



## Higher Education Policy as it applies to EIE programmes in Bulgaria

This document applies only to education at Level 6 and above of the European Qualifications Framework. All terms used in this document have the meaning specific for Bulgaria and may have different meaning when used in any other country.

### Overview of Quality Assurance

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) [1] is a statutory body for evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of the quality in higher education institutions and scientific organizations aiming at the enhancement of their teaching and research, as well as of their development as scientific, cultural, and innovative organizations.

The NEAA monitors through regular institutional and program evaluation and accreditation the ability of institutions, their main units and branches to provide good quality of education and scientific research through an internal quality assurance system. On the bases of the results of the evaluation, NEAA determines the period of validity of the accreditation and the capacity of the higher school.

The higher school shall provide the quality of education and scientific research through internal system of assessment and maintenance of the quality of education and of the academic staff [2].

### External Evaluation

The program accreditation is a result of the evaluation of the quality of education offered in a specific professional field in a primary unit and/or a branch of the Higher Education Institution, of a major of the regulated professions list, or of a scientific major.

In 2010 the Ministry of Education and Science developed Bulgarian University Ranking System [3] which compiles information and data for more than 80 indicators measuring different aspects of university activities.

### New programme creation

According to the academic autonomy the universities has the rights independently to develop and implement new programmes. The university shall have internal rules for this process. Proposals for new programm can be submitted to the Academic Council on the initiative of external organizations or individuals.

### Changes to existing programmes

The Academic Council can approve any changes of the existing programmes.



## Student influence on programme content

According to the Higher Education Act [2] the higher school develops and implements a system for assessing and maintaining the quality of teaching and academic staff, which includes investigating the student's opinion. All decision making bodies in higher school includes representatives of the students and the doctoral students. They have to be at least 15% of the members of the General assembly of the higher school.

Every university shall have policy and a system for the quality assessment including investigation of the students' opinion about the educational process at least once per year. The functions and the structure of the quality assessment system, the procedure for the investigation of the student's opinion and the way of disclosure of the results are governed by Rules of the higher school. A questionnaire is developed by the Ministry of Education and Science where the students provide their opinions about the education. This information is used to update the data in the rating system of higher education institutions.

## Industry influence on programme content

Teaching documentation is periodically analysed and updated, taking into consideration the opinion of industry. There are internal university rules that in the preparing of the curricula shall participate representatives of the industry. Also the curricula has to be reviewed by two independent reviewers.

One of the criteria for programme accreditation includes information about the employers' assessment for the preparation of the graduates.

## Students with disabilities/special needs/unconventional needs

**In the Bulgarian Higher Education Act:** (Art. 70) Undergraduates, postgraduates and trainees who are orphans, blind, deaf, disabled shall be granted/ offered **special benefits specified in the Regulations of higher schools.**

According to the **Decree № 90 Council of Ministers/26.05.2000** [7]: There special funds for scholarships for students with disabilities, students with two parents with disabilities, students with a parent who is permanently disabled.

**Law for integration of people with disabled** [6] (Art. 20). Higher education institutions provide: Supportive environment, special equipment, suitable teaching materials and teaching additional help, supporting the process of training and assessment of people with disabilities; the training of specialists to work with people with disabilities.

**National program "Creating accessible architectural environment"** [8] - Annually to finance the construction of ramps, adaptation of sanitary facilities, repair of related infrastructure, execution of lifts and installation of platform facilities.



## Mobility and life-long learning processes

In the National Strategy [1] to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities 2008-2015 the first aim is: To create an environment and infrastructure adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. There are 3 directions: Accessible environment for people with disabilities - Physical access to public buildings, housing, open space and jobs; Accessible transportation.

According to the National Qualification Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria: The higher schools shall ensure system for accumulation and transfer of credits for assessment of the acquired knowledge and skills by the students during the education (ECTS). The objective of the system is to ensure for the students opportunity for choice of disciplines, individual work and mobility on the basis of mutual recognising of separate periods of education, corresponding to the part of the study plan of the specialty and the education – qualification degree.

## Information management

One of the NEAA criteria is for program accreditation of a professional field: The HEIs manage and develop the physical, technical and information facilities necessary for education in the professional field - Completeness of the required information base: library, computer facilities, information centres, computer system for management of administrative and academic activity, distance learning centre.

The webpages of all BG universities are in Bulgarian and English. Most of the information is publicly available: university overview, curricula, overview of the content of the modules, department and centres information etc.

In the National Strategy to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities 2008-2015 one of the aim is: Accessible information and communications [4].

A state strategy for accessibility of information services and documentation for different groups of people with disabilities is developed. Access to all types of media (print, electronic, audio, audio-visual); Access to telecommunication equipment (telephones, computers, etc.); Access to web-space, adequate, accessible on-line content and services.

## References:

- [1] WEB site of National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency [Online]. Available: <http://www.neaa.government.bg/en/methodology>, (Accessed June 2014).
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- [3] WEB site of Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgarian University Ranking System [Online]. Available: <http://rsvu.mon.bg/rsvu3/> (Accessed February 2015).
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- [5] WEB site of Ministry of Education and Science, "National Qualification Framework of the Republic of Bulgaria," [Online]. Available: <http://www.mon.bg/?go=page&pageId=74&subpageId=143> ,(Accessed June 2014).
- [6] WEB site of Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Law for integration of people with disabled (Section II Education and training), 2014, [Online]. Available: [http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/integration/euro/chapter13/euro/07.Social%20Protection/ZAKON\\_za\\_integraciq\\_na\\_horata\\_s\\_uvrejdaniq.pdf](http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/integration/euro/chapter13/euro/07.Social%20Protection/ZAKON_za_integraciq_na_horata_s_uvrejdaniq.pdf) ,(Accessed June 2014)
- [7] Decree № 90 Council of Ministers of 26.05.2000, [Online]. Available: <http://students.uni-sofia.bg/wp/wp-content/.../pms90.pdf/> ,(Accessed June 2014)
- [8] National program "Creating accessible architectural environment", [Online]. Available: <https://www.mon.bg/?h=downloadFile&fileId=2552> , (Accessed June 2014)