provided by their agents is accurate reliable and easily accessible
- d) Consult competent quality assurance and accreditation bodies and respect the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving country when delivering higher education across borders, including distance education.
- e) Share good practices by participating in sector organisations and inter-institutional networks at national and international levels.
- f) Develop and maintain networks and partnerships to facilitate the process of recognition by acknowledging each other's qualifications as equivalent or comparable.
- g) Where relevant, use codes of good practice such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe '*Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education*'<sup>9</sup> and other relevant codes such as the Council of Europe/UNESCO *Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications*<sup>10</sup>.
- h) Provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on the criteria and procedures of external and internal quality assurance and the academic and professional recognition of qualifications they deliver and provide complete descriptions of programmes and qualifications, preferably with descriptions of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a successful student should acquire. Higher education institutions/providers should collaborate especially with quality assurance and accreditation bodies and with student bodies to facilitate the dissemination of this information.
- i) Ensure the transparency of the financial status of the institution and/or educational programme offered.

### **Guidelines for student bodies**

As representatives of the direct recipients of cross-border higher education and as part of the higher education community, student bodies bear the responsibility of helping students and potential students to

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<sup>8</sup> Available at:  
[http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13144&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13144&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>9</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/Recognition/Code%20of%20good%20practice\\_EN.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/Recognition/Code%20of%20good%20practice_EN.asp#TopOfPage)

<sup>10</sup> Available at:  
[http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/Recognition/Criteria%20and%20procedures\\_EN.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/HigherEducation/Recognition/Criteria%20and%20procedures_EN.asp#TopOfPage)

carefully scrutinise the information available and giving sufficient consideration in their decision making process.

In this context, it is recommended that the emergence of autonomous local, national and international student bodies be encouraged and that the student bodies:

- a) Be involved as active partners at international, national and institutional levels in the development, monitoring and maintenance of the quality provision of cross-border higher education and take the necessary steps to achieve this objective.
- b) Take active part in promoting quality provision, by increasing the awareness of the students of the potential risks such as misleading guidance and information, low-quality provision leading to qualifications of limited validity, and disreputable providers. They should also guide them to accurate and reliable information sources on cross-border higher education. This could be done by increasing the awareness of the existence of these guidelines as well as taking an active part in their implementation.
- c) Encourage students and potential students to ask appropriate questions when enrolling in cross-border higher education programmes. A list of relevant questions could be established by student bodies, including foreign students where possible, in collaboration with bodies such as higher education institutions, quality assurance and accreditation bodies and academic recognition bodies. Such a list should include the following questions: whether the foreign institution/provider is recognised or accredited by a trustworthy body and whether the qualifications delivered by the foreign institution/provider are recognised in the students' home country for academic and/or professional purposes.

### ***Guidelines for quality assurance and accreditation bodies***

In addition to internal quality management of institutions/providers, external quality assurance and accreditation systems have been adopted in more than 60 countries. Quality assurance and accreditation bodies are responsible for assessing the quality of higher education provision. The existing systems of quality assurance and accreditation often vary from country to country and sometimes within the countries themselves. Some have governmental bodies for quality assurance and accreditation, and others have non-governmental bodies. Furthermore, some differences exist in the terminologies used, the definition of "quality", the purpose and function of the system including its link to the funding of students, institutions or programmes, the methodologies used in quality assurance and accreditation, the scope and function of the responsible body or unit, and the voluntary or compulsory nature of participation. While respecting this diversity, a co-ordinated effort among the bodies of both sending and receiving countries is needed at both the regional and global level, in order to tackle the challenges raised by the growth of cross-border provision of higher education, especially in its new forms<sup>11</sup>.

In this context, it is recommended that quality assurance and accreditation bodies:

- a) Ensure that their quality assurance and accreditation arrangements include cross-border education provision in its various modes. This can mean giving attention to assessment guidelines, ensuring that standards and processes are transparent, consistent and appropriate to take account of the shape and scope of the national higher education system, and adaptability to changes and developments in cross-border provision.

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote 2.

- b) Sustain and strengthen the existing regional and international networks or establish regional networks in regions that do not already have one. These networks can serve as platforms to exchange information and good practice, disseminate knowledge, increase the understanding of international developments and challenges as well as to improve the professional expertise of their staff and quality assessors. These networks could also be used to improve awareness of disreputable providers and dubious quality assurance and accreditation bodies, and to develop monitoring and reporting systems that can lead to their identification.
- c) Establish links to strengthen the collaboration between the bodies of the sending country and the receiving country and enhance the mutual understanding of different systems of quality assurance and accreditation. This may facilitate the process of assuring the quality of programmes delivered across borders and institutions operating across borders while respecting the quality assurance and accreditation systems of the receiving countries.
- d) Provide accurate and easily accessible information on the assessment standards, procedures, and effects of the quality assurance mechanisms on the funding of students, institutions or programmes where applicable as well as the results of the assessment. Quality assurance and accreditation bodies should collaborate with other actors, especially higher education institutions/providers, academic staff, student bodies and academic recognition bodies to facilitate the dissemination of such information.
- e) Apply the principles reflected in current international documents on cross-border higher education such as the UNESCO/Council of Europe '*Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*'<sup>12</sup>.
- f) Reach mutual recognition agreements with other bodies on the basis of trust in and understanding of each other's professional practice, develop systems of internal quality assurance and regularly undergo external evaluations, making full use of the competencies of stakeholders. Where feasible, consider undertaking experiments in international evaluation or peer reviews of quality assurance and accreditation bodies.
- g) Consider adoption of procedures for the international composition of peer review panels, international benchmarking of standards, criteria and assessment procedures and undertake joint assessment projects to increase the comparability of evaluation activities of different quality assurance and accreditation bodies.

### ***Guidelines for academic recognition bodies***

The UNESCO regional conventions on recognition of qualifications are important instruments facilitating the fair recognition of higher education qualifications, including the assessment of foreign qualifications resulting from cross-border mobility of students, skilled professionals and cross-border provision of higher education.

There is a need to build on existing initiatives with additional international action to facilitate fair processes of recognition of academic qualifications by making systems more transparent and comparable.

In this context, it is recommended that academic recognition bodies:

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 9.

- a) Establish and maintain regional and international networks that can serve as platforms to exchange information and good practice, disseminate knowledge, increase the understanding of international developments and challenges and improve the professional expertise of their staff.
- b) Strengthen their cooperation with quality assurance and accreditation bodies to facilitate the process of determining whether a qualification meets basic quality standards, as well as to engage in cross-border cooperation and networking with quality assurance and accreditation bodies. This cooperation should be pursued both at regional and cross-regional level.
- c) Establish and maintain contacts with all stakeholders to share the information and improve the links between academic and professional qualification assessment methodologies.
- d) Where appropriate, address the professional recognition of qualifications in the labour market and provide necessary information on professional recognition, both to those who have a foreign qualification and to employers. Given the increasing scope of the international labour markets and growing professional mobility, collaboration and co-ordination with professional associations are recommended for this purpose.
- e) Use codes of practice such as the Council of Europe/UNESCO *Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications*<sup>13</sup> and other relevant codes of practice to increase the public's confidence in their recognition procedures, and to reassure stakeholders that the processing of requests is conducted in a fair and consistent manner.
- f) Provide clear, accurate and accessible information on the criteria for the assessment of qualifications, including qualifications resulting from cross-border provision.

### ***Guidelines for professional bodies***<sup>14</sup>

Systems of professional recognition differ from country to country and from profession to profession. For example, in some cases, a recognised academic qualification could be sufficient for entry into professional practice, whereas in other cases, additional requirements are imposed on holders of academic qualifications in order to enter the profession. Given the increasing scope of international labour markets and growing professional mobility, the holders of academic qualifications, as well as employers and professional associations are facing many challenges. Increasing transparency – *i.e.*, improving the availability and the quality of the information - is critical for fair recognition processes.

In this context, it is recommended that professional bodies responsible for professional recognition:

- a) Develop information channels that are accessible both to national and foreign holders of qualifications to assist them in gaining professional recognition of their qualifications, and to employers who need advice on the professional recognition of foreign qualifications. Information should also be easily accessible to current and potential students.
- b) Establish and maintain contacts between the professional bodies of both sending and receiving countries, higher education institutions/providers, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, as well as academic recognition bodies to improve qualification assessment methodologies.

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<sup>13</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>14</sup> This section refers to institutions with legal competence in the field of regulated professions and professional recognition. In some countries, these institutions are professional bodies; in other countries, this role is being performed by other competent authorities, such as governmental ministries.

- c) Establish, develop and implement assessment criteria and procedures for comparing programmes and qualifications to facilitate the recognition of qualifications and to accommodate learning outcomes and competencies that are culturally appropriate in addition to input and process requirements.
- d) Improve the accessibility at the international level of up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information on mutual recognition agreements for the professions and encourage the development of new agreements.
- e) OECD (2008), *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society*, 2 volumes, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- f) OECD (2009), *Higher Education to 2030, volume 2: Globalisation*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

**RECENT OECD PUBLICATIONS OF RELEVANCE TO THIS WORKING PAPER**

OECD (2004a), *Internationalisation and Trade in Higher Education*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2004b), *Quality and Recognition in Higher Education: the Cross-Border Challenge*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2006), “The Internationalisation of Higher Education: Towards an Explicit Policy”, in *Education Policy Analysis 2005-2006*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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