

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CASE OF ROMANIA

1. INTRODUCTION

In the years after the fall of communism in 1989, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe experienced an unprecedented growth and transformation of their higher education systems. Romania, like her neighbors, underwent significant changes. However, several features of the reform process, and particularly of the development in the evolution of the mix of public and private provision of higher education, make the Romanian case worth close study.

Prior to 1989, the tertiary education system in Romania was heavily politicized and centralized, similar to that of other socialist countries. Virtually all academics were members of the Communist Party, which controlled every aspect of education. All educational decisions, including the day-to-day management of universities and departments, were made by the Ministry of Education (Nicolescu, 2001a).¹ Despite the rigidities inherent in the system, reforms began almost immediately in the early 1990s but progressed slowly, and their objectives changed throughout the years. The reform in higher education was complemented by a dramatic expansion in the number of institutions and enrollment levels in response to the excess demand resulting from the overly restricted numbers of students granted admission to tertiary education under the socialist system. This growth was initially spurred by the existing public universities, which – in spite of tightening resources from the state budget – expanded their programs in the high-demand fields when restrictions on student intake were relaxed by the government. Like other countries in the former Soviet block, the increase in the overall enrollment levels in higher education was accompanied by important shifts in the relative demand for different fields of study: technical fields such as mining, chemical engineering and metallurgy, for instance, became less popular; by contrast, larger absolute and relative numbers of students applied to and enrolled in law, social science, and humanities programs, fields formerly deemed superfluous for the building of the “industrialized multilaterally developed society” and neglected by the communist government.

The rapid transformation of the tertiary sector was also stimulated by the emergence of new private providers in higher education, even in an environment lacking clear accreditation regulations. It is clear that one initial growth factor was the existence of high excess demand at the beginning of the 1990s and the inability of public universities to fully meet this demand. It is less obvious, however – and unfortunately existing data do not allow us to investigate this issue – whether the continued growth was perpetuated by persistent unsatisfied demand carried over from the socialist period, or whether it can be

¹ The Ministry of Education has changed names over the years, particularly after 1989. Its official designations varied from the Ministry of National Education, to the Ministry of Education and Research, to, most recently, the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (in June 2003, the Ministry of Education and Research merged with the Ministry of Youth and Sport). For purposes of clarity, the government body overseeing education in Romania will be referred to throughout this text and the references as the “Ministry of Education” (MoE), regardless of its many official titles.

more readily characterized as “nondistinctive” growth (Levy et al., 1992), i.e., just by virtue that private providers existed. What is different about Romania, however, is the extent and speed of this development: private higher education institutions have grown at a bewildering pace, such that private universities or colleges currently account for more than 30 percent of higher education enrollments (see Section 6 on the Evolution and Current Status of Higher Education in Romania).

This paper documents the growth of public and private higher education in Romania since 1989, including the general framework for educational reform, the legislation governing higher education during this period, and the changes in the size and features of the system, as well as the current state of affairs in this sector. It focuses on the similarities and distinctions between the two institutional forms (public and private) in higher education in terms of enrollment levels, structure by field and form of study, resources and financing, academic management, quality assurance, and accreditation.

2. REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

Given the important role education played in reinforcing the communist ideology, and consequently the strict regulation of programs and curricula, as well as the uniformity of national standards for educational activities at all levels (with little diversity and choice built into the system), it should come as no surprise that the fall of the Ceausescu regime in 1989 was very soon followed by radical measures in education, particularly in favor of increased choice. According to Heyneman (1997), “these choices were put into place in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union with an enthusiasm and speed similar to that of the privatization of state-owned enterprises.” In Romania, the “privatization” and massification of higher education occurred at an even swifter pace, in conjunction with the reform measures undertaken by the government. Several reform phases may be distinguished.

2.1. The Period from 1990 to 1993

During the early 1990s, higher education reform was limited to measures with immediate reparatory objectives in education. The main goal was depoliticizing the academic curricula, reintroducing several fields of study suppressed under the communist regime (such as sociology and business), and improving working conditions for teachers (Korka, 2000). Throughout this period, reform consisted mainly of less important measures intended to modernize academic life and concerned minor changes in curricula, textbooks, teaching and learning methods, and educational standards. Both in secondary and tertiary education, educational reform was short-run-driven, lacked coherence, and did not succeed in changing the nature of supply in higher education significantly (Korka, 2000).

2.2. The Period from 1993 to 1997

The 1993-1997 period was marked by the need to change the legal framework in education and to improve managerial practices at all levels. Several fundamental laws were adopted during this period, such as the Accreditation Law in 1993 and the Education Law in 1995 (see Section 3 on Legislation and Governing Bodies in Higher Education in Romania below).

However, most reform measures remained solely on paper and did not trickle down to the institutional level. For instance, the adoption of the accreditation standards and the creation of the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA) in 1993 were intended to ensure the quality of higher education programs, but came into effect only in 1996. Prior to that date, institutions developed self-evaluation reports, but these constituted only a formality, were not analyzed, and did not lead to accreditation. Furthermore, academic autonomy, a *sine qua non* condition for the progress of reform, was mostly a principle on paper until the end of 1997, especially in public education. Private providers, however, mainly due to their financial independence, enjoyed greater freedom, even though they were also restricted in the organization of postgraduate programs and graduation/licensing exams (see Section 4 on Ensuring Quality in Higher Education in Romania: Accreditation).

This wave of reforms ultimately did not meet the formal objectives and therefore did not significantly change the system as a whole (Birzea and Badescu, 1998). The reforms potentially failed because they were targeted more to the needs of the educational providers, both public and private, rather than to social or individual demand (Miroiu et al., 1998, Chiritoiu and Horobet, 1999). Most educational experts agree that the lack of coherence in the steps taken during the first seven years after the fall of communism and the sluggishness with which these steps were implemented made the reform of higher education in Romania almost non-existent. Systemic reforms, introducing a real paradigm shift that affected the inner logic of the system by changing the fundamentals of the educational system, had not been pursued by 1997 (Birzea and Badescu, 1998). Neither the character of education nor its underlying principles had changed, and at the end of that year higher education could still be described, according to the Minister of Education at the time, professor Andrei Marga, as a system that “transmits knowledge but does not encourage creativity; mostly repetitive, it is based on separation into rigid subjects, it is still centralized...” (Marga, 1998).

2.3. The Period from 1997 to 2000

Starting in 1998, the reform in higher education accelerated and focused on “curricular reform, increasing the links between education and the economic, administrative and cultural environment, improving the educational infrastructure, eliminating paternalism and populism from educational management, and enhancing international cooperation in education” (Marga, 1998). This phase of educational reform had four major objectives: 1) enhancing access to higher education, 2) decentralizing academic and financial

management in higher education by strengthening institutional autonomy, 3) encouraging an active partnership between the academic and business environments, and 4) improving the quality of higher education (Korka, 2000).

The objective of enhancing and liberalizing access to higher education was pursued mainly through increased institutional autonomy, which allowed state universities beginning in 1999 to accept tuition fee-paying students in addition to those funded by the state and to set their own enrollment levels for such students.² As a result, enrollments increased significantly in public higher education (particularly in full-time, distance learning, and Masters programs), although the physical endowment did not develop accordingly at this time.³

The development of higher education for ethnic minorities also contributed to enhancing access to higher education. The Romanian Democratic Union of Hungarians campaigned steadily for public higher education in minority languages.⁴ This was sanctioned in 1999 by the amendment to the Education Law (see Sections 3 and 6 below).

The second objective of reform during this period, the decentralization of academic and financial decision-making power, was an integral part of the institutional reform in higher education. Previously, insufficient human and capital resources, the limited managerial experience of university leadership, legal constraints, inadequate incentives, excessive bureaucracy in the sector, as well as inertia in the system more generally made academic autonomy in Romania look like a caricature of itself. Decentralization relied on improving management and ensuring that institutional autonomy became the core governing principle for both state and private universities. This component of the reform targeted mostly public universities, which relied on the Ministry of Education even for current operational decisions.

Institutional autonomy was achieved both through the decentralization of academic decisions concerning programs, admission, and curricula, and through the transfer of financial decision-making power to public universities (Nicolescu, 2002). The devolution of autonomy to lower hierarchical levels progressed slowly in public higher education and became effective only in 1999 with the introduction of global financing (see also sections below). Nonetheless, a better separation of academic leadership from financial and administrative management and the improvement of the managerial abilities of governing bodies are still needed.

The last two objectives of this reform period – encouraging an active partnership between the academic and business environments and improving the quality of higher education – stemmed directly from the decentralization of academic and financial management. Educational experts hoped that, in

² As discussed above, during the socialist period the Ministry of Education set national admission procedures and criteria, as well as enrollment levels, for each field of study in public higher education.

³ No empirical studies have been carried out, however, on whether or not the ability of public universities to admit tuition-paying students affected the relative demand for private and public higher education. It is possible that the increased supply and lower tuition fees at state universities became attractive to some candidates who would have otherwise applied to private institutions in order to maximize the chances of gaining admission. As a result, enrollment levels at private institutions may be lower than what we might expect if this measure had not been implemented.

⁴ See Daun and Sapatoru (2002) for a more detailed description of the events.

addition to increasing the efficiency in the use of resources, these would also provide incentives for universities to produce graduates with skills competitive in the transforming labor market, and to ensure comparability with Western and, in particular, European Union standards (see Section 7 on Complying with European Union Standards in Higher Education).

Universities focused on curricular reform, which included the introduction of subjects with direct application in practice, the diversification of academic specializations, the development of interdisciplinary programs, and the transfer of skills thought to be in demand in the labor market. According to the Education Law of 1995 put into practice a few years later, curricula and programs are now designed by each department, approved by the Department Council and the Senate of the University, and then approved by the Ministry of Education at the recommendation of the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA) to ensure national comparability. Although the law proposes curricula frameworks, the sequence of subjects during the course of study in a program, the time allocated for each course, and adaptations of the framework to specific academic missions are decided at the university level, with the formal objective of “ensuring high quality skills and knowledge for the students and graduates of higher education institutions” (Ministry of Education, 2000a).

The final objective of the Romanian higher education reform in this period, raising the quality of education, was expected not only as a result of decentralization and academic autonomy, but also in response to external accreditation evaluations. Although some progress has been made, mostly in terms of establishing quality standards, this is still an ongoing process in its initial stages.

2.4. The Period after 2000

The pace of reform in higher education slowed down significantly after the Social Democratic Party of Romania came to power in the fall of 2000. For the first year and a half, essentially everything came to a standstill: the government did not even announce its educational policy, let alone introduce any new reform initiatives. No significant changes took place in the period from late 2000 to 2002 compared to what had already been started in 1997. Nonetheless, in 2002, after the newly appointed Ministry officials were settled in their positions, there was a renewed interest in higher education. The government passed several provisions, among which the most important pertain to the accreditation of 18 and the closure of 14 private universities (see Section 4 on Ensuring Quality in Higher Education in Romania: Accreditation). Furthermore, changes in the financing of higher education were introduced. Thus, private universities became required to surrender 10 percent of their revenues to the Ministry of Education, while state universities must relinquish 40 percent of the revenues from enrolling students above the number approved by the MoE (see Section 5 on Higher Education Finance in Romania). While this is clearly in contradiction with institutional autonomy, particularly in the case of private universities, it

is officially justified on the grounds of controlling quality in higher education by keeping student-teacher ratios under control.

3. LEGISLATION AND GOVERNING BODIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

3.1. Legislation in Higher Education

This section distinguishes only two periods of legislative development in higher education after 1990 (Nicolescu, 2001b): the period from 1990 to 1993 and the period after 1993 to the present. During the former there were no specific laws regulating activity in the field of higher education. Universities and colleges could be set up on the basis of Law 21/1924 concerning Non-Profit Organizations and Law 31/1990 on the Reorganization of State-Owned Enterprises. The loose legislation permitted the founding of private higher education institutions as non-profit or for-profit organizations. After 1993, however, there was a rapid development in the legislation governing education in general and higher education in particular.

The main laws regulating higher education in Romania at present are:

1) The Accreditation Law (Law no. 88/1993 concerning the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and the Recognition of Diplomas) was meant to regulate the rapidly growing private higher education sector. The provisions for academic accreditation were put forth in 1993, but their implementation started only three years later, together with the collection of relevant information by private universities.

2) The Education Laws (Law no. 84/1995 and Law no. 151/1999). Only as late as 1995 a law regulating education was passed, and was amended four years later through Law no. 151/1999. This law laid down the objectives of higher education (art. 4), stated the principle of open access to higher education for all people (art. 5), prohibited any political or ideological affiliation of higher education institutions (art. 11), proposed guidelines for the organization and administration of higher education institutions (including university leadership), and instituted the principle of academic institutional autonomy. According to this law, universities may conduct both research and teaching activities, and are free to decide on the organization of programs and research, curricula, and human resource management (activities that were previously controlled by the Ministry of Education).

The 1999 amendment to the Education Law introduced new principles and guidelines regarding the financing of higher education, including the so-called “global financing principle”. This was intended to reduce the reliance of public universities on state financing and implied a more complete definition and enforcement of the principle of institutional autonomy. For private higher education, this new principle of

financing meant that they would be able to compete for public funds which had been previously unavailable (see section 5 on Higher Education Finance in Romania for more information).

3) The Law on the Status of Teachers (Law no. 128/1997). The law provided a detailed list of all professional degrees (article 53), put forth the activities compatible with the academic profession and their content, and legislated the guidelines for the compensation of the teaching staff (art. 48 – 52) as well as their rights and obligations (title IV, chapter I).

4) Other numerous government decisions regarding specific educational issues adopted after 1997. Most of these provisions were designed either to ensure a proper implementation of or to supplement the existing laws regulating education and often included measures for implementing institutional autonomy, and put forth detailed operational guidelines. However, the high number of regulations reduced the transparency and coherence of the legislative framework governing higher education and made their application difficult. Moreover, problems were compounded by situations when government-issued regulations were put into practice despite not having been approved by the Parliament or when the new regulations were inconsistent with previous provisions remaining in effect.

At present the Ministry of Education is preparing a new Law on Higher Education in Romania, which is expected to pass in 2003. No draft of the law was made available for debate among the relevant agents, proving again the lack of transparency and disinterest in social mobilization on behalf of the government.

3.2. Governing Bodies in Higher Education

In Romania, the Ministry of Education is currently the main government body responsible for regulating the activity of universities and other tertiary education institutions through its General Division for the Coordination of Higher Education. According to the Education Law of 1995, the main functions of the Ministry are the coordination and control of the national system of education at all levels and the coordination of scientific research in higher education. The Ministry also publishes a list of approved institutions and academic specializations and sets the annual number of state-funded students for public universities. It also endorses the maximum annual enrollment levels for tuition-fee-paying students in both public and private universities. Therefore, every academic year public universities submit their proposals for the number of students to be admitted without state financial support (i.e., tuition-paying students), and private institutions put forward the total number of students they intend to admit. The Ministry, based on an evaluation of the resources available to each institution relative to the number of students proposed, approves or adjusts the enrollment levels. It is not clear how this evaluation or correlation is carried out, however, leaving room for numerous possibilities of intervention when adjustments are made by the Ministry.

Under Law no. 88/1993 on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Diplomas, the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA) was created as the government body in charge of accrediting universities. The Council consists of 19 to 21 members proposed by the government and approved by the Romanian Parliament; according to the law, every four years a third of its members must be replaced. The NCAEA is responsible for setting up academic evaluation commissions, composed of well-known academics from different academic disciplines, which carry out program and institutional evaluations for the Council.

The National Council for University Research (NCUR) is the autonomous body responsible for the funding of research in Romania. Nonetheless, the Council has only a consultative capacity, as the Ministry of Education must approve the actual budget allocations. Its main role is therefore to establish and identify programs through which university research can be supported, to develop procedures for the evaluation of grant proposals, to organize competitions for grants, and to propose annual research budgets (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Between 1997 – 2000, several new governing or consultative bodies were established, including the National Council for Education Reform, the National Council for the Attestation of Academic Certificates and Diplomas, the National Council for Higher Education Finance, the National Council for Scientific Academic Research, the National Council for Libraries, the National Council of Rectors, and national committees for various fields of study. The new bodies were created to assist the Ministry of Education in the implementation of academic and financial autonomy.

4. ENSURING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA: ACCREDITATION

According to Law no. 88/1993 concerning the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and the Recognition of Diplomas, all higher education institutions functioning on 22 December 1989 were accredited by the state by default. All other institutions established after that date were required to submit to an accreditation process within six months after the law came into effect.

The academic accreditation process in Romania consists of two sequential stages: provisional authorization and full accreditation. They are each discussed separately in this section.

4.1. Provisional Authorization

Provisional authorization implies that a department or program within an institution is permitted to organize admissions, design curricula, and enroll students. However, during the provisional authorization period – which may be no longer than three years – the institution cannot organize graduation

examinations, cannot award degrees, and cannot issue diplomas. Graduating students must take their licensing examinations at an accredited higher education institution that grants the degree and issues the diploma.

To apply for provisional authorization, the department or program prepares a self-evaluation report that is submitted to the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA). The latter appoints special commissions to carry out their own evaluation of the institution's or department's activities and, in turn, issues a new report. All the reports, accompanied by the Ministry's recommendation, are forwarded to the Government, which ultimately grants provisional authorization. The criteria for authorization pertain to faculty, curriculum, and educational facilities. Among these are the requirements that at least 50 percent of the faculty members in each department, program, or specialization must be employed full-time, and that full-time faculty members must author a textbook in their subject areas. Table 1 (Academic Authorization and Accreditation Standards in Romania) presents these criteria in more detail.

4.2. Full Accreditation

The second stage of academic accreditation consists of full accreditation. The process must begin within two years after the first cohort of students graduates from the department or institution applying for accreditation. Receiving full accreditation grants the institution the right to organize graduation examinations, to award degrees, and to issue diplomas. The application and approval processes are similar to those for provisional authorization but involve meeting stricter standards for faculty members, administration, educational facilities, and graduation examinations. For instance, for each of the first three years of operation in the life of the institution, at least 51 percent of the total number of students taking the graduation examinations each year must pass the exams (see Table 1 for additional criteria). The Romanian Parliament ultimately endorses the accreditation.

Initially, due to a shortage of qualified personnel, private universities largely relied on professors teaching in public universities to staff their positions. In 1996, only 5 to 10 percent of the faculty members in private institutions were employed full time, the remainder being professors employed in public universities teaching part-time in private institutions (Mihailescu, 1996). As a result, a massive transfer of organization models, curricula, and teaching methods took place from state to private universities. The latter easily became duplicates of the former, leaving little room for innovation, initiative, and better quality education (Nicolescu, 2002). This situation, combined with the possibility that private universities attract students who do not gain admission to state institutions (Sapatoru, 2000) and that the majority may come from low income families (Ionita, 1998), may lead one to believe that private higher education is not a real alternative for public education (Mihailescu, 1996; Miroiu, 1998; Chiritoiu & Horobet, 1999). Several other studies support this argument. A study of the post-secondary educational choices of high school

graduates in Romania reveals that private education is believed to be inferior in quality relative to its state counterpart (Sapatoru, 2000 and 2001; Nicolescu, 2001a). Similarly, employers express their belief that public higher education is much more rigorous by comparison (Nicolescu, 2001b). Nonetheless, in hiring and promotion decisions, employers do not seem to distinguish systematically between graduates of public and of private universities (Nicolescu and Sapatoru, 2002).

As of February 2003, only 18 private universities – out of 87 operating at that time, according to the Ministry of Education – were fully accredited (see Table 2, List of Private Universities Accredited and Closed in 2001 – 2002). Among the remainder, some universities are still under review for accreditation. However, during the last decade a number of private universities ceased their activities voluntarily, some were not authorized after the adoption of the Accreditation Law in 1993, and others were closed subsequent to not being granted accreditation in 2001 and 2002 (see also Table 4, The Number of Higher Education Institutions and Total Enrollment 1989/90 to 2000/01, for the evolution of the number of private higher education institutions from 1989/90 to 2000/01). For instance, in October 2001, 14 private institutions were denied accreditation, and were therefore required to cease all activities (see Table 2). The students enrolled in such institutions were redistributed to other private accredited universities. No data is accessible at this time to document the number of students affected by these closures and no information available on how exactly the redistribution took place. All that is known is that students attending institutions that were shut down at that time could opt to be transferred to another private university which offered a program in the same or related specialization as that which they were enrolled in. The receiving institution obtained the individual student records from the transferring university and could decide whether or not to admit the students on a case-by-case basis. It seems that the transfers took place smoothly and no social unrest among the students was caused by these closures. Similarly, there was no public protest from the professors employed in the institutions that were shut down, perhaps because they had multiple employment opportunities at that time.

5. HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE IN ROMANIA

Under tightened state budget constraints, with the collapse of the socialist system and the plunge of the economy at the beginning of 1990s, the Romanian government had no choice but to cut back public expenditures on education, together with slashing spending in most other areas of the economy. The share of educational expenditures in GDP, although it increased from the meager 2.2 percent in 1995, stayed well below the 4 percent threshold established by law, and in 1999 it accounted for 3.2 percent of GDP (Sapatoru, 2001; see Table 3, Total Public Expenditure on Education, by Level, 1985 – 2000). The level of public spending on education fluctuated greatly in real terms, although it seems to

have risen rather steadily (until 1996) in terms of its share in total government expenditure, only to fall again in more recent years (OECD, 2000).

The major source of funding for public higher education in Romania is the state budget, allocated annually by the Parliament. Until 1998, state support was earmarked exclusively for public education and was meant to cover the current costs of inputs (mainly staff salaries, building maintenance, etc.). State-allocated funds could be used only according to the destination indicated by the Ministry, although flexibility in the use of funds within each category existed.

Starting in 1998, in accordance with the decentralization of academic management and financing, the so-called "global financing" system was introduced and was implemented in the academic year 1999/2000. The explicit goal of this reform measure was to diversify the sources of financing, particularly in public higher education, and to avoid reliance on a single revenue source (which led a chronic under-financing of public universities). Global financing permits universities to obtain funding both from the state budget (through so-called "base financing") and from non-governmental "extra-budgetary" sources (through "complementary or additional funding"). "Base financing" involves the allocation of state funds to institutions to cover current educational expenses proportional to the number of full-time equivalent students which it enrolls and the size of the allowance set for each field by the National Council for Financing in Higher Education (NCFHE), supposedly reflecting educational costs by specialization. "Complementary or additional financing" entails the allocation of funds on the basis of competition for financing academic research projects and educational investments. Finally, in addition to state funds, universities may use other "extra-budgetary" resources from tuition fees, revenues from scientific research, consulting, or national and international research grants.

The introduction of global financing reduced the importance of state funding as the sole source of financing for public universities. The newly introduced system represented a major step towards a more effective institutional autonomy of public universities whose activities were indirectly limited before by their dependence on state allowances and restrictions imposed on the use of funds provided. State funds allocated to universities can now be redistributed across departments.

Private universities receive most of their income from tuition fees and only a small proportion comes from private sponsors or donors. State support is also available to accredited private providers, which may participate in competitions for public funding for research and investments and may be granted other forms of government support (see global financing, above). However, as of the end of 2002 no private institutions had received any state support.

In September 2002, the Ministry of Education issued methodological regulations to improve financing in higher education, according to which private higher education institutions are compelled to contribute 10 percent of their revenues from student fees to the state budget for students enrolled within the limit approved by the National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA) and the Ministry of Education. For enrollments above this level, private higher education institutions must relinquish 40 percent of their revenues. This former provision also applies to public higher education

institutions. The measure was formally justified by the need to raise funds for improving student housing and implicitly to control quality in higher education by prevent universities from increasing student-teacher ratios, overcrowding classrooms, and overloading professors. No information exists as of yet to assess the effects these regulations have had on private and public higher education institutions, but it is clear that the measures do not provide incentives for growth.

As of February 2003, the Romanian Parliament was discussing a Draft regulation on the improvement of financing in higher education, which makes the provisions of the previous policies even harsher. According to this draft, all higher education institutions, be they state or private, would be required to hand over to MoE a progressively higher proportion (even up to 100 percent) of their revenues. The surrender brackets are as follows:

for enrollment levels which exceed the number approved by the Ministry of Education...	the institution is required to surrender the following proportion of tuition income from the excess number of students enrolled
by < 10 percent	40 percent
by 11 – 20 percent	55 percent
by 21 – 30 percent	70 percent
by 31 – 40 percent	85 percent
by > 40 percent	100 percent

The September 2002 European Union country report on higher education in Romania states that “the Romanian education system is still missing financial funds, and even if the public funds were increasing, the financing is still not satisfactory.” The report recommends that the sources of funding in higher education be diversified and that all agents involved in the educational process contribute to financing.

6. THE EVOLUTION AND CURRENT STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

The reforms undertaken throughout the years and the legislation governing higher education in Romania influenced the evolution of this sector as a whole along a series of dimensions. Furthermore, the reforms influenced the evolution of the public-private mix in tertiary education. This section explains the mechanisms for the growth and transformation of public and private higher education and documents the extent of these phenomena. We focus here on the changes starting in 1990 and the current status in student enrollment levels, faculty numbers, and the structure of the sector by field of study, type (day, evening, and distance-learning) and language of instruction.

6.1. Number of Institutions, Enrollment Levels, and Geographic Distribution in Public and Private Higher Education

Under the communist regime, the sole providers of higher education in Romania were public institutions. The concept of “scientific planning” of the country’s manpower needs, adopted by the central government, ensured that access to higher education was severely restricted both in number of students granted admission and in the fields of study offered by state universities. Consequently, the liberalization of the economy was also reflected in the liberalization and massification of higher education in Romania, and one of the major transformations in the sector after 1989 consisted of a significant increase in the supply of both public and private higher education services in response to the initially high excess demand for tertiary education.

Public higher education in Romania evolved in several ways. First, the established state universities spun off smaller units across the country. Second, in a move away from the communist planning model, departments were re-organized through the creation of new academic units or through closures and break-ups of existing departments to reflect the changes in the curricula. Third, several post-secondary vocational institutions (which had lost their higher education status in the 1970s when there was a push for shorter-term post-secondary vocational training in Romania, particularly in teacher training and technical studies) reverted back to their legal form as universities (Eisemon et al., 1995). Finally, new public universities were established, primarily in small and medium-sized towns, to cater to local markets. From 1989/1990 to 2000/2001, the number of universities increased from 44 to 57 and the number of departments/programs overall increased more than five-fold (see Table 4, The Number of Higher Education Institutions and Total Enrollment, 1989/90 to 2000/01).

While some growth in public education enrollments was recorded in the early transition years, the pace and magnitude of growth increased in the 1997/1998 academic year when public institutions were first allowed by the Ministry of Education to admit tuition-fee-paying students for both day and distance-learning programs (above the number approved and funded by the state). According to anecdotal information, currently the number of students paying tuition seems to exceed the number of students financed by the state budget.

Private higher education developed through the establishment of new institutions. Table 4 shows the growth in the number of private institutions in recent years. Despite the controversy surrounding the exact figures, it is clear that private tertiary education flourished after 1989.⁵ Most of the new private institutions and the largest amongst these were established in Bucharest. In 1999, about 40 percent of the new private universities were located in the capital and accounted for approximately half of total enrollments in private higher education (OECD, 2000).

⁵ A discrepancy exists between the number of higher education institutions reported by the National Commission for Statistics and the MoE, respectively. According to Mihai Korca, former State Secretary in MoE, this discrepancy stems from the fact that there was no systematic recording of the number of private higher education institutions prior to 1999 and that the two institutions do not synchronize educational data.

Despite the rapid growth of private higher education, the established existence of public universities prior to 1990 and funding by the state, combined with capital and other resource constraints and the prospect of a finite demand for higher education faced by private education providers, ensured that the public provision of education still dominates university enrollments: as of 2000/2001 almost 70 percent of the number of students enrolled in a tertiary degree program were attending a public institution (see Table 4).

The extent of the massification of higher education in Romania is evident from the evolution of the number of university students per one thousand inhabitants, which increased from 8.3 in 1990/91 to 23.8 in 2000/2001. Similarly, enrollment rates (associated with the 19 to 23 age group) went from 9.9 to 27.7 percent in the same period (Sapatoru, 2001 and National Institute for Statistics).⁶

Both supply and demand factors contributed to the uneven regional distribution of private universities in Romania. On the demand side, Bucharest was a large market for higher education, particularly in fields in which public universities were not strong. On the supply side, in the initial stages of growth, private providers relied on the existing public education infrastructure, including both material and human resources (buildings, libraries, teaching staff etc.). Moreover, most new private institutions were founded by entrepreneurial-minded university professors, most of which were then located in Bucharest. Gradually, however, private institutions began responding to demand in markets other than Bucharest and set up regional branches, particularly in areas where there was little competition from public institutions.

6.2. Faculty and Staff in Public and Private Higher Education

The extent to which private higher education constitutes a new industry in Romania is obvious in Table 5 (The Structure of the Faculty Body in Romania at the Beginning of the Academic Year): while enrollments in private education amounted to about 30 percent of the total number of students in higher education, the number of full-time academic staff employed in the former accounted for only around 10 percent of the total number of professors, assistants, and researchers in higher education. Given the accreditation requirements pertaining to the percentage of faculty employed full-time, we can expect to see an increase in the number of staff in private institutions as they rely less on faculty visiting from state universities and hire their own staff to meet accreditation standards.

The data also show that – for the years in which figures were available – approximately two thirds of the faculty body consisted of junior and regular teaching assistants and junior lecturers, possibly younger faculty members. This may reflect the relative shortage of professors given the rapid expansion

⁶ No data is available for more recent years.

of enrollments, particularly in private higher education, a problem compounded by the earlier hiring freeze in effect imposed by the socialist regime in public universities in the 15 years prior to 1990.⁷

6.3. Fields of Study

Prior to 1990, the public higher education enrollments were dominated by engineering and other technical sciences (which accounted for approximately 65 percent of total enrollments – see Table 6, The Structure of Higher Education Enrollment, by Field, 1989/90 to 2000/01) – while the production of other specialists, such as legal experts, economists, and social scientists was less of a priority for the socialist economy at that time. The transition to a market economy in Romania and the subsequent collapse of the system of centrally planned manpower, combined with the prospect of higher returns to education in other fields in the new economy, induced a shift away from such studies, and the decline of the share of enrollments in technical studies in public higher education is almost monotonous through 2000/2001. Nonetheless, state universities maintained their programs in technical fields, as it would have been politically unacceptable to lay off professors and other teaching and administrative staff serving programs that had experienced a drastic fall in demand, particularly while they were still under state control and financed by the government, even though sometimes seats for admission in such programs remained unfilled.

After 1990, both public and private universities, and especially the latter, began offering new programs in high-demand fields. Currently, approximately 75 percent of total student enrollments in public and private higher education are represented by economics, law, fine arts, and humanities programs, together with newer specializations such as IT and computer science. In private education, enrollments are heavily skewed towards economics and law programs, which represent about three quarters of total enrollments in this sector (see Table 6).

6.4. Types of Instruction and Degrees

Higher education in Romania has been organized, since 1948, in three types of instruction (day, evening and distance learning courses), and at present both public and private institutions offer these three forms of instruction. However, the most common form is full-time day classes: in 1998/1999, 94.6 and 68.3 percent of the total number of students enrolled in public and private higher education, respectively, were pursuing a degree full-time (see Table 7, The Structure of Enrollment in Higher Education, by Type, 1989/90 to 1998/99). This is a clear shift compared to the communist period when

⁷ In fact, the number of academic positions in higher education decreased from 13,250 to 11,696 in the period 1984/85 to 1989/90 (Ministry of Education, 1998a).

the share of full time enrollments was nearly equal to that of part-time enrollment: day classes accounted for 57.72 percent in the academic year 1989/1990.

Distance-learning enrollments exhibit yet another pattern of development in the years since 1989: an almost five-fold absolute overall increase, due to a surge in enrollment in private higher education institutions. Both in evening and in distance-learning programs, but especially in the latter, students tend to be older adults compared to those enrolled in day classes who are more likely to come directly from high school. Forty-one percent and 44.2 percent of the students enrolled in day classes in public and private education, respectively, were 20 or under, while only slightly more than 33 percent and about 25.7 percent of the students enrolled in evening classes and distance learning in public and, private education, respectively, fall in this age group (Sapatoru, 2001).

6.5. Language of Instruction

Prior to 1990 there were no higher education institutions with teaching activities carried out in a language other than Romanian. However, one major university from Cluj (a large city with a considerable population of Hungarian ethnicity) offered students the possibility to enroll in special program sections – albeit very restricted in terms of enrollment levels – where instruction was in Hungarian. More recently, such sections have developed significantly. Subsequently, some departments/programs with teaching in other foreign languages (English, French, German, etc.) were created in public institutions. Furthermore, sanctioned by the 1999 amendments to the Education Law, separate programs and/or departments with teaching in the main minority languages were set up within public higher education institutions. One of the first of this kind was the Multicultural Babes – Bolyai University in Cluj. In 2001 a new private Hungarian University, with financial support from the Hungarian government, began enrolling students in Miercurea Ciuc.

7. COMPLYING WITH EUROPEAN UNION STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN ROMANIA

In 1998 and 1999, reports of the European Union Commission judged that Romania had made progress toward an effective institutional and legislative reform in the field of education, and that "Romanian education reform continues, but the rhythm of transformations is slowed down by financial difficulties" (Ministry of Education, 2000b). Therefore, in an effort to contribute to the country's chances for accession to the European Union, the more recent reforms in higher education in Romania have focused on

measures meant to ensure the harmonization of the Romanian educational system with European Union standards and procedures.

The first step in this process was Romania's participation in the European conventions for mutual recognition of diplomas and certificates. Romania has also redefined the objectives and the underlying principles in higher education in accordance with the Conference of European Rectors (Berlin, 1998) and the Bologna European Summit (1999). Furthermore, issues such as enhanced access to higher education, promoting gender and ethnic equality, decentralization, and development of non-traditional forms of study, as stipulated in the Bologna convention, became part of the reform in higher education in Romania.⁸

As a result, the European Union (E.U.) Commission considered the progress made by Romania towards ensuring compatibility with E.U. standards as being substantial: "...In higher education a council was set up during the reference period to certify the quality management systems. Secondary legislation has been adopted on: general objectives and guidelines for second chance education; entrepreneurial education; combating social exclusion; providing access to the pre-university education, colleges and universities for young Roma; and integration of the children with disabilities. Measures have been taken to facilitate the free movement of students. Student, professor and researcher mobility has been introduced as an indicator of the performance of higher education institutions. Periods of studies of at least one semester or examinations taken in an E.U. member state are recognized. As from the academic year 2000/2001 higher education institutions will issue, upon request, a diploma supplement to facilitate the recognition of qualifications. In principle E.U. nationals enjoy the same rights as Romanian students in higher education. However, equal treatment will still have to be extended to tuition fees, which are higher for E.U. nationals than for Romanian students" (European Commission, 2000). Education was included among the first five area for the 2007 negotiations for European Union accession.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the importance given officially to education and its declaration as a national priority by the Romanian government, higher education was rarely part of the political discourse and even to a lesser extent (if possible) was it part of a dominant party's political platform. According to Miroiu *et al.* (1998), until 1998 the educational system was mostly a result of the compromises between the interests of teachers and those of students, within the framework created by the government.

The reforms took place gradually, starting with the passing of legislation and still struggling with the most difficult task of implementation. Despite the unhurried and uneven pace of reform, however, one dramatic transformation of the Romanian higher education system consists in the growth of private

⁸ According to Korka (2002), formal conformity with the Bologna provisions is not sufficient, however, to ensure quality in Romanian higher education compatible with the European Higher Education Area. Fundamental changes in the means and instruments of economic, fiscal, and operational areas of university functioning are also necessary.

universities. Their success has been credited to the replication of the structure, program offerings and mode of operation of existing public institutions. Nonetheless, despite the similarities with their public counterparts, private universities have been bolder in responding to market demand and offering a wider variety of programs.

The recent introduction in public universities of full tuition for students admitted above the number of students approved and funded by the state and for those enrolled in distance-learning programs forces state higher education institutions to operate in a manner closer to a profit-driven institution. As of yet, it is not certain if this will be reflected in a decrease in the quality of public education, as seems to be the case in most private universities, or whether the former will thus find the resources to improve.

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Table 1
Academic Authorization and Accreditation Standards in Romania
According to Law no. 88/1993 on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Diplomas

Criteria / standards	Provisional authorization	Full accreditation
Faculty	At least 70 percent of the faculty in each department, program, specialization must be employed full-time. At least 30 percent of the faculty must hold full-time or associate senior positions (senior lecturer or professor).	At least 50 percent of the faculty in each department, program, specialization must be employed full-time. At least 30 percent of the faculty must hold senior positions (senior lecturer or professor).
Administration	Faculty members must carry out research materialized in publications, contracts, consulting activities, etc.	The rector, pro-rector, dean, assistant dean, and the scientific secretary of each department, program or specialization must be senior full-time faculty members (senior lecturers or professors).
Curriculum	The course offerings must include compulsory, elective and optional subjects, in accordance with national standards.	
Textbooks		Full-time faculty members must author a textbook in their subject areas. The administration has the obligation to reproduce the textbooks written by the full-time faculty members and to make these available to the students.
Graduation examinations	The first three graduating classes of the higher education institution must take their graduation examinations (orals) in institutions specifically authorized by the NCAEA. Diplomas are issued by the university that organized the examination, but must specify the institution where the student was enrolled.	51 percent of the total number of students in each of the first three graduating classes must pass the graduation examination (orals).
Educational facilities	The higher education institution must have its own or rented classrooms and labs, and its own library and reading room.	The higher education institution must invest at least 25 percent of its revenues in educational facilities. After two academic years, the higher education institution must own at least 50 percent of the physical facilities.

Source: Sapatoru (2000)

Table 2
List of Private Universities Accredited and Closed in 2001 – 2002 in Romania

No.	Private universities accredited	Private universities closed
1.	“APOLLONIA” University – Iasi	The “DECEBAL” Romanian Foundation for Youth – Baile Herculane
2.	“BIOTERRA” University – Bucharest	The “ECATERINA TEODOROIU” National Foundation for Children and Youth
3.	“CONSTANTIN BRANCOVEANU” University – Pitesti	“EUROPA ECOR – U.S.” University – Bucharest
4.	“DANUBIUS” University – Galati	“ETNOCULTURALIA” European Academic Foundation – Bucharest
5.	“DIMITRIE CANTEMIR” University – Bucharest	“GAUDEAMUS” University – Constanta
6.	“EMANUEL” University – Oradea	“FORTUNA” University – Bucharest
7.	“GEORGE BACOVIA” University – Bacau	“IRECSON” Foundation – Bucharest
8.	“GEORGE BARITIU” University – Brasov	“JIUL DE SUS ” University – Targu Jiu
9.	“GHEORGHE CRISTEA” University – Bucharest	“LUCEAFARUL” Academy of Arts – Bucharest
10.	“HYPERION” University – Bucharest	National Academy for the Study of History – Bucharest
11.	“NICOLAE TITULESCU” University – Bucharest	The National Inventions Center – Ploiesti
12.	“PETRE ANDREI” University – Iasi	“PRO HUMANITAS” University – Bucharest
13.	The Roman – Catholic Theological Institute – Bucharest	The Romanian – Canadian Friendship Foundation – Brasov
14.	The Romanian – American University – Bucharest	“UNITEH” Technological University – Bucharest
15.	“SPIRU HARET” University – Bucharest	
16.	“TIBISCUS” University – Timisoara	
17.	“TITU MAIORESCU” University – Bucharest	
18.	“VASILE GOLDIS” University of West – Arad	

Sources: Parliament of Romania (2002 a through q) and Government of Romania (2002).

Table 3
Total Public Expenditure on Education, by Level, 1985 – 2000, in Romania

Year	Total		As percent of GDP ^(b)	As percent of total government expenditures ^(c)	Current educational expenditures by level (percent)			
	In mln ROL	In mln USD ^(a)			Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Higher education
1985	17,941	1,047	2.20	5.3				
1990	24,270	1,082	2.83	7.3	7.1	45.0	22.1	9.6
1993	636,952	838	3.18	9.1	8.4	36.5	23.8	15.9
1994	1,490,795	901	2.07	13.6	Na	Na	Na	Na
1996	3,882,000	1,259	3.58	10.5	Na	39.6	22.5	16.2
1997 ^(d)	7,223,564	1,008	2.89	9.5	6.6	64.6		16.8
1998	15,151,800	983	3.30	9.2	Na	Na	Na	19.0
1999	19,175,600	765	3.20	7.8	Na	Na	Na	16.7
2000	30,529,550	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na

Sources: Data for 1985 – 1997 are from Sapatoru (2001) and for 1998 – 2000 from Andrei Marga (2001) and UNDP (2002).

Note: Data are obtained from UNESCO (1998) and Ministry of Education (1998b), unless otherwise specified below.
“Na” represents not available.

- a) For 1985 – 1997, calculated by dividing total educational expenditures to the average exchange rate for the year (source for exchange rates: International Monetary Fund, 2001).
- b) For 1985 – 1997, calculated by dividing total public expenditure on education to GDP (source for GDP, International Monetary Fund, 1998). For 1998 and 1999, from UNDP (2002).
- c) The source for total government expenditures used to calculate the figure for 1985 is International Monetary Fund (1998).
- d) Total public expenditure on education in 1997 is calculated as the sum of budgetary expenditures on educational institutions and on services (room and board). Current educational expenditures by level pertain only to budgetary expenditures on educational institutions for 1997.

Table 4
The Number of Higher Education Institutions and Total Enrollment, 1989/90 to 2000/01, in Romania

Fields of education	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Public Education												
No. of institutions	44	48	56	62	63	63	59	58	59	57	57	59
No. of departments	101	186	257	261	262	262	318	324	342	361	391	438
Enrollment level	164,507	192,810	215,226	235,669	250,087	255,162	250,836	261,055	249,875	277,666	310,285	382,478
Private education												
No. of institutions	0	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	36	44	49 (83)	58 (84)	64 (83)	67 (84)
No. of departments	0	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	119	161	174	195	241 (Na)	258 (376)
Enrollment level	0	Na	Na	Na	Na	59,967	85,305	93,434	110,715	130,054	130,000	150,674
Public and private education												
No. of institutions	44	Na	Na	Na	63	Na	95	102	108 (142)	111 (141)	121 (140)	126 (143)
No. of departments	101	Na	Na	Na	Na	Na	437	485	516	556	632 (Na)	696 (814)
Enrollment level	164,507	Na	Na	Na	Na	315,129	336,141	354,489	360,590	407,720	452,621	533,152

Source: Sapatoru (2001); National Commission for Statistics (2000 and 2001); and National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation (NCAEA).

Notes:

Figures up to 1996/97 are from Ministry of Education (1997a).

Figures for 1997/98 are from the Ministry of Education (1998a).

Figures for 1999/00 and 2000/01 are from the National Institute for Statistics (2001).

The number of institutions and departments for 1998/99 and further are reported as follows: numbers before the parentheses are from the National Commission for Statistics (2001); numbers in parentheses are from unpublished National Council for Academic Evaluation and Accreditation data.

“Na” represents not available.

Table 5
The Structure of the Faculty Body at the Beginning of the Academic Year,
1997/1998 – 1999/2000, in Romania

(percent)

Faculty body	Public higher education		Private higher education		Total			
	1997/1998	1998/1999	1997/1998	1998/1999	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001
Regular faculty	96.44	Na	99.38	Na	96.79	Na	Na	Na
<i>of which:</i>								
Professors	17.33	18.00	18.51	18.60	17.46	Na	Na	Na
Senior lecturers	13.66	14.20	13.83	13.90	13.68	Na	Na	Na
Lecturers	31.20	32.30	23.97	24.10	30.35	Na	Na	Na
Teaching assistants		23.80	21.16	21.30	22.74	Na	Na	Na
Junior teaching assistants	11.31	11.70	21.91	22.00	12.56	Na	Na	Na
Visiting professors	3.52	Na	0.26	Na	3.13	Na	Na	Na
Research staff	0.04	Na	0.36	Na	0.08	Na	Na	Na
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	Na	Na	Na
Total number	22,955	23,000	3,058	3,100	26,013	26,100	26,977	27,959

Sources: National Commission for Statistics (1999) and National Center for Vocational Guidance (2000).

Note: "Na" represents not available.

Table 6
The Structure of Higher Education Enrollment, by Field, 1989/90 to 2000/01, in Romania

(percent)

Fields of education	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Public Education												
Technical	68.80	62.52	57.49	50.11	44.44	39.52	37.91	36.49	38.86	39.56	37.50	34.71
Economics	9.42	10.38	11.52	14.97	15.95	18.70	20.62	20.88	18.51	17.66	17.08	18.60
Law	1.44	2.06	3.50	4.61	5.94	6.05	4.02	4.46	4.29	3.99	5.35	5.68
Medicine	10.15	10.44	10.13	10.04	10.29	10.31	10.88	10.94	11.42	10.57	9.35	8.15
Humanities and sciences	9.62	13.62	15.97	18.80	21.71	23.49	24.49	25.09	24.59	25.94	28.66	31.01
Arts	0.57	0.98	1.39	1.47	1.67	1.93	2.08	2.14	2.33	2.28	2.06	1.85
Total public education	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Private education												
Technical	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	0.08	0.08	0.31	1.57	2.22	3.50	3.71
Economics	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	37.66	37.84	35.49	36.72	40.65	38.86	40.62
Law	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	36.39	37.59	39.21	38.58	35.54	35.12	31.29
Medicine	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	7.33	5.81	4.44	3.01	2.13	1.62	1.21
Humanities and sciences	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	17.85	18.07	19.23	18.90	18.48	19.97	22.26
Arts	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	0.69	0.61	1.32	1.22	0.98	0.93	0.91
Total private education	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 6 continued)

Fields of education	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Public and private education												
Technical	68.80	Na	Na	Na	Na	32.01	28.31	27.00	27.94	27.65	27.70	25.94
Economics	9.42	Na	Na	Na	Na	22.30	24.99	24.68	22.80	24.99	23.36	24.82
Law	1.44	Na	Na	Na	Na	11.82	12.54	13.62	14.88	14.05	13.93	12.92
Medicine	10.15	Na	Na	Na	Na	9.75	9.59	9.23	9.30	7.88	7.12	6.19
Humanities and sciences	9.62	Na	Na	Na	Na	22.42	22.86	23.55	22.98	23.56	26.15	28.54
Arts	0.57	Na	Na	Na	Na	1.70	1.71	1.92	2.10	1.87	1.74	1.59
Total public and private education	100.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sources: Figures from 1989/90 to 1997/98 are from the Ministry of Education (1997 and 1998).

Figures for 1998/99 to 2000/01 are from the National Commission for Statistics (1999 and 2000) and the National Institute for Statistics (2001).

Note: Numbers for 1994/95 in private education are derived from enrollment levels calculated based on data from the Ministry of Education (1997a), by subtracting the number of first year students in 1995/96 from the total number of students in the same year.

“Na” represents not available.

Table 7
The Structure of Enrollment in Higher Education, by Type, 1989/90 to 1998/99, in Romania

Type of education	1989/ 1990	1990/ 1991	1991/ 1992	1992/ 1993	1993/ 1994	1994/ 1995	1995/ 1996	1996/ 1997	1997/ 1998 ⁽¹⁾	1998/ 1999 ⁽²⁾	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001
(percent)												
Public education												
Day classes	57.72	70.57	74.19	79.10	83.53	87.13	89.89	91.18	92.79	94.60	92.22	86.83
Evening classes	36.07	23.80	18.88	12.92	8.43	5.84	4.38	3.32	2.27	1.30	0.98	0.81
Distance learning	6.21	5.63	6.93	7.98	8.04	7.03	5.73	5.52	4.94	4.10	6.80	12.36
Total public education (number)	164,507	192,810	215,226	235,669	250,087	255,162	250,836	261,054	249,875	310,285	322,129	382,478
Private education												
Day classes	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	53.16	55.95	62.23	67.42	68.30	69.51	64.45
Evening classes	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	1.28	1.17	0.19	0.15	0.10	0.10	0.08
Distance learning	0.00	Na	Na	Na	Na	45.56	42.88	37.58	32.43	31.60	30.39	35.47
Total private education (number)	0	Na	Na	Na	Na	59,967	85,305	93,434	110,715	130,000	130,492	150,674
Public and private education												
Day classes	57.72	Na	Na	Na	Na	80.67	81.28	83.54	85.00	86.80	85.70	80.51
Evening classes	36.07	Na	Na	Na	Na	4.97	3.57	2.49	1.62	1.20	0.7	0.60
Distance learning	6.21	Na	Na	Na	Na	14.36	15.15	13.97	13.38	12.00	13.60	18.89
Total public and private education (number)	164,507	Na	Na	Na	Na	315,129	336,141	354,488	360,590	440,285	452,621	533,152

Sources: Ministry of Education (1997 and 1998) for 1989/1990 to 1997/1998 data, National Center for Vocational Guidance (2000) for 1998/1999 data, and National Commission for Statistics (1999 and 2000) and the National Institute for Statistics (2001) for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 data.

Note: "Na" represents not available.