



European
Commission

Erasmus+ National Policy Reviews 2024 Pakistan

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Pakistan

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This national policy review provides a detailed analysis of Pakistan's educational policies and their alignment with the Erasmus+ programme. It offers official, first-hand information into the country's engagement with Erasmus+ from 2021 to 2024, highlighting opportunities for improvement and identifying strategies to enhance integration and outcomes. Prepared and submitted by the Erasmus+ National Focal Point, this review contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen international cooperation and to maximise the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme in Pakistan.

Reviews of policies, initiatives, projects, and/or stakeholders

The Higher Education Commission (HEC)

The Higher Education Commission is the leading authority for funding, regulating, and enhancing the country's higher education capacity. It oversees over 240 universities and manages an enrolment of nearly one million students in these institutions, with an additional million students in colleges, vocational schools, and distance learning programmes.

Since its establishment, it has focused on three main objectives: expanding access to higher education, improving quality, and ensuring its relevance to societal needs. The commission also emphasises connecting students, faculty, and various sectors such as industry, non-profits, and government to ensure that education and research align with societal demands.

When HEC Pakistan was established in 2002, only about 2.3% of the eligible population was enrolled in tertiary education. At that time, Pakistan had a population of around 150 million. Today, with a population exceeding 240 million, the enrolment rate in higher education has increased to over 10%. Facility, faculty, and resource improvements mirror this 8-10% annual growth. As a result, the proportion of people in higher education has significantly increased, from 2.3% to 10%.

HEC Pakistan aims to keep growing until everyone who wants to enrol in higher education can do so. To support this goal, HEC Pakistan offers scholarships to help students afford education within the country and scholarships for studying abroad. This approach not only enhances students' skills but also helps attract qualified faculty to meet the needs of the expanding education network.

The primary goal is to ensure that anyone who wants to pursue HE and develop advanced skills can do so, regardless of their economic status. This means providing opportunities both within the country and abroad to make higher education accessible to everyone.

Initiatives and/or programmes that have been launched in the past three years

HEC Pakistan offers two main types of scholarships:

- Indigenous scholarships for those studying in Pakistan
- Overseas scholarships for those who wish to study abroad.

Additionally, there are special scholarships for students from less developed areas like Balochistan and FATA, as well as need-based scholarships aimed at helping deserving students who lack the financial resources to pursue their education.

One of the criteria for awarding these scholarships is allocating slots based on provincial quotas, ensuring equal opportunities for both males and females based on merit without discrimination. This approach has encouraged girls from diverse family backgrounds to apply and be selected. Several scholarship schemes have been launched in the past three years to support this initiative:

- 2000 Overseas Scholarships for PhD and MS/MPhil in Selected Fields of Study
 - 75 National Top Talent Scholarships Programme for Pakistani Students in MS and PhD in the World's Top 25 Ranked Universities
 - PhD Scholarships under US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor in Top 300 QS World Ranked US Universities
- The Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Project reserves 50% of its scholarships for female students. This initiative ensures that at least half of the awarded scholarships go to women, particularly those from remote and vulnerable areas of Pakistan. The scholarships target financially needy students who meet the admission criteria of partner Pakistani universities.

Projects which are examples of good practice that have been launched in the past three years

2000 Overseas Scholarships for PhD and MS/MPhil in Selected Fields of Study

<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarshipsgrants/OSSPhase-III/Pages/default.aspx>

75 National Top Talent Scholarships Programme for Pakistani Students in MS and PhD in the World's Top 25 Ranked Universities

<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarshipsgrants/IDPS/Pages/default.aspx>

PhD Scholarships under US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor in Top 300 QS World Ranked US Universities

<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarshipsgrants/US-Pakcorridor/Pages/default.aspx>

Benazir Undergraduate Scholarship Project

<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarshipsgrants/Ehsaas/Pages/default.aspx>

Key players and networks (stakeholders) at the national level (or at the regional level with a national component)

Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, established in 2002, is the statutory body responsible for managing all tertiary education in the country. It oversees funding, regulation, accreditation, and the overall quality of HEIs. Initially formed in 1974 as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the HEC was restructured into its current form on 11 September 2002 to better address the needs of Pakistan's higher education sector.

The HEC is responsible for developing HE policies, ensuring quality assurance to meet international standards, accrediting academic degrees, and fostering the growth of new institutions. It also works to enhance and upgrade existing educational institutions across the country. HEC has played a crucial role in advancing Pakistan's higher education system by upgrading universities and degree-awarding institutions to centres of excellence in education, research, and development. It has significantly contributed to building a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan by annually providing hundreds of doctoral scholarships for studies abroad.

www.hec.gov.pk

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training

<https://www.mofept.gov.pk/>