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Abstract

This article examines the access policies in Portuguese higher education, from the 1974 revolution to the present. Recently, under the simultaneous pressure of a declining birth rate and increasing financial stringency, higher education institutions, both public and private, have started to compete for students, while responding to increasing social demands for a more diversified higher education. The government and institutions are being challenged to meet both the political goal of equality of opportunities through widening access to higher education, and the need to attract underrepresented students from a broader range of social backgrounds that includes more mature students. This article contextualises the government's access policies, which changed quite recently to offer not only 'more' higher education but also 'more diverse' higher education; it also identifies institutional reactions to access policies as reflected by the nature of public or private funding and higher education type, that is, university or polytechnic identity. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)