



**Template of the Proposal for the Academic Accreditation of
Undergraduate Programmes**

January 2018

Introductory Note

This document constitutes a template for the structure and content of the proposal drafted by Higher Education Institutions for the academic accreditation of an Undergraduate Programme. Its structure is consistent with the main principles of the “Standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes” published by HQA in November 2016 which is in line with both the accreditation criteria (L. 4009/2011, Art. 70 - 72) and with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

Institutions wishing to draft a Proposal for the Academic Accreditation of an Undergraduate Programme must use this template which includes guidelines in the form of suggestions and/or questions for each quality standard aiming at assisting Institutions in drafting their Proposal. The Proposal should be self-standing and self-explanatory, not exceeding forty (40) pages in length. Where reference is made to articles or provisions of regulatory texts (Rules of Procedure of the Institution, Rules of Procedure of the academic unit/programme etc.), these must be attached to this document where appropriate.

HQA remains at the disposal of the stakeholders and is always eager to offer its services aiming at quality assurance and improvement of Higher Education Institutions.

January 2018

Proposal for the Academic Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes

Institution (*name*):

Undergraduate Programme Title:

Date of submission:

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1. QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC PLANNING. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED - WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS- AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and it is included in a published statement that is implemented by all interested parties. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.

The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.

In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to putting into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways of linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and internal audit of the quality assurance system for undergraduate programmes, as well as the collaboration of OMEA (Internal Evaluation Group) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU-MODIP).*

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Quality Policy Statement of the academic unit;
- Goal and action planning;
- How the Quality Policy is communicated.

2. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE PROGRAMME'S APPROVAL COMMITTEES. THE OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. THE ABOVE DATA AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

Academic units develop their study programmes using a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards to be carried out by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Furthermore, programme design should take into consideration the following:

- *the Institutional strategy;*
- *the active participation of students;*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market;*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme;*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System;*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students;*
- *the linking of teaching and research;*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Has the academic unit taken the programme's academic profile (history, scientific field, objectives, teaching staff, perspective) and orientation (educational, scientific, and professional) into consideration during the development phase;
- Please indicate the programme's strategy and how this is connected with the Institution's strategy;
- How has feedback from alumni, relevant scientific associations and employers active in similar fields been asked regarding the degree to which learning outcomes have been achieved;
- What kind of sources are used in order to integrate new knowledge into the programme;
- Benchmarking against other HEIs programmes in Greece/abroad;
- Please specify how the programme's structure ensures the students' smooth progression throughout its stages;

- Please indicate whether the curriculum is allocated in a rational manner and if it is in line with ECTS requirements (please consult the ECTS Guide);
- Please indicate whether the option of work experience is provided to students;
- Please specify how teaching is linked with research.

3. STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING, TEACHING AND EVALUATION

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centered learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centered learning and teaching process:

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement;*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys;*
- *reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff;*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student – teacher relationship;*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.*

In addition:

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

Please describe in a short text how student-centered learning is put into practice within the programme by commenting on the above mentioned specific points. In particular, indicate the

means used and the learning, teaching and student assessment practices (where appropriate, refer to the relevant articles of the Rules of Procedure of the programme or the academic unit).

4. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION STAGES, COURSE RECOGNITION AND DEGREE AWARD

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information on student progression.

Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Graduation marks the completion of studies. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Please indicate in particular:
 - ❖ How new entrants are supported (information sessions / events, etc.);
 - ❖ How is student progression monitored;
 - ❖ Whether there are official scholarships for students;
 - ❖ The terms and conditions on student mobility;
 - ❖ Whether there is additional financial support for students taking part in mobility programmes;
 - ❖ What steps are taken to inform the academic community of mobility programmes;
 - ❖ Whether the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is implemented;
 - ❖ Whether the Diploma Supplement is issued automatically for all programme graduates;
 - ❖ Whether there are specific quality standards regarding the diploma thesis provided for in the Study Regulation (please refer to the relevant article);
 - ❖ How the academic unit guarantees transparency in terms of thesis assignment and assessment;
- Please specify whether students receive training in research methodology and ethics, and if participation in research projects is encouraged;
- Please specify if the practice of student placements has been established, whether it is of obligatory or voluntary nature, and how it contributes to achieving learning outcomes. Indicate in more detail:
 - ❖ What particular skills in terms of practical application of new knowledge are targeted by the practice of student placement;
 - ❖ To what extent is the outcome satisfactory;

- ❖ How work carried out during placement is linked with the student's thesis;
- ❖ Whether there is a network in place bringing the programme in contact with social, cultural or production bodies aiming at fostering the practice of student placements;
- ❖ What kind of initiatives are taken to create student placement opportunities (at local, national and European level);
- ❖ Whether there is – and on what conditions – cooperation between the programme's teaching staff / reviewers and representatives of the bodies involved in student placement;
- ❖ Whether student placement creates future employment opportunities for graduates.

5. TEACHING STAFF

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.

The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work.

In particular, the academic unit should:

- *set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and provide them conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching and research;*
- *offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;*
- *encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;*
- *encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;*
- *promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit;*
- *follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.);*
- *develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

Please indicate:

- ❖ the processes implemented by the academic unit for the selection and development of teaching staff members as well as the practices put in place to ensure transparent and fair procedures;
- ❖ the teaching staff members' average weekly workload and the fluctuation between the minimum and maximum amount;
- ❖ any processes implemented for teacher evaluation by students;
- ❖ how the outcomes of teacher evaluation by students are used (e.g. if they are taken into account regarding the development of teaching staff members);
- ❖ any strategy put in place regarding mobility of the academic unit's teaching staff members;
- ❖ any additional financial support to academic staff members participating in mobility programmes granted by the programme and/or the Institution;
- ❖ any practices put in place in order to attract highly qualified academic staff;
- ❖ the setting up, if any, of teaching awards;
- ❖ whether the academic unit has a strategy in place regarding research activities in areas of special scientific interest.

6. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD —ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND—ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible education. The above means could be facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Please describe:
 - ❖ the means and resources available to the programme for supporting learning and academic activities (human resources, infrastructure, services etc.) and fostering research;
 - ❖ how resources are allocated;
- Please indicate:
 - ❖ Whether there are any support structures and services for students;
 - ❖ Whether these services are staffed with specialised support and administrative staff ;
 - ❖ How staff skills are developed (training etc.).

7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators;*
- *student population profile;*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates;*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s);*
- *availability of learning resources and student support;*
- *career paths of graduates*

A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Please describe the procedures in place for collecting information regarding students, staff, infrastructure, the programme's structure, organization and quality of teaching, services provided etc.;
- Please indicate the main tools used for collecting information and drawing useful conclusions such as e.g. questionnaires (Erasmus students, teaching staff, administrative staff, graduates, and alumni), interviews (employers, cooperating partners, citizens etc.);
- Please specify how the information gathered is analysed and how the conclusions drawn are used

8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.

Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, Institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these programmes, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

Please indicate:

- ❖ What kind of information is published and which groups/stakeholders are targeted;
- ❖ The means or communication channels used to publish information;
- ❖ The relevant documents (brochures, Rules of Procedure, Guides etc.) published by the academic unit;
- ❖ How the academic unit ensures that the information published is clear and objective, how it specifies and controls the website content regarding this particular study programme, and what is the procedure in place for regularly updating the information contained in the programme's website.

9. CONTINUOUS FOLLOW-UP AND REGULAR INTERNAL EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
- *the changing needs of society;*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
- *the effectiveness of procedures for the assessment of students;*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
- *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme.*

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analyzed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Please describe how the annual internal evaluation of the study programme is conducted. Specify how the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG - OMEA) cooperates with the QAU as part of the programme's annual internal evaluation process;
- Please indicate the process implemented regarding reassessment, readjustment and updating of the curriculum;
- Please indicate a specific action plan aimed at tackling the negative aspects and reinforcing the positive ones based on defined priorities;
- Please indicate the mechanisms and decision-making processes in place through which the study programme is consistent with the goal of continuous improvement of teaching;
- Please mention specific case studies that in your opinion have led to substantial improvement in terms of achieving the programme's learning outcomes.

10. REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.

HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA grants accreditation of programmes with a specific term of validity, following which revision is required. Programme quality accreditation acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards' requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.

Quality assurance, in this case accreditation, is an on-going process that does not end with the external feedback, or report or its follow-up process within the Institution. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

INDICATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE

- Please specify if there has been a previous external evaluation of the academic unit in which the study programme operates, as well as the date on which the final report has been delivered;
- Please indicate approximately the proportion of recommendations made by the Committee of External Evaluation that the academic unit has built on;
- Please specify in detail how the recommendations made following the external evaluation of the academic unit and/or the Institution have been used in order to improve the programme's operation (please refer to the action plan);
- Please indicate whether any significant events or changes or distinctions (awards, position improvement in international university rankings, participation in teachers, students, research programmes competitions etc.) have occurred in the programme since the last external evaluation.

11. ANNEXES

1. Quality Policy of the programme;
2. Study Guide (with ECTS credits, intended learning outcomes);
3. Programme's Rules of Procedure and other regulations (e.g. on mobility, student placement etc.);
4. Course outline for all the courses;
5. Goal setting and action planning of the programme;
6. Student questionnaire templates and processing results;
7. Results of the programme's internal evaluation carried out by the QAU (QAU report);
8. The set of required quality data (sections: Department, study programme) included in the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) for the academic years 2015-2016, 2016-2017/ calendar years 2016, 2017 (to be printed from NISQA)
9. Other supporting documentation (e.g. graduate absorption studies, research performance etc.).