



**PUBLIC ACCREDITATION AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

PAAHE

STATE QUALITY STANDARDS

FOR

ACCREDITATION OF FIRST CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMS

(BACHELOR)

Tirana 2012

State Quality Standards in Higher Education Institutions

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STATE QUALITY STANDARDS

State Quality Standards, logic and organization

State Quality Standards are drafted in accordance with and for implementation of Article 61 of Law No.9741 of 21.5.2007, "On Higher Education in Republic of Albania", amended and pursuant to guidelines of Quality Assurance in European Area of Higher Education. They help Higher Education Institutions to assess their procedures, outcomes and potential. Division in chapters directs Higher Education Institutions to fulfill basic tasks (study programs, science policy, and institution management) and helps them to assess the internal quality assurance from a strategic viewpoint. With these normative standards that are possible to be implemented, institutions are allowed all freedom of expression.

Based on the operation logic, this set of standards invites Higher Education Institutions to accept it. With a properly performed assessment, Institution will have an overall vision of its functioning and greater autonomy in management policy.

The logic on the basis of which State Quality Standards are designed dictates that they should be distributed to all constituent units of higher education institutions in order to include not only the bodies and their management authorities in the self-evaluation process.

This is the opportunity to create a dynamic stream that will lay before them the need for recognition of successful collective practices and the use of instruments and methods for a sustainable assessment.

Thus, Institution will use the self-evaluation process for its own purposes, as a real tool of measurement and progress to show the image that will distinguish it among other institutions. Furthermore, internal assessment report that it will have drafted, will enable Public Agency for Higher Education Accreditation (PAHEA) to assess the ability of institution to prove that it meets its obligations and responsibilities and it is aware of its capacities.

Glossary

Principal objectives of study programs and standards of offered programs are the basis for building chapters and highlighting the goals that Higher Education Institutions aim to achieve in relation to their missions in public service. (examples: students from registration to employment; research: research outcomes, dissemination, evaluation, transfer, etc.).

Standards: They are the entire requirements, qualities and characteristics that help to achieve these fundamental objectives of HEI-s, which are defined as targets to respond to a certain level of institution development (examples: Institution pursues a policy of welcoming new students, Institution follows a policy of public communication and dissemination of outcomes in scientific research field...).

Criteria: They are examples of good practice, listed in a non-final form (that is, they are not reviewed finally). They help Institution to meet standards in favor of quality improvement (examples: Institution offers Study programs and provides academic staff for their accomplishment; institution interacts with actors from local or foreign economic and business

areas). Performance indicators and solutions tailored to achieve its best, will improve Institution functioning.

State Quality Standards in Higher Education Institutions.

State Quality Standards represent the entire requirements, criteria that Institution meets, which serve as a set of recommendations to help Higher Education Institutions to reach a certain development level. The criteria are standard, achievable, verifiable, clearly defined elements on which Institutions rely to fulfill their missions and they are used to make an assessment a classification, etc.

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STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF FIRST CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMS

I - PROVISION OF STUDY PROGRAMS

Standard I. 1 - Institution offers study programs in accordance with its mission and purpose.

Criterion 1 Institution offers accredited study programs, organized in modules and evaluated by credits under European Credits Collection and Transfer System (ECTS);

Criterion 2 Average amount of credits accrued during the year by a student who attends a full-time study program is 60 credits;

Criterion 3 Study programs are designed in accordance with the institution purposes and mission;

Criterion 4 Study programs have clearly defined objectives for students' molding in that program, which include knowledge, professional skills and competencies that students should acquire at the completion of the study program and which characterize the program profile;

Criterion 5 Study programs are designed in accordance with labor market needs;

Criterion 6 Study programs are designed in accordance with economic development of the country.

Standard I.2 - Study programs are consistent with institution's development strategy.

Criterion 1 Study programs are geared to institution's development strategy;

Criterion 2 First cycle study programs aim at providing basic knowledge on general scientific methods and principles;

Criterion 3 First cycle study programs aim at formation of specific skills in a variety of professions and specialties.

II - ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF STUDY PROGRAMS

Standard II.1 - Study programs are designed to meet the labor market needs.

Criterion 1 Study programs are designed to meet labor market needs in accordance with strategic goals of national economic development;

Criterion 2 In order to assess labor market needs, Institution carries out a market study, which includes:

- a. students' employment opportunities in domestic or regional, national and international market;
- b. demands of employers;
- c. a rough estimate of expected number of students that may be enrolled in this program;
- d. number of enrollments in similar programs of sister institutions.

Standard II.2 - Study programs aim at maintaining national cultural values and national interests.

Criterion 1 Institution offers study programs that do not conflict with national interests;

Criterion 2 Study programs intend to help preserve national cultural values.

Standard II.3 - Institution uses evaluation methodologies, measuring and evaluation instruments for the progress of study programs' accreditation.

Criterion 1 Institution uses evaluation methodologies, measuring and evaluation instruments for the progress of study programs;

Criterion 2 Institution includes this piece of information in institutional self assessment;

Criterion 3 Institution publishes the expected results, evaluation results and results it aims to achieve;

Criterion 4 In order to conduct the assessment, the institution uses indirect or direct methods:

Indirect:

a. Survey: for students who follow study programs, for graduates;

b. Surveys assessing didactics, curriculum, learning;

c. Conceptual question;

d. Interviews;

e. Etc.

Direct:

a. Standardized national/international tests (e.g. State exam for regulated professions);

b. Hearings in auditorium;

c. Assessment with grades / points;

d. Preliminary and final tests, examinations for practical modules;

e. Assessment of tasks performed by students (course assignments for analyzing conceptual understanding, exams, presentations);

f. Observations in performance of exercises / practice;

g. Etc..

Standard II.4 - First cycle study programs are detailed and informative.

Criterion 1 Main units responsible for a first cycle study program provide the necessary information for study programs' content;

Criterion 2 Main units responsible for the first cycle study program provide the necessary information for optional or obligatory courses per semester;

Criterion 3 Main units responsible for the first cycle study program provide the necessary information for teaching load, classes in auditorium, program attendance / following;

Criterion 4 Main units responsible for the first cycle study program provide the necessary information for detailed syllabus for each subject, for practices, exercises, or laboratory classes, etc.

Standard II.5 - Institution evaluates and documents its financial situation.

Criterion 1 Institution makes an (external or internal) annual audit of its financial situation;

Criterion 2 Audit report contains all financial obligations, personnel salaries, operating costs, etc..;

Criterion 3 Audit report contains a clear picture of obtained foreign grants and related services contracts for implementation of first cycle programs.

III - INSTITUTION STAFF

Standard III.1 - Institution follows legal and transparent procedures for personnel recruitment and evaluation.

Criterion 1 Institution follows legal and transparent proceedings for personnel recruitment in accordance with the statute and regulation;

Criterion 2 Academic staff employed with fulltime comprises at least 70% of academic staff engaged in implementation of first cycle programs;

Criterion 3 Institution follows legal and transparent procedures for personnel assessment;

Criterion 4 Institution maintains a database of personnel recruitment reports, of announcements for jobs, etc..

Standard III.2 - Institution has a database for its staff.

Criterion 1 Institution has a detailed database for academic staff members involved in the program and the person responsible for study program organization;

Criterion 2 Institution possesses the complete list of academic staff for each semester, supporting teaching-scientific staff and administrative staff;

Criterion 3 Institution publishes criteria and procedures for academic staff recruitment;

Criterion 4 Institution engages as heads of subjects/modules or first cycle study programs the academic staffs that have at least the scientific degree "Doctor" or the academic title "Docent".

Standard III.3 - Institution engages supporting teaching-scientific staff and administrative staff to accomplish its mission.

Criterion 1 Institution demonstrates an optimal commitment of supporting teaching-scientific staff for realization of laboratory classes and maintenance of laboratories and school facilities;

Criterion 2 Institution demonstrates an optimal commitment of human resource for meeting objectives of first cycle study programs;

Criterion 3 Institution shall provide sufficient staff for instruction, guidance and supervision of students in professional practice (at least one tutor / instructor per 12 students).

Standard III.4 - Institution is committed to continuous and further training of its staff.

Criterion 1 Institution organizes specific programs for further professional qualification of its academic staff and scientific-teaching personnel;

Criterion 2 Institution has a database of offered study programs.

IV - INSTITUTION PROTECTS STUDENTS RIGHTS

Standard IV.1 - Institution pursues a welcoming policy for the new students.

Criterion 1 Admission in the first cycle of studies is made in accordance with law No. 9741 of 21.5.2007, "On Higher Education in Republic of Albania", amended, and bylaws in force.

Criterion 2 Institution of Higher Education proposes specific criteria for selection of candidates who have completed State Matura, to be admitted in the first cycle of studies.

Standard IV.2 - Institution informs students about employment policies.

Criterion 1 Students are informed in details about the study program, organization and duration of study program;

Criterion 2 Students evaluate each subject lecturer at the end of semester;

Criterion 3 Students are offered career counseling service;

Criterion 4 Students are informed about opportunities for employment after graduation in this study program.

Standard IV.3 - Institution has statistics about the number of students attending study programs of first cycle

Criterion 1 Institution has annual statistics about the number of graduates in the first cycle;

Criterion 2 Institution possesses annual statistics about the number of students enrolled in the first cycle study programs, withdrawals from program and dropouts before program completion or unsuccessful completion of academic year in which study program takes place;

Criterion 3 Institution has data on progress of students during the conduct of study program from admission to graduation.

Standard IV.4 Institution engages its staff to take care of students.

Criterion 1 Institution offers to students' career counseling, it follows their progress and helps them in matters related to teaching process;

Criterion 2 Institution helps students (through the office for career counseling) to select institution in which they will carry out the professional practice, in foreseen cases.

V - INSTITUTION PROVIDES SERVICES AND MAKES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS LIBRARIES AND OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

Standard V. 1 - Institution makes its library available to students.

Criterion 1 Institution makes available to students auxiliary textbooks and literature sufficient in quantity and quality;

Criterion 2 Library has sufficient literature that helps student to fulfill the study program successfully;

Criterion 3 Library has periodicals and computer software, as electronic libraries, which contain necessary books or journals for the successful study program realization;

Criterion 4 Program Managers develop a detailed plan for library items increase to support the program, including the budget estimated for it;

Criterion 5 Library announces service hours in accordance with study program timetable and students' needs.

Standard V. 2 - Institution makes labs and appropriate teaching and practical training premises available to students.

Criterion 1 Institution proves that it has sufficient amounts of: labs, classrooms, offices, studios and other facilities with electronic equipment and information technology for the realization of study programs;

Criterion 2 Equipment of teaching premises is suitable for teaching in accordance with the program goals;

Criterion 3 Laboratories contain necessary equipment and tools to meet requirements of study programs;

Criterion 4 Depending on study programs that it provides, institution has one laboratory at least.

Criterion 5 Depending on study programs, institution has computers in information technology laboratories, provided with professional programs such as programs for statistics, linguistics, architecture, engineering, economics, medicine, stimulation software for social sciences, etc..

Criterion 6 With capacities that it owns or in cooperation with other institutions and entities, Institution guarantees that there are sufficient premises for the conduct of professional practices.

VI - FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Standard VI.1 - Institution prepares a financial report of study programs costs.

Criterion 1 Institution prepares a financial report containing a detailed financial overview of revenues from tuition fees and other financial contributions for students or financial resources allocation;

Criterion 2 Institution documents financial reports for the past three academic years;

Criterion 3 Institution demonstrates financial sustainability in the time of study program conduct and it has sufficient financial capacities to improve the financial situation and to generate necessary revenues in the future.

VII - INSTITUTIONS GUARANTEES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COLLABORATIVE RELATIONS

Standard VII.1 - Institution guarantees fruitful cooperation relations among its staff.

Criterion 1 Institution promotes cooperation among staff within institution through information exchange for drafting and overseeing the program;

Criterion 2 Institution guarantees fruitful cooperation relations through division of duties among institution personnel by taking respective responsibilities and by continued analysis of their work.

Standard VII.2 - Institution provides collaborative relations with counterpart institutions abroad and domestic or foreign business actors.

Criterion 1 To achieve objectives of study programs institution shows that it has established cooperation relations with counterpart institutions abroad and domestic or foreign business actors;

Criterion 2 Institution has established cooperation relations with employers to conduct and supervise the practice, depending on study programs that it offers;

Criterion 3 Institution organizes further vocational training in coordination with employers;

Criterion 4 Institution makes an analytical report of benefits from contractual agreements for realization of study programs.

VIII - INSTITUTION GUARANTEES QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard VIII.1 - Institution provides quality assurance in realization of study programs.

Criterion 1 Institution has met institutional standards and is accredited in the institutional level before applying for accreditation of study programs;

Criterion 2 Institution uses appropriate instruments for quality assurance;

Criterion 3 Institution shall establish a clear policy and follow the procedure of periodic assessment of effectiveness of activities it carries out for quality assurance and standards study programs it offers;

Criterion 4 Institution uses formal mechanisms for frequent reviewing, approving and supervision of study programs it offers;

Criterion 5 Institution aims at raising awareness of its staff and students who attend offered study programs about quality importance and quality assurance in them;

Criterion 6 Institution designs and implements a strategy for constant quality improvement. Strategy, policy and procedures are published.