



QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS

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STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

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Standard I.3 Study programs are organized in compliance with national legal stipulations and sublegal definitions in force and the European and Albanian Qualifications Framework on the said study programs.

Criterion 1 Study programs are structured in subjects and modules evaluated in credits in compliance with the national legislation in force and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Criterion 2 Professional study programs aim at acquiring theoretical and practical specialized comprehensive knowledge in the employment field with a wide range of professions and specialties.

Criterion 3 Professional study programs aim at providing students with a number of comprehensive cognitive and practical knowledge, necessary to creatively solve problems of practical professional nature.

Criterion 4 Professional study programs aim at developing students' competences for management and supervision, in the framework of professional activities and properly advising them on different and changing situations.

Criterion 5 Institution/main unit/professional college and the basic responsible unit for the study program fulfills the legal requirements and, organization and academic structure quality standards, as well as the number of qualified academic staff.

Criterion 6 Study programs have well-determined objectives about students' professional training, where knowledge, skills and professional competences that students should obtain at the end of the program and that characterize the professional profile of the program are included.

II. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF PROFESSIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS

Standard II.1 Professional study programs are detailed, informative, structured and organized in compliance with formative stipulation and objectives of this level and employment opportunities.

- Criterion 1** Professional study programs*, contain and give the necessary information on training objectives, expected learning outcomes, organization, structure, content, potential employment areas or real time employment of the students graduated in these programs.
- Criterion 2** Study programs are structured in modules/subjects and training activities evaluated in credits, divided in years and semesters and in compliance with the national and European legislation in force.
- Criterion 3** The study program contains the syllabus, which incorporates the necessary information on the teaching workload, hours in / outside the auditorium, attendance / program follow-up, the knowledge assessment methods and specific activities, etc.
- Criterion 4** Study programs contain detailed syllabi for each subject, training, exercise or lab classes, as well as for all study program components and training activities.
- Criterion 5** Study program structure and organization are enough flexible to enable students' training during the program and in compliance with the employment.
- Criterion 6** Practical learning and specific work elements have been properly structured, assessed and reassessed.

Standard II.2 Professional study programs' structure, syllabus and subject distribution is in accordance with training objectives, learning outcomes and in compliance with the National and European Qualifications Framework and labor market requirements related to these programs.

- Criterion 1** Course title, structure and division into years and semesters, and credit and classes evaluation are in compliance with legal and sublegal provisions in force.
- Criterion 2** Course title, structure and division into years and semesters, and credit and classes evaluation enable the achievement of study program academic objectives and the expected results of learning and student employment.
- Criterion 3** The syllabus, modules/subjects' character and title, module and training activities' syllabi are informative and contain all the required elements.

Criterion 4 There is a balanced ratio between theoretical and practical modules/training activities (50:50). About 25% of the program is dedicated to the practical training/specific work in the profession.

Criterion 5 Classification according to training activities and the ratio between theoretical and practical training enable meeting training objectives and advise students towards further studies and/or in compliance with the expectations and requirements of the labor market.

Standard II.3 **Subject contents, modules and other professional study programs training models are in accordance with training objectives, learning outcomes and labor market requirements for these programs.**

Criterion 1 The Syllabus contains full data on module/subject content of theoretical and practical training and other training activities according to the syllabus structure.

Criterion 2 Syllabus content is actual, meets all the special requirements of the profession and the requirements for required/expected abilities and skills on the part of the employer.

Criterion 3 The content foresees the development of transferable skills and their content during curricula development included in modules, teaching and evaluation methods.

Criterion 4 Theoretical and practical/specific work training modules and activities enable knowledge, abilities and intercultural skills acquisition, critical thinking, problem solving in specific contexts, communication and relationships with others, as well as qualitative advising on work experience.

Criterion 5 Cooperation with employers, internship/practical experience, tutoring and their evaluation in the profession is enough, appropriate and guarantees practical training, in accordance with profession requirements.

III. TEACHING, LEARNING, EVALUATION AND COMPETENCES

Standard III.1 **The institution guarantees the development of teaching, learning, and professional training through special policies and instructions based on the best methods and practices.**

Criterion 1 The institution drafts special guidelines, sets up special structures and develops teaching quality, uses methods and staff skills evaluation and monitoring mechanisms actively including students during the process. Evaluation results are made public.

Criterion 2 The most common forms of teaching, learning process, and knowledge transfer are lectures, seminars, laboratory work, course assignments/essays, projects, professional clinical practice, public lectures and any other models approved by the institution and which are suitable for the development of the study program.

Criterion 3 The academic staff uses alternative teaching and learning forms, means, methods and opportunities, in accordance with study program character in general, and with training modules and activities in particular, answering students' diversity and needs.

Criterion 4 The academic staff engaged in teaching is competent in explaining knowledge and concepts, by using various teaching methods including interactive and comprehensive methods, according to topics and profiles.

Criterion 5 The institution has to support the staff by introducing the best practice examples, to stimulate and encourage the academic staff for further teaching quality improvement.

Standard III.2 **The responsible units guarantee the development of teaching, learning, and professional training, by making available all the necessary physical, didactic and logistic infrastructure to successfully carry out the teaching and scientific activity.**

Criterion 1 The theoretical and practical teaching process is realized in qualitative and functional spaces, equipped with the necessary logistics for a qualitative teaching process.

Criterion 2 The academic staff and students use different informatics systems, and a consolidated IT infrastructure necessary for the teaching process, as well as internal communication systems to have access in the electronic documentation and dedicated personal space.

Criterion 3 The required and recommended literature, made available to students in the study program language (in hard copy or soft copy), guarantees the acquisition of knowledge required for the study program.

Criterion 4 In terms of teaching and learning process, the academic staff and students have access to online libraries in similar fields to the study program.

Criterion 5 The laboratory infrastructure necessary for lab classes, course assignments, diplomas and specific studies is continuously used by the students.

Criterion 6 In terms of teaching, academic staff uses *online* platforms (*e-learning*) and supports and encourages academic staff and students to use them.

Standard III.3 The institution sets up special structures at institutional level, which guarantee study program teaching and learning quality and raises awareness about their improvement.

Criterion 1 The institution organizes at institutional level structures/units that follow, assess and monitor the teaching process, and coordinate activities with main/basic units, in the framework of its quality improvement.

Criterion 2 The main/ central unit is responsible for the teaching process and its quality, and for raising the academic staff and students' awareness on the quality the study programs provides.

Criterion 3 The academic and support staff are responsible for implementing the study program and committed to improve teaching and implementing new methods, in accordance professional programs' nature and specifics.

Criterion 4 The structures and responsible units support the experimentation and development of new innovative teaching methods through continuous academic staff training for teaching skills improvement and their implementation.

Criterion 5 The academic and support staff test new teaching methods, analyze effects/expectations and periodically report on results to the structures and units in charge.

Standard III.4 The institution drafts special regulations and procedures for professional knowledge, learning and skills, and guarantees a fair and transparent evaluation, based on the merit for each student.

Criterion 1 The criteria and the testing and assessment method of professional knowledge, competences and skills are defined in special regulations and announced to students. The institution contains and preserves evaluation documentation, appeals and review, according to deadlines and procedures in respective regulations.

Criterion 2 The testing and assessment method of professional competences and research skills is realized in various models and ways, providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate the acquired competences and knowledge.

Criterion 3 At the beginning of each course / module students are informed on testing and assessment method of professional knowledge, competences and professional and research skills provided for in the course / module syllabus by the head of the course / module.

Criterion 4 Professional knowledge, competences and skills examination and evaluation is realized throughout the whole academic year implementing examination and evaluation electronic systems, which guarantee anonymity, eliminate different abuse forms and increase transparency.

Criterion 5 The assessment of knowledge, competences and skills is conducted by test commissions and accompanied by comments / feedback (if necessary) for the learning process in order to help students improve in the future.

Criterion 6 The results of professional knowledge and skills are based on merit and are timely given, in accordance with specifications in respective regulations guaranteeing students' rights to recognize the evaluation, the requirement to review the evaluation, in compliance with these regulations.

Standard III.5 Study program delivery guarantees creative and implementing skills increase on students delivering applied skills and professional competences easily usable in the labor market, or for further studies.

Criterion 1 The study program is delivered in a way that guarantees knowledge acquisition, development of professional and special skills, which are in accordance with expected learning outcomes for professional study programs.

Criterion 2 The study program guarantees the appropriate knowledge and delivery of special skills in information technology, human and social, communication and interaction areas supporting discussion and work groups on the interpretation and solution of problems or specific issues.

Criterion 3 The teaching process is delivered based on competences so that students can use the knowledge they have acquired during the process in labs and professional practices guaranteeing the practical development of the agreement with employers and business actors in advantage of students' practical training. The academic staff

combines forms of teaching with partner institutions to enable qualitative training and increase student mobility.

Criterion 4 At the end of each module or subject the academic staff evaluates, analyzes and reviews students' competences and skills in the study program and the syllabi of each subject, highlighting the most important issues, and advises students on their implementation.

Criterion 5 The institution drafts special, known and public procedures for student graduation, and guarantees student support and instructions on graduation process. It preserves graduated students' official records and updates them at the end of each academic year.

Criterion 6 The responsible unit, academic staff and academic mentors advise and help students to prepare for their thesis, practical activity and result processing guaranteeing the cooperation even with external actors for its development.

IV. RESOURCES FOR STUDY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Standard IV.1 **The Higher Education Institution is mainly responsible for the selection and quality of staff who cover the study program and support for performing tasks efficiently and effectively on their part.**

Criterion 1 The institution drafts and implements general and specific procedures and criteria made public that guarantee qualified staff selection and in accordance with study program nature, structure, modules and content, in accordance with the legal basis in force and its internal regulatory acts.

Criterion 2 The institution collects, stores and updates each academic year the data of the personnel engaged in the study program. These data include the academic staff involved in the program and the person responsible for organizing the study program, workload and academic staff engagement in each academic semester and year including mentors or practice supervisors in partnering institutions, as well as the teaching and the scientific support staff.

Criterion 3 The institution constitutes human resources' optimal commitment to meet professional study program objectives and to provide the appropriate and equal environment and opportunities for the performance of staff tasks in a professional way.

Criterion 4 The institution commits itself for continuous qualification and further professional staff development that covers and administers the study program through the organization of specific programs for innovative teaching methods and the usage of new technologies, as well as of the support for further academic and teaching-scientific staff professional qualification.

Standard IV.2 **The Higher Education Institution makes available the learning premises and the appropriate infrastructure for the delivery of study program teaching process and practical training, according to the nature and area of the professional study program.**

Criterion 1 The institution provides sufficient and appropriate teaching facilities for the development of theoretical teaching activity, depending on the number of students and study groups, in accordance with the specific nature of the study program and respective modules.

Criterion 2 Learning premises such as classrooms, labs, studios and the like are equipped with electronic and information technology devices that guarantee the development of the theoretical and practical teaching process through the use of contemporary teaching and learning methodology and technology.

Criterion 3 Laboratories, studios, ateliers or other premises, according to the specific nature of the professional study program, shall contain the necessary equipment and tools to meet module requirements, theoretical and practical training, and the overall study program objectives.

Criterion 4 The institution provides at least one information technology lab, equipped with advanced programs appropriate to the nature of the study program/s it provides.

Criterion 5 The institution guarantees, with its available capacities and / or in cooperation with other institutions and entities that the premises are sufficient, appropriate and dedicated for the development of professional practices, *internship* and other practical activities for professional study programs.

Standard IV.3 **The higher education institution makes available the learning process for students support and special environments, the library and financial support and literature, necessary for the study program well-functioning and its qualitative development.**

Criterion 1 The institution makes available the library for students guaranteeing the equal usage of the study program by students, and creates conditions for an equal and free access, also it should be equipped with computer programs and other technical equipment that enable the unlimited usage on the part of all students.

Criterion 2 The library should be equipped with the basic and support literature both in Albanian and foreign languages, necessary and appropriate to cover all modules and courses according to each study program.

Criterion 3 The institution should create conditions for equal and free access for students in online libraries of the study program area and it should draft and implement a detailed plan for new library items, also the update of existing fund in support of the program.

Criterion 4 The institution should facilitate and guarantee student support and the usage of necessary resources and logistics of partnering institutions through cooperation with external factors, committed for study program development, depending on the nature of their commitment during student's theoretical, practical and professional training process.

Criterion 5 The institution foresees the professional study program financial cost, necessary financial support for its well-functioning for at least one full study cycle and the annual financial report at the end of each full study cycle.

Criterion 6 The financial cost of a professional study program should ensure and guarantee the coverage for all sustainable and operative resources and activities, related to one another and that are in function of study program development guaranteeing the financial sustainability during study program development and onwards.

Standard IV.4 **The higher education institution drafts, follows, implements institutional policies and procedures and gives a full and detailed information to the students on the professional study program, admission, selection, academic progress, competence evaluation and graduation.**

Criterion 1 The institution drafts, implements and makes public clear and understandable policies, procedures and criteria for student admission, their progress during the study course, competence evaluation and graduation, which guarantee equality and equal rights for all candidates and students, in accordance with the legislation in force and its regulatory acts.

Criterion 2 The institution drafts and publishes before each academic year the general and/or specific criteria for candidate admission and selection in professional study programs and instructs the public and those interested about them.

Criterion 3 The institution makes available a full and detailed information with regard to the criteria and procedures of students' academic progress, practical and professional program activities and cooperating institutions' drafting, student competence and skills evaluation and graduation.

Criterion 4 Students are informed in details about the study program structure, organization and duration, employment opportunities, as well as institutional support to advise them on labor market.

Criterion 5 The institution makes available for students special information and guidelines about modules, subjects, content, training activities and extensive and updated information on the organization of the teaching process, logistics, infrastructure and services in the function of its development.

Criterion 6 Information about the study program is provided through the internal information management system and should be easily accessible even to distance students.

Standard IV.5 **The Higher Education Institution has an internal institutional management system, which is made available to the administration, information and monitoring of academic, financial and administrative activity for the professional study program.**

Criterion 1 The institution has in place a management system for the management of all student-related information and activity from enrollment to the study programs up to graduation and entering the labor market.

Criterion 2 The internal management system manages the information, documentation and activities of, academic and support staff, administrative staff and partners involved in the program implementation.

Criterion 3 The management system provides dedicated access to information and documents for all study program staff and students.

Criterion 4 The management system has integrated platforms and modules that enable interactive communication and information exchange among staff and students.

Criterion 5 The management system guarantees real-time monitoring of academic and administrative activity and enables individual and real-time reporting to governing bodies and unit heads.

Criterion 6 Information related to the study program, academic staff, and the various activities is published in the website in at least two languages, one of which is Albanian.

V. STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT

Standard V.1 **The Higher Education Institution drafts, follows and implements policies and procedures on students' admission, selection, progress, transfer, recognition, knowledge assessment and graduation in the study program and makes it available for the students of the study program.**

Criterion 1 The institution drafts and implements admission, progress, transfer, previous or part-time studies recognition, competence evaluation and student graduation policies, procedures and criteria, in accordance with the legislation in force and its regulatory acts, and that are easily understandable and accessible from the public.

Criterion 2 Policies and procedures from enrollment to graduation and advises them on labor market guarantee equality and equal rights to all study program applicants and students.

Criterion 3 The institution drafts and publishes before each academic year special criteria about candidate selection and instructs the public and interested parties with regard to the study program general and specific requirement and criteria.

Criterion 4 The institution provides full and detailed information on the criteria and procedures for students' academic progress and transition from one academic year to the other, the procedures for the recognition of previous qualifications or part-time studies.

Criterion 5 The institution informs students about the criteria and procedures on knowledge and skills assessment during the study program and the graduation.

Criterion 6 Before the beginning of and throughout each academic year, the institution publishes special directives and organizes briefings to inform potential students about the study program.

Standard V.2 **The Higher Education Institution provides students with comprehensive and detailed information on training objectives, structure, organization,**

study program content, expected learning outcomes and employment opportunities.

- Criterion 1** The institution informs students in details about the study program structure, organization and duration and makes available for them special information and documentation/guidelines for professional study program modules, subjects, content and training activities.
- Criterion 2** The institution informs students on the professional practices in the framework of study program development, partners and cooperating institutions where they are foreseen to be developed, as well as on employment opportunities and institutional support to advise them on the labor market.
- Criterion 3** Students are provided with extensive and up-to-date information on the teaching process development and organization, logistics, infrastructure and services in order to accomplish it.
- Criterion 4** Information about the study program is provided through the internal information management system and should be easily accessible even to distance students.

Standard V.3 The Higher Education Institution collects, manages, updates and preserves detailed information about the number of students attending the professional study program from their admission to university, as well as employment/career data through an internal IT management system.

- Criterion 1** The institution produces annual statistics on the number of graduated students in each study program.
- Criterion 2** The institution produces annual statistics on the number of students enrolled, dropouts during the or before the end of the program, or the non-successful completion of the academic year in which the study program is delivered.
- Criterion 3** The institution possesses data on students' progress throughout the study program course from their admission up to their graduation including their potential employment.
- Criterion 4** Student statistical data are managed through the internal information system and must be secured and easily accessible to authorized persons.

Criterion 5 The institution should develop periodic analytical reports on incoming and exiting students' profile and quality, as well as their employment rate, along with appropriate measures to improve these indicators.

Standard V.4 **The Higher Education Institution includes and engages students in decision-making and advisory bodies such as drafting, approving, reviewing and improving the study programs, teaching methods and the quality of provided resources and services.**

Criterion 1 The institution envisages students and their representatives' involvement and engagement in decision-making and advisory bodies, according to HEI legal and regulatory acts.

Criterion 2 The institution should ensure that students and / or their representatives' involvement in decision-making, counseling or evaluation on the academic process be realistic, specific, productive and with easily verifiable and measurable results.

Criterion 3 In designing and improving the study program, the institution should take into account the academic load of students in the study program and the provision of the non-bureaucratic student progress procedures throughout the program, including recognition of their full or partial study programs.

Criterion 4 The institution guarantees the students' involvement in drafting, reviewing and improving the study program on a regular basis and reflects their suggestions and contributions.

Criterion 5 Students are encouraged to give their input on equality and knowledge assessment and control, including their right to appeal, review and reflect on the part of the institution / unit / responsible lecturer.

Standard V.5 **The Higher Education Institution has special units and procedures for student admission, induction, counseling, complaints and issues management, which permanently function and are easily accessible and usable by students.**

Criterion 1 The institution has special units and procedures which ensure student information and assistance in accordance with the HEI legal provisions and regulatory acts.

Criterion 2 The institution has set up and introduced a special system for student welcoming, information, counseling, progress and assistance in matters related to the teaching process and study program.

Criterion 3 The Career Counseling Office / Unit welcomes students continuously and periodically, providing specific information and guidance in terms of completing the learning process, selection and induction regarding professional training in other institutions, and also advises them on labor market.

Criterion 4 The Career Office / Unit follows-up students after graduation, by collecting, processing and storing data on the type and quality of study program student employment and makes them available to students and relevant bodies and authorities and takes measures for the employment type and quality improvement.