

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

# France



## Policy Frameworks

**Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?**

Legislative and regulatory texts:

- Article L.123-2 of the Education Code: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGIARTI000027747735/2013-07-24/>
- Article L.841-5 of the Education Code: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGIARTI000036685289/2018-07-01/>
- Law n° 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 relating to student guidance and success (Loi relative à l'orientation et à la réussite des étudiants) and its implementing texts, in particular Chapter II relating to access to higher education in Title I, Book VI of the regulatory part of the Education Code. [https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section\\_lc/LEGITEXT000006071191/LEGISCTA000036695418/#LEGISCTA000036695418](https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section_lc/LEGITEXT000006071191/LEGISCTA000036695418/#LEGISCTA000036695418)
- Law n° 2012-954 of 6 August 2012 relating to sexual harassment: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000026263463&categorieLien=id>
- Law n° 2014-873 of 4 August 2014 for real equity between women and men: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000029330832&categorieLien=id>
- Circular of 25 November 2015 on the prevention and treatment of sexual harassment in public higher education and research institutions under the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research: [https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid20536/bulletin-officiel.html%3c2009%3e?cid\\_bo=95478&cbo=1](https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid20536/bulletin-officiel.html%3c2009%3e?cid_bo=95478&cbo=1)
- Circular of 8 June 2020 on grants and student aid methods of awarding higher education grants based on social criteria, merit aid and international mobility aid - year 2020-2021: <https://www.education.gouv.fr/bo/20/Hebdo25/ESRS2013435C.htm>

Policy documents:

- Plan Étudiant (2017): [https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/concertation/73/5/dp\\_plan\\_etudiants\\_839735.pdf](https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/concertation/73/5/dp_plan_etudiants_839735.pdf)
- Plan de mobilisation contre la haine et les discriminations anti-LGBT: [https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2017/01/plan\\_de\\_mobilisation\\_contre\\_la\\_haine\\_et\\_les\\_discriminations\\_anti-lgbt\\_dilcrah.pdf](https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2017/01/plan_de_mobilisation_contre_la_haine_et_les_discriminations_anti-lgbt_dilcrah.pdf)
- Plans interministériels de lutte contre le racisme et antisémitisme (PILCRA): <https://www.dilcrah.fr/le-plan-national-de-lutte-contre-le-racisme-et-lantisemitisme/>
- Roadmap of 2017 for real equality between women and men: [https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Parite\\_et\\_lutte\\_contre\\_les\\_discriminations/86/5/Feuille\\_de\\_route\\_egalite\\_ES\\_R\\_8\\_MARS\\_2017\\_802865.pdf](https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Parite_et_lutte_contre_les_discriminations/86/5/Feuille_de_route_egalite_ES_R_8_MARS_2017_802865.pdf)
- Campus Connectés: [https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Enseignement\\_superieur/14/5/DP\\_campus\\_connectes\\_version-finale\\_1119145.pdf](https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Enseignement_superieur/14/5/DP_campus_connectes_version-finale_1119145.pdf)

**What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?**

- The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MESRI) is committed to a global policy approach in favour of students with the aim of promoting their success through better support and improved living conditions. This policy, known as "student and campus life", includes all the services offered to students in order to improve their social support, offer them cultural and sporting activities, encourage their initiatives and support associative projects, and set up actions in favour of health or sustainable development. Campus life encourages the fulfilment of each individual, multiplies and reinforces the bonds of solidarity between individuals, induces a sense of belonging and is likely to

promote student success.

- ➔ According to Article L.123-2 of the Education Code, the public higher education service must contribute to the fight against discrimination, the reduction of social or cultural inequalities, the improvement of student living conditions and the construction of an inclusive society. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGIARTI000027747735/2013-07-24/>
- ➔ The Government's Plan Étudiant (2017) defines several specific objectives for entering and succeeding in higher education: a better entourage of the orientation of secondary school students; a fairer and more transparent access to higher education; a tailor-made and renovated post-secondary training offer; better student living conditions for success; a massive financial commitment from the State of almost 1 billion euros to support the reform. [https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/concertation/73/5/dp\\_plan\\_etudiants\\_839735.pdf](https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/concertation/73/5/dp_plan_etudiants_839735.pdf)
- ➔ The Law no. 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 relating to student guidance and success (Loi relative à l'orientation et à la réussite des étudiants) inserted a new Article L.841-5 into the Education Code which creates a contribution intended to promote the reception and social, health, cultural and sports support of students and to reinforce the prevention and health education actions carried out for them. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000036683777/>  
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGIARTI000036685289/2018-07-01/>
- ➔ With regard to students with disabilities, Article L.123-4-2 of the Education Code specifies the principle of equity for access to knowledge: "Higher education institutions shall enrol students with disabilities or with a disabling health problem, within the framework of provisions regulating their access on the same basis as other students, and shall ensure their training by implementing the accommodations necessary to their situation in the organisation, conduct and support of their studies." In addition, Article L.712-6-1 of the Education Code specifies that the "Conseil des Formations et de la Vie Etudiante" (CFVE) proposes to the Board of Directors a multi-year master plan for disability policy, covering all areas concerned by disability and in particular making it possible to improve student access and success. The Board of Directors adopts a multi-annual master plan for disability policy and each year the Chairman presents a report to the Board of Directors on the implementation of this plan, together with performance and monitoring indicators (Article L.712-3).  
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/id/LEGIARTI000038902229/2019-09-02/>
- ➔ Specific plans are built to increase inclusion of specific disabilities in higher education. For instance, Autistic National Plan aim to improve welcome of students with autistic disorders by a better information of workers for instance. [https://handicap.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/strategie\\_nationale\\_autisme\\_2018.pdf](https://handicap.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/strategie_nationale_autisme_2018.pdf)
- ➔ Equality and the fight against discrimination: three main mechanisms are in place, namely the Network of Equality Officers, the Network of Officers in charge on Racism and Antisemitism and the Mechanism for the prevention and treatment of sexist and sexual violence and discrimination.
- ➔ The Interministerial Plans for Combating Racism and Antisemitism (PILCRA) and the Mobilisation Plan against Anti-LGBT Hate and Discrimination contain specific measures for Higher Education and Research.
- ➔ Campus Connectés: aim to give all those who want to succeed in higher education, as close to home as possible, the means to overcome the geographical, urban and social barriers that create inequalities of destiny. The 'connected campus' is a tool that combines the flexibility of distance learning with individual and collective tutoring in order to better support students who are the furthest away from the university centres in the undergraduate cycle of higher education. The 'connected campuses' are intended to bring the undergraduate level closer to all territories.

[https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Enseignement\\_superieur/14/5/DP\\_campus\\_connectes\\_version\\_finale\\_1119145.pdf](https://cache.media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Enseignement_superieur/14/5/DP_campus_connectes_version_finale_1119145.pdf)

**Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?**

No

**Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)**

- Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
- Gender groups
- People from rural backgrounds
- Students with disability
- Victims of sexual and gender violence
- Members of the LGBT community
- Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)
- Students with care experience, orphans, youth without parental care
- Other: Special assistance for students from French overseas territories

**Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?**

- Gender groups : 40% of female students in scientific subjects as of 2020

In order to curb as far as possible the phenomena of social reproduction which are still pervasive in access to higher education, the "Parcoursup" procedure implements a proactive strategy, in consultation with higher education institutions, based on three concrete levers, which are now well appropriated by the training courses and whose effects are becoming more pronounced this year:

- ↘ Mandatory minimum percentages of secondary school students on scholarships in all courses;
- ↘ Inter-academic mobility rates, to guarantee candidates the possibility of integrating training courses anywhere in the country (in France an Academy is an administrative circumscription of the Ministries in charge of Education);
- ↘ Minimum rates of professional and technological baccalaureate (secondary school diploma) holders to give priority access to short and professional courses (called STS and DUT) for which they are better prepared and thus promote their success in higher education.

**Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?**

Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation; Higher Education institutions

**Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)**

- Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- Civil society organisations
- Student Organisations/Association

## Achieving Policy Targets

**Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?**

- Reforms to university admission: The pre-registration procedure "Parcoursup" for admission to higher education gives each candidate the time and support needed to prepare a well-considered and motivated training project, to benefit from all the information relating to the training courses on offer, to express coherent wishes with regard to his or her achievements and study project and to be offered training courses that will help him or her succeed in higher education.
- Students with disabilities: For access to higher education, the specific needs of students with disabilities are taken into account in order to promote access to an institution and training that meets the student's needs. From the moment they apply for a higher education course, the "Parcoursup" platform provides them with a range of personalised information and support services:
  - A disability adviser is indicated for each course. A disability adviser is appointed for each course. He or she is responsible for answering questions from candidates with disabilities or their families about possible adaptations to the course.
  - The "Parcoursup" platform's advisors can also answer questions from candidates with disabilities. This service is also accessible to deaf and hearing-impaired people.
  - These candidates, as well as all those with a disabling health problem or special needs, have the opportunity, if they wish, to inform their future institution of their situation, the accommodations they have benefited from during their precedent studies and their needs for the new academic year. These indications are not obligatory and they are not sent to the courses for the examination of their file during the admission process.
  - Furthermore, Decree n° 2018-370 of 18 May 2018 relating to the conditions for re-examining applications introduces the possibility of re-examining applications if the applicant is offered an assignment that does not correspond to their needs related to their disability. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000036927489/>
  - The Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation also works with a strong disability officers' network to welcome students with disabilities. They meet once a year to exchange. They also receive a training every year, subsidized by the Ministry.
  - Equality and the fight against discrimination: three main mechanisms are in place, namely the Network of Equality Officers, the Network of Officers in charge on Racism and Antisemitism and the Mechanism for the prevention and treatment of sexist and sexual violence and discrimination.
- The Interministerial Plans for Combating Racism and Antisemitism (PILCRA) and the Mobilisation Plan against Anti-LGBT Hate and Discrimination contain specific measures for Higher Education and Research.
- The "cord for success" scheme aims to develop the academic ambitions of middle and high school students and broaden their horizons, in particular by introducing them to the diversity of possible paths to higher education. The scheme is targeted at students attending secondary schools in urban underprivileged neighbourhoods or isolated rural areas, as well as vocational secondary school students. It is based on partnerships between higher education institutions and secondary schools. This partnership takes the form of a range of support actions implemented in the secondary schools. The aim is to provide comprehensive support which, depending on the degree of maturity of each student's orientation project, offers different types of action that can be mobilised: support and social and cultural outreach actions on the one hand, and tutoring/mentoring actions on the other. They set up a continuum of support starting for 13-year-olds and up to their entry to higher education, with the

objective to making guidance support a real lever for equal opportunities.

**Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?**

- Scholarships based on social criteria: The higher education scholarship based on social criteria is awarded to students facing material difficulties that do not allow them to undertake or continue higher education studies. It is a supplement to family support. As such, it cannot replace the obligation to provide maintenance as defined by the provisions of Articles 203 and 371-2 of the Civil Code, which require parents to ensure the maintenance of their children, even if they are of age, as long as they are unable to provide for their own needs. The family's income and expenses are taken into account to determine the rate of the grant, which is set according to a national scale.
- Students can benefit of a personalised housing assistance (APL): it is financial aid intended to reduce the amount of the rent. It is paid on the basis of the housing situation, regardless of the family's situation.
- The student loan is a loan created to help young people under the age of 28 to finance their studies. It is only granted by the banks that are partners in the operation. The loan must be repaid with interest, but repayment may be deferred until the end of the studies. The state guarantees the loan, within the limit of a special budget voted each year. When this budget is exhausted before the end of the year, the partner banks stop granting loans or require guarantees.
- Different bursaries and scholarships for student mobility, including for oversea students studying in continental France.
- "Contribution de vie étudiante et de campus" (CVEC): Each year, the collection of the CVEC (provided for in Article L841-5-I of the Education Code) leads to a repayment to the assigned higher education institutions and the CROUS. In 2019-2020, 117 million euros has been paid to the institutions to finance additional student life and campus activities. In this way, higher education institutions can use the CVEC to create, animate and develop policies in favour of gender equality and the fight against sexist and sexual violence, racism, antisemitism and discrimination:  
[https://services.dgesip.fr/T213/S113/contribution\\_vie\\_etudiante\\_et\\_de\\_campus\\_cvec](https://services.dgesip.fr/T213/S113/contribution_vie_etudiante_et_de_campus_cvec)
- Students experiencing financial difficulties can apply for assistance under a specific aid scheme of one-time (ASAP) or annual (ASAA) allowances. One-time assistance (social difficulties, internship fees, costs of internship and teaching materials, health-related costs, etc.) may be granted to students enrolled in initial training courses. This aid is paid in a single instalment, is one-time and can be combined with a grant based on social criteria, an annual allowance, mobility assistance, and merit-based aid. If the student's situation justifies it, several one-time grants may exceptionally be awarded during the same academic year.
- An annual allowance similar to a scholarship may be awarded to students enrolled in training courses that qualify for a scholarship based on social criteria. The amounts of the annual grants are equivalent to those of the scholarships. The annual grants confer the status of scholarship holder, they allow to apply for the reimbursement of the registration fees and the CVEC. They are paid in 10 monthly instalments, from September to June. The same attendance requirements must be met. General conditions and guidelines set by the Circular of Specific Aid (circular n° 2014-0016 of 10 August 2014).
- Students with disabilities: Credits are granted to Higher Education institutions for a total amount of 7.5 million euros per year to contribute to the specific aid set up for students with disabilities (217 €/student in 2019), to which are added the amounts devoted by the institutions from their own budgets.
- Equality and the fight against gender-based and sexual violence: In 2020, a national call for projects on equality and the fight against gender-based and sexual violence was organised by the ministry.

105.000 euros have been allocated to 24 selected projects: <https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid148396/financements-de-projets-en-faveur-de-l-egalite-des-sexes-et-de-la-lutte-contre-les-violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles-au-sein-de-l-enseignement-superieur-et-la-recherche.html>

- Discrimination, Racism and Antisemitism: In 2020, a national call for projects on discrimination, racism and antisemitism was organised by the ministry. 9 projects were selected and 30,000 Euros were paid out.

### Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

### What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

- "Repères et références statistiques" is a yearly statistics publication that brings together all the statistical information available on the French education and research system, including data on admission to the higher education system. <https://www.education.gouv.fr/reperes-et-references-statistiques-2020-1316>
- Yearly publication of « Etat de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la recherche et de l'innovation en France » with specific data on admission to the higher education system. <https://publication.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/eesr/FR/>
- The National Observatory of Student Life (OVE) was created in 1989. Its mission is to provide information that is as complete, detailed and objective as possible on the living conditions of students and their relationship with the course of study, in order to inform political and social thinking and to help in decision-making. <http://www.ove-national.education.fr/>

### What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

Higher Education Institutions enjoy institutional autonomy in France. The Ministry is engaging in a strategic dialogue with higher education institutions in order to fix strategic targets for the institution including on equity policy.

### How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries
  2. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
- Unranked: Policy setting  
Unranked: Technical assistance and capacity building

## COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

### How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

Following the COVID-19 health crisis, the Ministry has put in place information and recommendations for higher education candidates. They are directly accessible via the "Parcoursup" platform.

The platform also provides institutions with fact sheets to help them adapt selection methods to the context of a health crisis (for degrees with selective entry procedures) and provides advice on the organisation of the wish examination commissions for the examination of Parcoursup files.



## Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the [“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”](#) report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(AEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8<sup>th</sup> AEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation of France as of 2 October 2020.