



# POLICY OPTIONS FOR CLOSING THE ACCESS GAP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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OECD/EDU



# Overview

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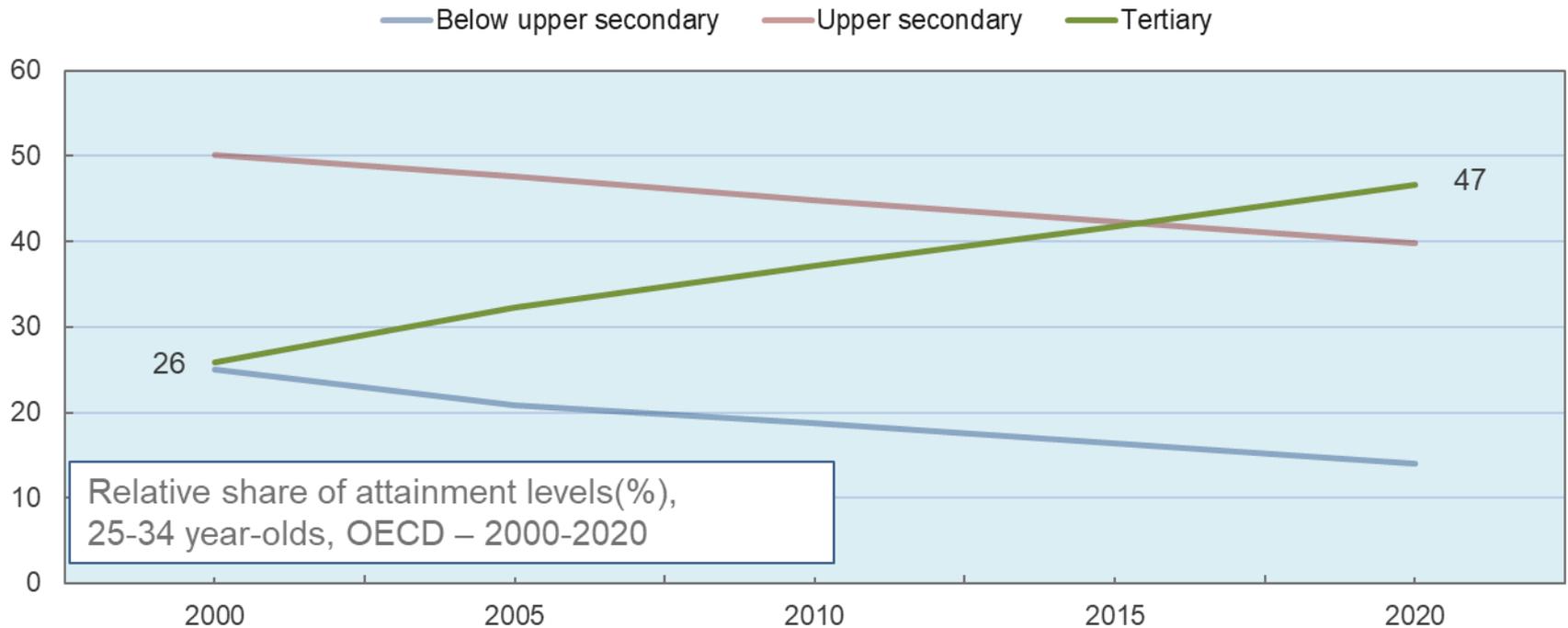
- The wider context
- Where do we stand currently?
- Policy options for closing the gaps
- Additional policy considerations



# THE WIDER CONTEXT



# Higher demand, more qualifications





# Expansion continues on all fronts

Growing  
scale and  
complexity



**18,000+** University level institutions in 196 countries



Enrolment of **216 million** students worldwide in 2016



Projected **300 million** young graduates in OECD/G20 by 2030



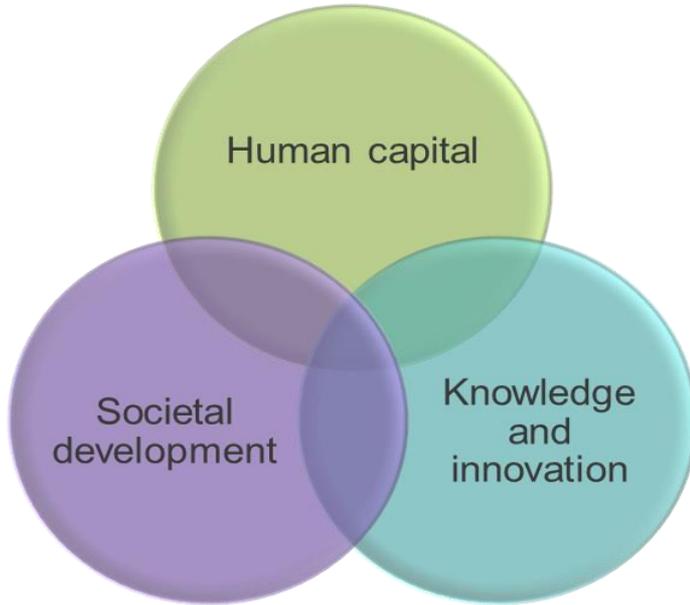
**3.3 million** international students enrolled in the OECD alone in 2015



Almost **14,500** academic journals in the ESSCI journal directory



# The growth of higher education brings benefits.....



Significant private returns



Significant public returns



Better social outcomes



Continuing education



Technology and knowledge transfer



Social inclusion



Regional development



Regional integration

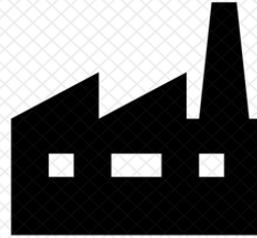




## ...but there are performance challenges...



Among young OECD graduates, **15%** have low literacy skills and **21%** have low numeracy skills.



Less than **10%** of firms cite institutional sources, including higher education, as a “highly important” source of knowledge for innovation

On average, **17%** of young OECD graduates are unemployed or not active in the labour force.



Only **40%** of new entrants complete their Bachelor in the expected duration, and only **70%** complete by three years after the expected graduation year





# .....and costs are increasingly difficult to manage.

OECD average change in expenditure by all public and private tertiary institutions, 2008-2014

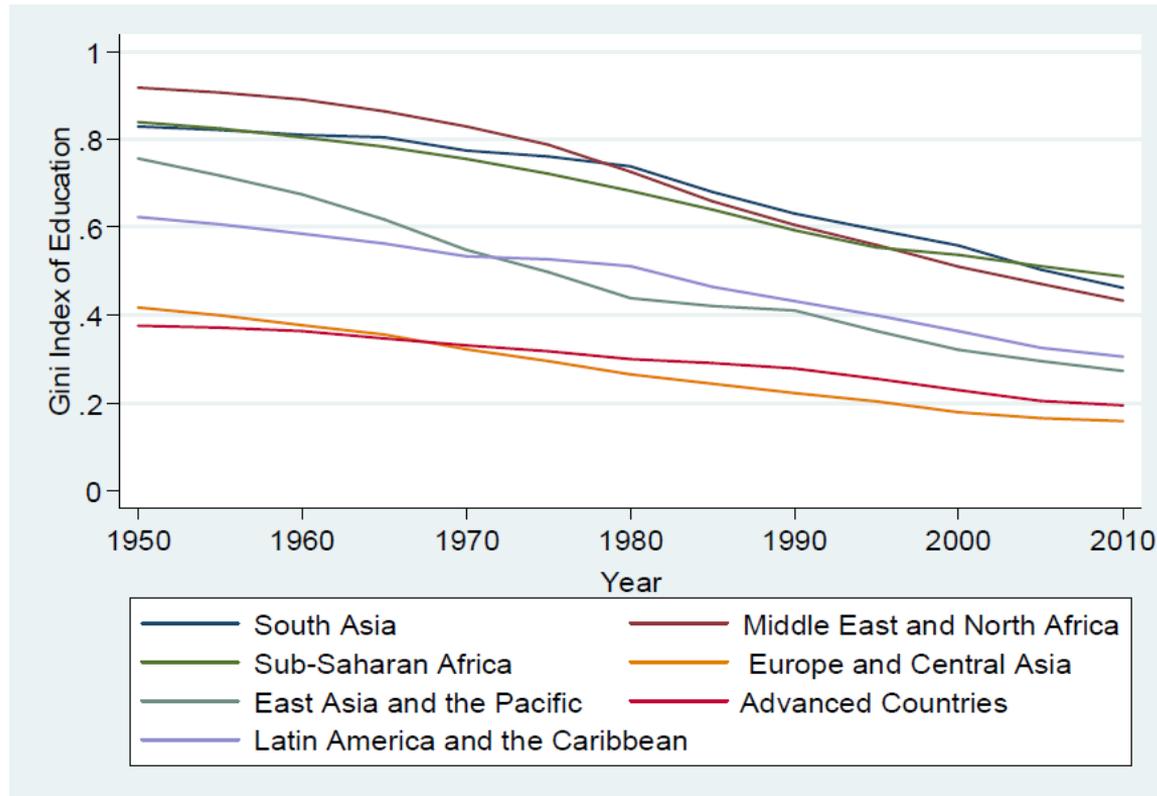




# WHERE DO WE STAND ON EQUITY OF ACCESS?



# Gini coefficients of education by region



Source: (Wail, Said & Abdelhak, 2011)



## Despite progress...

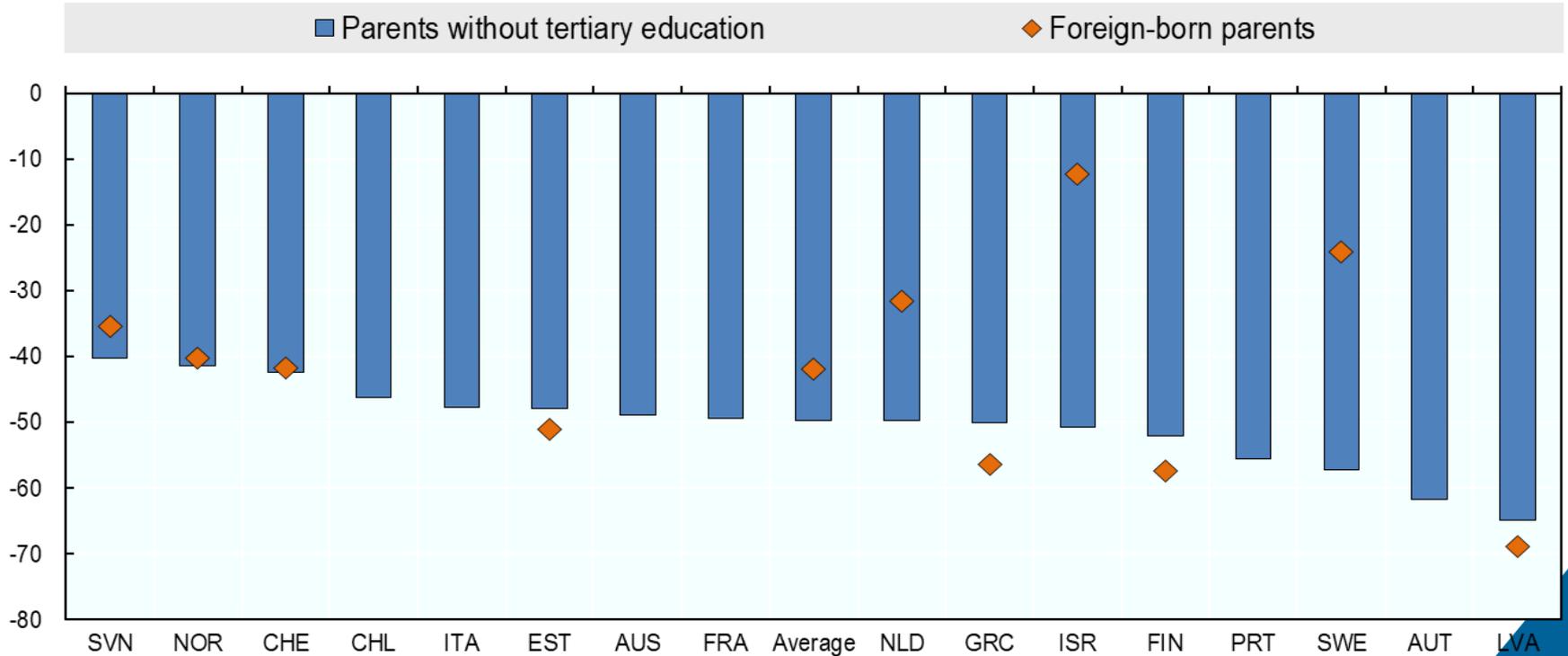
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- Young people with no family background in higher education are **much less likely** to enter a Bachelor programme
- Students with foreign-born parents are **under-represented** in higher education
- Depending on country context, various characteristics or circumstances can act as a **barriers to access** (e.g. gender, ethnic or cultural background, disability, having children)



# Persistent gaps in access rates

Change in the probability to enter a bachelor's or long first degree





# POLICY OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING EQUITY OF ACCESS



# The OECD perspective on equity in education

Gaps in outcomes **open up early**

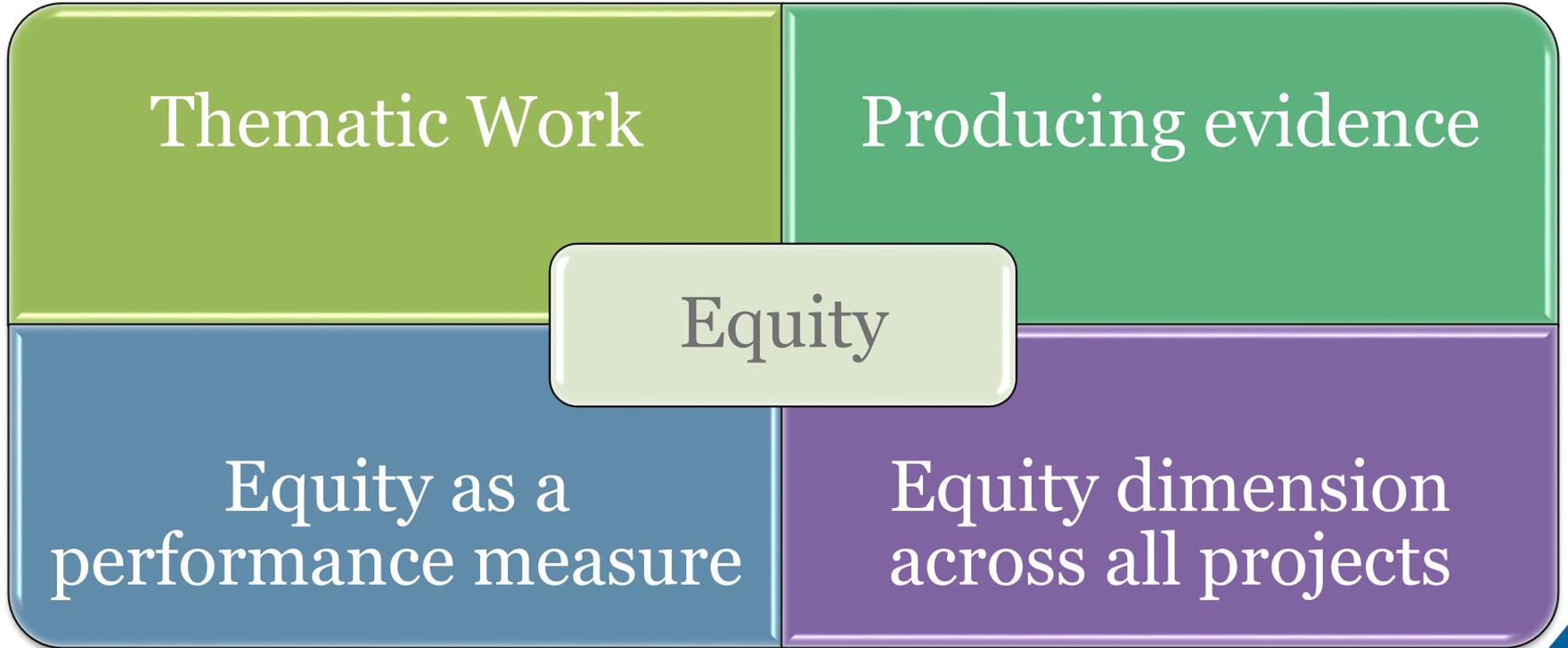
They **widen** over the life course

Equity needs to be fostered **from the beginning**

- Delivering high quality early childhood education and care
- Improving teaching quality
- Reducing grade repetition
- Delaying tracking
- Improving retention in the school system
- **Ensuring fair access to higher education**



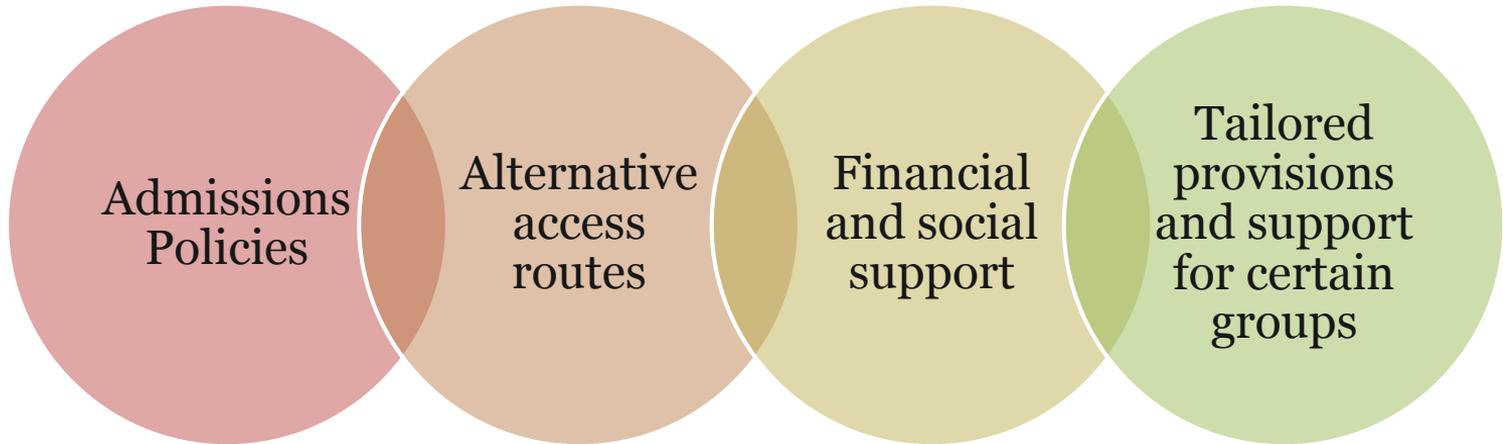
## What is OECD EDU doing on equity?





# Policy options for improving equity of access

Context: Interventions at lower levels of the system may reduce but do not eliminate the access gap





# What are OECD countries doing?

## Examples of admissions policies

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- **Norway:** “mainstreaming” approach and quotas
- **Australia:** participation and partnership programme to support institutions
- **Finland:** Reforming the admissions process to simplify access
- **Korea:** Working to broaden admissions criteria
- **Austria:** Making social inclusion and diversity part of the system-wide university development plan



# What are OECD countries doing?

## Examples of alternative access and provision

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- **Belgium:** Flexibility in programme design (Flemish Community). New work-based programmes (French Community)
- **Estonia:** Focus on lifelong learning
- **France:** Recognition of prior learning through the VAE procedure



# What are OECD countries doing?

## Examples of financial, academic and social support

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- **USA:** Pell Grants
- **UK:** Student loans
- **Ireland:** Means-tested student support
- **Mexico:** Cash-transfer policies
- **Flemish Community of Belgium:** Student tutoring for under-represented groups
- **Netherlands:** Student orientation and study advice



# What are OECD countries doing?

## Examples of tailored provisions

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- **Poland:** Awareness programmes and specific staff for students with disabilities (e.g. sign language interpreters)
- **NSPA:** Sámi University College and College for Applied Sciences



# EMERGING CONSIDERATIONS



# Key questions – Equity and performance

	Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) (% weight)	QS World University Rankings (% weight)	THE World University Rankings (% weight)	Government-defined funding-related metrics (jurisdictions)
<b>Input and activity-oriented</b>				
Staff-Student Ratio	No	Yes (20%)	Yes (4.5%)	No
Enrolments	No	No	No	Yes (NOR)
Enrolments from particular student categories	No	No	No	Yes (VLG)
<b>Outcome-oriented</b>				
Credits	No	No	No	Yes (NOR and VLG)
International Staff		Yes (5%)	Yes (2.5%)	
International Students	No	Yes (5%)	Yes (2.5%)	Yes (EST and NOR)
Doctorate to bachelors ratio	No	No	Yes (2.5%)	No
Institutional income	No	No	Yes (2.5%)	No
Research income	No	No	Yes (6%)	No
International collaboration		No	Yes (2.5%)	
International funding	No	No	No	Yes (EST, VLG and NOR)
Co-financing of research	No	No	Yes (2.5%)	Yes(all)
Gender diversity	No	No	No	Yes (VLG)
<b>Output-oriented</b>				
Degrees	No	No	No	Yes (NLD, NOR and VLG)
Completion rates	No	No	No	Yes (EST)
Papers published in Nature and Science	Yes (20%)	No	No	No
Doctoral degrees to academic staff ratio	No	No	Yes (6%)	No

	Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) (% weight)	QS World University Rankings (% weight)	THE World University Rankings (% weight)	Government-defined funding-related metrics (jurisdictions)
Publications per faculty	No	No	Yes (6%)	No
Number of publications	Yes (20%)	No	No	Yes (EST, VLG and NOR)
<b>Outcome-oriented</b>				
Academic reputation survey	No	Yes (40%)	Yes (Teaching 15% and Research 18%)	No
Employer reputation survey	No	Yes (10%)	No	No
Citations per faculty	No	Yes (20%)	No	No
Number of Citations	No	No	Yes (30%)	Yes (EST, VLG and NOR)
Highly cited researchers in subject	Yes (20%)	No	No	No
Alumni with Nobel prizes and Fields medals	Yes (10%)	No	No	No
Staff with Nobel prizes and Fields medals	Yes (20%)	No	No	No
Graduates in employment	No	No	No	Yes (EST)
Patents or Spinoffs	No	No	No	Yes (EST and VLG)

Source: OECD Benchmarking Higher Education system performance (forthcoming 2019)



## Key questions

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- What counts as “equal access”?
  - short-cycle programmes
  - institution and programme status
  - access to different fields of study
- Equity of completion?



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**Thank you!**

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