



ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC  
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

# A brief overview of the OECD Feasibility Study for an AHELO

**AHELO: Assessment of  
Higher Education Learning  
Outcomes**

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# The OECD AHELO feasibility study

## What is AHELO?

A ground-breaking initiative to assess HE learning outcomes on an international scale, by creating measures that would be valid:

- For all cultures and languages;
- And also for the diversity of HE institutions.

## Why undertake the study?

After decades of quantitative growth in HE, consensus on the need to tackle the quality challenge (Athens, 2006)... but questions on how to address it?

➡ Carry out a feasibility study to provide a proof of concept (Tokyo, 2008)

## Why is the OECD?

- Experience PISA, PIAAC...
- Institutional framework
- Institutions and ministries lead the project



# The feasibility study at a glance

## Goal?

To assess whether reliable cross-national comparisons of HE learning outcomes are **scientifically possible** and whether their **implementation is feasible**.

## What?

Not a pilot, but rather a research approach to provide a proof of concept and proof of practicality.

## Why?

The outcomes will be used to assist countries to decide on the next steps.

## When?

The testing window is from August 2010 to April 2011.

## Who?

Data will be collected from a targeted population of students who are near, but before, the end of their first 3-4 year degree.

## How?

OECD's role is to establish broad frameworks that guide international expert committees charged with instrument development in the assessment areas.

# AHELO: 4 strands of work

## Discipline strand in Economics

Framework of expected learning outcomes to be defined through 'Tuning' approach.

Instruments yet to be determined.

## Discipline strand in Engineering

Framework of expected learning outcomes to be defined through 'Tuning' approach.

Instruments yet to be determined.

## Generic skills strand

Experts recommended an international pilot test of the US Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), to assess the extent to which problem-solving or critical thinking can be validly measured across different cultural, linguistic and institutional contexts.

## Research-based “Value-added” or “Learning gain” measurement strand

Several perspectives to explore the issue of value-added (conceptually, psychometrics), building on recent OECD work at school level.





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### **In each assessment, there will be a collection of contextual information:**

- to look beyond student performance: (institutional missions, graduates' satisfaction, employment and socio-economic outcomes).
- to make AHELO an effective tool to reveal best practices and to identify shared problems.



# AHELO tests of instruments

## 3 assessment instruments

<b>Assessment generic skills</b>  Finland, Korea, Mexico, Norway	<b>Assessment discipline-specific skills in engineering</b>  Australia, Japan, Sweden	<b>Assessment discipline-specific skills in economics</b>  Belgium (Fl.), Italy, Mexico, Netherlands
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## Contextual instrument

**Contextual indicators and indirect proxies of quality**



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