



Policy in Higher Education A Study Case - Bulgaria

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1. External evaluation of the bachelor programmes in Bulgaria – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU

1.1 The Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in Higher Education

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA) 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.

NEAA contributes to improving the quality of higher education through regular institutional and program evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions in Bulgaria, through evaluation of projects for opening of new institutions of higher education and basic units, as well as monitoring and control, while providing independence and transparency of procedures and high competence of the participating Bulgarian and foreign experts.

The NEAA monitors the ability of institutions, their main units and branches to provide good quality of education and scientific research through an internal quality assurance system.

The NEAA mission is to encourage higher education institutions in assuring and enhancing the quality of education they offer by sustaining high academic standards and good education traditions in Bulgaria.

The mission of the NEAA is bound with national targets reflecting the role of higher education in social development. The policy and the activities of the NEAA facilitate the achievement of these goals. The mission is bound by the Higher Education Act. Under this law, the external evaluation and accreditation aim at encouraging universities to develop their potential and to improve and maintain the quality of education offered by the results of the accreditation is taken into account in forming the state policy to university.

NEAA has the capacity to fulfil this mission in developing the European Higher Education Area in accordance with the developed and mutually agreed standards, criteria and guidelines



for quality management.

1.2 External Evaluation

The accreditation is institutional and program.

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 (HE) Institution, of a major of the regulated professions list, or of a scientific major.

Within the framework of a professional field, the evaluation is aimed at the quality of student education in all offered forms of education for acquiring the educational–qualification degrees “specialist on...“ or ”professional bachelor”, “bachelor” and “master”, and the educational and scientific degree “doctor”.

Subjects to assessment during the program accreditation are:

1. the structure, organization and content of the educational plans and programs;
2. the faculty profile and qualification;
3. the physical and technical facilities available for the purposes of education;
4. the teaching and the methods of evaluation of the student achievements;
5. the educational quality management;
6. faculty scientific research and artistic and creative activities and students’ and doctoral students’ participation in it.

The accreditation is carried out according to criteria and procedures and the related documentation, established by the Accreditation Council and approved by the Chairman of the Agency.

The criteria, procedures and documentation are published in the bulletin of the Agency and are posted on the web-site of the Agency.

The expenditures related to the accreditation and project evaluation are paid by the requester according to norms approved by the Minister of Finance upon proposal by the Agency.

The procedure for program accreditation by professional fields is started upon a request by the HE institution and/or the Minister of Education and Science.

Program accreditation can be requested by the HE institution after institutional accreditation has been granted.



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The procedure for program accreditation by specific professional field is started simultaneously for all HE institutions, which offer education in this professional field, if they have submitted a request, and according to a schedule, coordinated with the Rectors' Council.

The program accreditation procedure outside the schedule is started upon a request by the Minister of Education and Science or by the HE institutions.

The requests for program accreditation are submitted 12 months before the date of expiration of the term of the previous program accreditation, indicated in the decision of the Accreditation Council.

The requests for program accreditation of new majors are submitted before the date of expiration of the terms, indicated in the decision of the Accreditation Council, respectively of the Standing Committee, under art. 84, para 2 of the Higher Education Act.

The HE institutions reserve the rights of the previous accreditation until the program accreditation procedure is completed within the timeframe, defined in art. 32.

The new professional fields have the status as accredited for the term, indicated in the decision of the Accreditation Council under art. 84, para 2 of the Higher Education Act.

The request for starting a procedure for accreditation, submitted by the HE institution, is supplemented with:

1. A self-evaluation report, containing quantitative information for fulfilment of the criteria of the Agency for the specific procedure, and the related documentation, enclosed with it;
2. A report of the HE institution for fulfilment of the obligatory recommendations of the Accreditation Council from the previous procedure, and from the post-accreditation monitoring and control procedures;
3. Minutes of the Academic Council's or respectively of the Scientific Council's decision, for approval of the documentation under items 1 and 2;
4. A letter from the Ministry of Education and Science in regard to the compliance of the structure of the HE institution with the requirements of the HE Act.

The self-evaluation report on a professional field is a document, which serves as a starting point in the work of the NEAA during the procedure for programme accreditation of a professional field. The self-evaluation report on a professional field allows the HE institution to describe and evaluate the way in which it maintains, controls, and develops the quality of education and the academic standards in the offered specialities and programmes, offered in the different educational and qualification degrees, and in the different forms of education.



Requirements to the contents of the self-evaluation report (according to art.78, para. 3, items 1-6 of the HE Act, and art.29, para. 3 of the NEAA Statute):

Information should be presented about the education in each speciality that leads to acquiring an educational and qualification degree in the professional field under evaluation, structured as follows:

1. Structure, organization and contents of the educational plans and programs

- Name of the speciality;
- Educational and qualification degree, which is acquired through the education in this speciality (according to art. 42, para 2 of the HE Act);
- Form of the planned education in this speciality (to the effect of art. 42, para 9 of the HE Act);
- Knowledge, skills, and competencies, required from the students to enroll in this major, and form for their ascertainment (according to the information in the Student Catalog, and in the qualification characteristics of the speciality);
- Total number of credits, envisaged for the education in this speciality (to the effect of art. 44a of the HE Act);
- Structure of the educational plan of the speciality, containing the names and the duration of the disciplines in it, as well as the number of credits for each discipline (to the effect of art. 44 a, para 3,4,5 and 6 of the HE Act);
- List of the required and elective courses, including the free elective courses and those elective among a limited number (list) of courses (according to art. 41 of the HE Act);
- Educational results expected from the students for acquiring the qualification relevant to the speciality;
- Educational results expected from the students in each separate discipline or module, included in the educational plan of the major;
- Student load (number of hours) in each separate discipline or module, distributed as in-class and out-of-class time;
- Published rules regulating the exam procedures of the speciality (including excerpts of rules and regulations, orders, instructions, etc.) to the effect of art. 44 and art. 45 of the HE Act.

2. Faculty profile and qualification

- List of faculty who take part in the instruction in this speciality;
- Age characteristic of faculty on primary labour relations with the HE institution, engaged in the instruction in the specific speciality in the professional field under evaluation;
- Qualification profile of faculty on primary labour relations with the HE institution, engaged in the instruction in the specific speciality in the professional field under evaluation.



3. Physical and technical assets for the purposes of education

- Characteristics of the physical and technical facilities and modern information technologies, included in the instruction in the speciality;
- Ensured student access to modern scientific literature on issues related to the disciplines studied under the educational plan;
- Ensured supplemental educational materials for out-of-class time for learning or educational practice of the students in each separate discipline or module.

4. Methods of teaching and assessment of the student achievements

- Methods of teaching within the timeframe of the in-class time for each separate discipline or module (to the effect of art. 40 of the HE Act);
- Envisaged methods for assessment of student achievements in each separate discipline or module;
- Methods of assessment of the intermediate and final results of the student education for acquiring the respective qualification (in regard to the requirements of art. 44, para 2 of the HE Act);

5. Characteristics of the scientific (art and creative) productivity of faculty on primary labour relations in the unit that provides education in the professional field under evaluation, and of the conditions for participation of students and doctoral students in the scientific research (art and creative) activities.

6. Analysis of the problems related to the ensuring and maintenance of the quality of education in the professional field.

7. Possibilities for improvement and ways for their achievement during the following three years.

8. In case there are speciality in the professional field whose accreditation has not expired, the HE institution submits information for the actions taken in regard to the recommendations of the Agency from the last accreditation.

9. Supporting documentation - qualification characteristics of the majors, included in the professional field for which accreditation is requested as well as educational plans and programs of the separate disciplines, included in the educational plan for each speciality and for each educational and qualification degree.

1.3 List of academic degree studies fields



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Engineering Sciences (selection from SALEIE point of view):

Areas of higher education	Professional fields
Technical sciences	Electrical engineering, electronics and automation
	Communication and computer networks
	Energetics
Natural sciences, Mathematics and Informatics	Informatics and computer studies

- **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING, ELECTRONICS AND AUTOMATION:** Electrical Engineering, Electronics, Electronics and microelectronics, Automation, Information and Control Engineering, Automation and Information technologies, Computer Control, Electrical Power Engineering, Electrical Power Engineering and Renewable Energy Sources, Energy efficiency, Industrial Electronics and Computer Engineering

- **COMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER NETWORKS:** Computer Systems and Technologies, Communication systems and computer networks, Telecommunication systems and technologies, Telecommunication and security systems

- **INFORMATICS AND COMPUTER STUDIES:** Informatics, Information Systems, Informatics and information technologies, Software Engineering

1.4 CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION OF A PROFESSIONAL FIELD

A.1 Education and Qualification Degrees of “Professional Bachelor”, “Bachelor” and “Master”

1. Educational activities

Criteria	Contents (Characteristics of the criteria)
Training of students is conducted	There is available teaching documentation on the



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<p>in accordance with the requirements for the education and qualification degrees and the educational mission, goals and objectives of the higher school</p>	<p>education and qualification degrees and forms of instruction.</p> <p>There has been set up organisation for working out and approval of teaching documentation for all education and qualification degrees and forms of instruction</p>
	<p>Teaching documentation is periodically analysed, updated, taking into consideration students' opinion, the opinion of consumers and its synchronisation with the documentation from the European area of higher education</p>
<p>Training of students is performed by academic staff with the necessary profile and qualification</p>	<p>The required statutory minimum of faculty with an academic rank is ensured</p>
<p>The HS manages and develops the physical, technical and information facilities necessary for education in the professional field</p>	<p>The physical and technical facilities for education and research activities are built up and are developed according to the specificity of the education and qualification in the professional field:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -auditorium and laboratory floorage for teaching activities -other specialised facilities for carrying instruction of students
	<p>Completeness of the required information base :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - library;



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - computer facilities; - information centres - computer system for management of administrative and academic activity; - distance learning centre (at accreditation of distance learning programmes)
<p>Training of students corresponds and adheres to contemporary methods of teaching and evaluation of their achievements</p>	<p>Organization has been set up for maintaining and developing of modern methods in teaching and tutoring in practical classes and evaluation of students' achievements</p>
	<p>The results related to teaching methods and evaluation of students' achievements taking into account students' opinion, are periodically analysed and announced to the public</p>
	<p>There is ensured students' mobility through part training in a chosen by them university at home or abroad</p>
<p>High quality instruction is carried out in the profiling subjects</p>	<p>Full-time lecturers read lectures in the profiling subjects</p>
	<p>Course books, reference books and teaching aids, drafted up by the faculty in the professional field</p>

B. About the professional field as a whole

2. A Scientific and research activities

<http://www.saleie.york.ac.uk>



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Criteria	Contents (Characteristics of the criteria)
Research activity of the faculty is organized, maintained and developed in the professional field	Involvement of teachers from the professional field in the implementation of research projects
	The Higher School (HS) supports research activities of the academic staff
	The outcomes of the scientific and research activities are periodically analysed and priorities are set
	There have been created conditions (administrative and organizational) for dissemination in an appropriate form of research outcomes of public, scientific and applied interest
The professional field organizes, maintains and develops scientific research activities of undergraduates and PhD students	Involvement of students and postgraduates in the implementation of research projects is ensured
High quality of publications of undergraduates, PhD students and faculty	HS pursues international standards of the research activity

2. B Scientific research (artistic and creative) and sports activities

Criteria	Contents (Characteristics of the criteria)
Research, artistic and sports activities is	HS ensures the involvement of lecturers from



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organised, maintained and developed by the academic staff in the professional field	the professional field in the implementation of research, artistic, creative and other projects
	Research, artistic activity of the academic staff is supported
	Outcomes of the scientific research (artistic and creative), sports activities are periodically analysed and priorities are set
	There have been created conditions (administrative and organizational) for dissemination of the outcomes from scientific and research, artistic and creative, sports activities of the faculty members in an appropriate form
High quality of scientific and research, creative, artistic and sports activities of students and PhD students in the professional field is ensured	Involvement of students and postgraduates in research, artistic, and performing and sports projects and research structures
High professional level of scientific and research, creative, artistic and sports activities is ensured in the professional field	International standards of research, artistic, performing and sports activities are met



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3. Management of the instruction process

Criteria	Contents (Characteristics of the criteria)
There has been developed an overall system for management of quality of education and teaching related to it	Rules and regulations for management of quality of education are developed, adopted and announced
	The effectiveness of the results related to the management of quality of education is periodically discussed and disclosed
There is developed organization for tracing of realization of the graduates	Information for the realization and the development of the graduates in the professional field
	Information about the employers' assessment for the preparation of the graduates is collected and analysed

4. Competitiveness of instruction in the professional field

Criteria	Contents (Characteristics of the criteria)
Innovative practices in instruction	Contemporary methods for providing modern instruction
	Culture of innovations
Knowledge about the competitive environment of the training in the relevant professional field	Study of the competitive environment
	Study of employability opportunities for graduates and PhD students



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National and international positions and opportunities	Participation of faculty, students and PhD students
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1.4.1 The legal organisation framework

The object of the higher education shall be to prepare highly qualified specialists above the secondary school and the development of science and culture. Higher education shall be acquired in higher schools, having obtained accreditation and established under terms and by an order, determined by National Education Act. 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, including also student's opinion pools at least once in an academic year.

The study programs have to answer the requirements of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Bulgaria:

NQF Level 6 – Degree of Professional Bachelor in ...– 180 ECTS;

NQF Level 6 – Bachelor Degree – 240 ECTS.

1.4.2 The teaching staff

The positions of the scientific-lecturing staff in the higher schools shall be:

- for lecturers with academic rank – associate professor and professor;
- for lecturers without an academic rank – assistant and senior assistant.

As associate professors and professors shall be elected persons with the corresponding scientific rank, conferred to them under the conditions and by the order of the Law of Scientific Degrees and Scientific Ranks.

The higher school shall have academic personnel under basic legal terms of employment which, on each speciality shall carry out not less than half of the auditorium and practical classes, as the persons with academic rank shall lecture for each speciality not less than 70 percent of the lecture courses. The department is a basic unit of the higher school for providing the education on one or more disciplines which does not constitute a speciality. The department shall have at least 14-member academic personnel with legal terms of employment.

The higher schools shall assess the contribution of each member of the academic personnel to the educational, scientific and research, administrative and other activities and shall give testimonial once in 3 years to persons without academic rank and once in 5 years to lecturers



with academic rank.

The assessment and the testimonial shall be carried out according to preliminarily announced indices and criteria determined by the regulations of the higher school which shall obligatorily include:

- fulfilment of the normative of educational occupation adopted by the academic council;
- worked out new seminar and/or laboratory exercises, textbooks and educational auxiliary literature;
- scientific production, participation in contracts for scientific research and international scientific cooperation;
- supervision of diplomants, doctorants and specialists;
- investigation of the students' opinion.

1.4.3 The educational process content

According to the Bulgarian Higher Education Act the education process in the higher schools shall be conducted according to teaching documentation for each speciality, comprising qualification characteristics in degrees, study plan, study programmes of the taught disciplines and annual time schedule of the education process. The study content of each discipline shall be organised in relatively detached parts. Each part shall include at least 15 academic hours auditorium sessions. The academic hour shall last 45 minutes. In the higher schools the education shall be done in obligatory, optional and facultative disciplines. For obtaining the educational-qualification degree "bachelor" in compliance with the curriculum are required:

- a) not less than 180 credits with a term of education not less than three years – “professional bachelor in...”;
- b) not less than 240 credits with a term of education not less than 4 years – “bachelor”.

The education for the degree "bachelor" provides basic wide-profile education or specialized professional training on professional branches and specialities.

The higher schools with their regulations shall determine the mode of conducting the examination procedures:

- The forms of the check and of assessment of the knowledge and skills of the students shall be determined in the study plans and programmes. A basic form of assessment of the knowledge is the exam, which shall be in writing, unless the specifics of the educational subject and/or module require something different. Written materials of the check of knowledge and skills shall be kept for a period not less than one year after its implementation.
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- The knowledge and the skills shall be assessed with a six grade system, including: excellent (6.00), very good (5.00), good (4.00), average (3.00), poor (2.00). As successfully taken exam shall be considered this marked at least average (3.00). Higher school shall be able to introduce with its regulations also another system for assessment, ensuring a compatibility of the marks with these above pointed out.
- 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 speciality and the education – qualification degree.
- The credits shall be assessment of the obligations, which the students must fulfil in given discipline or module as part of the general obligations, necessary for successful graduation of one study year or semester.
- In each discipline the credits shall be formed by horarium of lectures and practical and seminar exercises, individual work (in laboratories, libraries, course works, home-works and others), sit examinations and other forms of assessment, determined by the higher school. The credits can be adjudicated also participation in practice and presented course or thesis work when these activities are part of the study plan.
- The credits shall be adjudicated to students who have successfully graduated the respective study discipline and/or module by sitting an examination or by another way of assessment.
- The system is based on 60 credits for a school year or 30 credits for a semester, distributed in study disciplines and/or modules according to the study plan of the speciality and the education – qualification degree, or to other number of credits, compatible with this system.
- The conditions and the order for applying the system for accumulation and transfer of credits shall be determined with an ordinance by the Minister of Education and Science.
- The training in each speciality of educational and qualification degree “bachelor” shall finish with a state exam or with a presentation of a diploma thesis.
- The state exam or the presentation of a diploma thesis shall be carried out according to the state requirements for graduation before a state commission by lecturers with academic rank. As an exception, participants in the commission can be lecturers with educational and scientific degree "doctor". In the commission shall be included also persons out of the higher school.

1.4.4 The students

The admission of students shall be carried out through a competition examination within the



limits of the approved number in compliance with:

- the state requirements;
- the requirements determined by the regulations of the higher schools if they do not contradict the state requirements;
- the capacity of the higher school determined by the National Assessment and Accreditation Agency.

The higher schools can conduct general competition examination or recognise the results from the competition examinations sit in another higher school.

The higher schools after a decision of the academic council can admit also without competition exam applicant students, who have passed successfully the state matriculation exams according to the Law for the degree of education, the general education minimum and the study plan, within the approved number under art. 9, para 3, item 6, letters “a” and “b” of the Higher Education Act.

The students shall have the right to:

- select study disciplines on the conditions, determined in the study plan;
- receive qualified help and tutorship in their professional-creative promotion;
- study simultaneously more than one speciality or to study additional courses on conditions determined by the higher school;
- participate in the scientific research activity of the higher school, having guaranteed author's, inventor's and related rights and consideration;
- elect and be elected in the management bodies of the higher school;
- use student's campus, canteens, medical cares, discount at travel with public town and inter-settlement transport, as well as the whole base of the higher school for study, scientific-research, sport and cultural activity and other benefits for normal life and study under conditions, determined by the state and the higher school;
- associate in study, scientific, cultural and sport communities for protection and satisfaction of their interests, as well as to be members of international organisations which activity does not contradict with the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria;
- move into another higher school, faculty, speciality, degree or form of study in compliance with the regulations of the higher school;
- discontinue their study as well as to continue it after this under conditions and by order provided in the regulations of the higher school;
- use holidays not less than 30 days within one study year;
- receive scholarships;
- to use credit for payment of fees and/or for support during the term of education.

The students, the doctorants and the specialisants - orphans, blind, deaf, disabled with durable damages and reduced ability to work 70 and over 70 percent, military disabled and persons,



raised till their majority in homes for raising of children, deprived from parent care, mothers with children up to 6 years of age and dispensarised, shall have the right to special alleviations, provided in the regulations of the higher school.

The obligations of the students, the doctorants and the specialisants shall be provided in the regulations of the higher school.

Body for protection of the common interests of the trainees shall be the Students Council.

1.4.5 The scientific research

The Scientific research in the higher schools shall be directed to the creation of new scientific knowledge or applied scientific products, as well as to grounding and development of education.

The organisation and the management of scientific-research activity shall be regulated in the regulations of the higher school.

The scientific research and projects in the priority fields shall be encouraged with privilege by the higher school.

The higher school shall have the right to plan and carry out, according to its interests and the interests of science, joint research projects with other higher schools, scientific organisations and institutions.

The conduct of scientific research shall be an inseparable part of the activity of the academic staff.

The higher school shall organise annually a session at which the academic council shall report the scientific results achieved through the year.

In his annual report before the General Assembly the rector shall also include information regarding the organisation, the results and the expenses of the carried out scientific and research activity.

1.4.6 The material basis

The higher school shall:

- have available material base which provides the practical education in compliance with the



state requirements;

- provide to the academic personnel and to the students conditions for printing scientific works, textbooks, monographs, as well as for realization of inherent creative contributions;
- possess library and other resources of informational servicing of the education and scientific research;
- maintain international contacts in the process of education and creative activity.
- possess a university information centre for administrative servicing of students.

2. External evaluation of the master programmes in Bulgaria – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU

2.1.

Introduction

The system of higher education shall organise study for the educational and qualification degree "master" for obtaining of which are required:

- a) not less than 300 credits according to the curriculum with a term of education not less than 5 years;
- b) not less than 120 credits after obtained educational and qualification degree of “professional bachelor” (with a term of education not less than three years and not less than 180 credits);
- c) not less than 60 credits after obtained educational and qualification degree of “bachelor” (with a term of education not less than 4 years and not less than 240 credits).

The education for the degree "master" provides a profound fundamental education combined with profiling in a definite speciality as well as additional wide-profiling and interdisciplinary training for students who have acquired educational and qualification degree "Bachelor" or "master" in other speciality.

The education provides:

1. Thorough scientific-theoretical and specialized preparation in the speciality;
2. Adoption of the bases of research, applied science and / or artistic-creativity activities;
3. Opportunity for educational mobility of students, including international comparability of the acquired knowledge and skills;



4. Development of the ability to adapt in terms of social, economic and technological changes.

The training in each speciality of educational and qualification degree “master” shall finish with a state exam or with a presentation of a diploma thesis. The state exam or the presentation of a diploma thesis shall be carried out according to the state requirements for graduation before a state commission by lecturers with academic rank. As an exception, participants in the commission can be lecturers with educational and scientific degree "doctor". In the commission shall be included also persons out of the higher school.

2.2. Specific objectives of the accreditation of master programmes

The study programs have to answer the requirements of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Bulgaria Level 7/Second cycle of QF-EHEA:

- Master Degree after obtaining Professional Bachelor Degree – 120 ECTS credits;
- Master Degree after obtaining Bachelor Degree in the same professional field – 60 ECTS credits;
- Master Degree after obtaining Bachelor Degree in another professional field – 120 ECTS credits;
- Master Degree in a subject that stipulates education only in this degree – 300 ECTS credits.

Also, the study programs have to answer the criteria for programme accreditation of a professional field and the Higher Education Act. They have to follow the Procedures for program accreditation of professional fields.

2.3. Criteria for accreditation of master programmes

The Criteria for programme accreditation of master programmes are described in para **1.4 Criteria for programme accreditation of a professional field** in this document.

3. External evaluation of the doctoral programmes in Bulgaria – a study case for the policies in higher education applied in new member states of EU



3.1. Introduction

Doctoral study is full-time, part-time and self-dependent (individual) study.

Full-time PhD is a minimum of four years - after acquired degree "Bachelor" or three years - after the educational and qualification degree "Master".

Part-time PhD is a minimum of five years - after acquired degree "Bachelor" or four years - after acquired degree "Master".

Doctoral studies can be carried out through self-dependent (individual) training, which provides training in accordance with the other forms of doctorate.

For doctoral students may apply individuals who hold degree "Bachelor" or "Master".

Graduates from foreign universities can apply after higher education they acquired is recognized under the Ordinance on the state requirements for the recognition of higher education qualifications and complete periods of study at foreign universities, adopted by Decree № 168 of the Council of Ministers 2000 (State Gazette 69 of 2000).

Training in educational and scientific degree "doctor" takes place in scientific fields. Scientific speciality for which the training is carried out has to be of a scientific field corresponding to the professional field in which the person has acquired the educational and qualification degree "Bachelor".

Doctoral studies are organized at universities and other research organizations, hereinafter referred to as "scientific organizations", in subjects rating as 'very good' through accreditation.

The scientific organizations annually announce the approved by the Council of Ministers number of the students admitted for doctoral training.

3.1.1 Admission for doctoral study

A. Bulgarian citizens

Candidates - Bulgarian citizens including persons with dual citizenship, one of which is Bulgarian, wishing to participate in competitive examinations apply to the head of the scientific organization in which they will receive training. To the application they have to enclose:

- CV;



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- diploma for the acquired degree "Bachelor" or "Master" with the diploma supplement or a certified copy thereof;
- certificate for higher education recognition if the diploma is issued by a foreign university.

The applicants may apply some other documents verifying their interest and achievements in the scientific field.

The applicant takes an exam in the speciality and one in foreign language of their choice (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian). The question forms for the exams are prepared by the scientific organization, organizing the competition, and submit to the applicants not later than 60 days before the exam date.

The speciality exams are conducted by a Committee appointed by order of the head of the scientific organization. The Committee includes three persons having academic rank or Doctor of Science in the same speciality.

Speciality exam is written and oral individually assessed. Only applicants estimated at least a very good 4.50 of the written exam are allowed to oral exam. Successfully passed the examination are the applicants who received an average score of the written and oral exam at least a very good 5.00.

To examination in a foreign language is permitted the candidates successfully passed the examination in the speciality. Successfully passed the examination in a foreign language are candidates received a score not lower than 4,00.

Individuals developed the main part of the dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree "doctor" can be admitted in the PhD self-dependent study based on a decision of the Scientific Council without taking competitive examinations.

The Ministry of Education and Science annually announces and held competitions for Bulgarians for PhD studies abroad under conditions specified in the intergovernmental agreements on educational, cultural and scientific exchanges.

B. Foreign citizens

Foreigners can apply for doctoral study:

- in implementation of intergovernmental agreements on educational, cultural and scientific exchanges;
- in accordance to acts of the Council of Ministers;



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- under Art. 95, para. 6 and 7 of the Higher Education Act.

Foreigners can apply for doctoral study under the terms and procedure for adoption of Bulgarian citizens in the scientific organizations of the Republic of Bulgaria if:

- have permanent resident status in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- have the status of refugees;
- are of Bulgarian nationality certified under the Decree of the Council of Ministers for the implementation of educational activity among Bulgarians abroad.

Scientific organizations provide language and specialized training of foreigners wishing to study at PhD in Bulgaria.

3.1.2 Training of the doctoral students

The training of the doctoral students is executed under the individual curriculum. It is prepared by the PhD student and the supervisor and after deliberation in the corresponding research unit is approved by the Scientific Council.

The individual plan shall specify:

- topic of the thesis;
- exams and deadlines for their application;
- attendance to a specified cycle of lectures and classes, participation in courses, seminars, conferences and other public scientific events;
- stages and deadlines for the preparation of the thesis.

Change of the topic of the thesis is allowed as an exception with a decision of the Scientific Council but not later than three months before the deadline for the submission of the thesis for defence.

Doctoral students are examined according to their individual curriculum by a Committee ordered by the head of the scientific organization. The Committee shall be composed of at least three persons having academic rank and with the participation of the supervisor of the doctoral student.

At least once a year scientific organizations that prepare graduate students discuss the implementation of the individual plans of PhD students and the state of the doctorate.

The duration of the PhD may be extended for objective reasons to six months by order of the head of the scientific organization after co-ordination with the supervisor and with the proposal of the Scientific Council.



PhD students have the right to interrupt their studies, to move to another scientific organization or to other form of training in terms and conditions defined by the rules of the scientific organizations.

3.1.3 The material basis

The scientific organizations provide facilities and resources necessary for the development of the doctoral thesis.

The financial resources and the equipment for the development of the thesis are approved annually by the Head of the scientific organization by the type of expenditure - expenditure on the maintenance of the training and social and welfare costs. The financing of the experimental work for every thesis takes place under separate annual account plan approved by the Head of the scientific organization.

3.1.4 Additional provisions

The scientific organizations create for every PhD student database. Organizations keep all materials and documents relating to the work of PhD students on the preparation and development of the thesis.

3.2. Criteria for program accreditation of the instruction for the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in a scientific major

3.2.1 Areas of Activities:

Educational Activities

Criteria	Content (characteristics) of the criteria
1.1. The higher education (HE) institution carries out the instruction in compliance with the modern tendencies in the development of the science (technologies and artistic activities) in the field of the scientific major.	1.1.1. Clear goals, tasks and purposes have been formulated for the instruction in the scientific major. 1.1.2. The doctoral students are being instructed according to the modern achievements in the field of the scientific major, and through appropriate forms – courses, specialized seminars, etc.
1.2. The HE institution carries out procedures for approval, monitoring,	1.2.1. The admission and the instruction of the doctoral students are in compliance with the



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and renewal of the documentation related to the admission and the instruction of the doctoral students in the scientific major.	<p>requirements of the legal regulations (HE Act, Law for Scientific Degrees and Scientific Ranks, etc.)</p> <p>1.2.2. The current documentation related to the admission and the instruction of the doctoral students is regularly analyzed and updated.</p>
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Scientific Potential

Criteria	Content (characteristics) of the criteria
2.1. The instruction of the doctoral students is carried out by faculties who have the necessary profile and qualification in the field of the scientific major.	<p>2.1.1. The HE institution unit has habilitated faculty to carry out the instruction in the scientific major</p> <p>2.1.2. The scientific research activities of the habilitated faculty who take part in the instruction of the doctoral students are well developed in the field and on the topics of the scientific major</p>

Conditions for instruction and scientific research

Criteria	Content (characteristics) of the criteria
3.1. The HE institution has created and maintains physical, technical, and informational facilities for the purposes of instruction of the doctoral students in the scientific major.	<p>3.1.1. The physical and technical facilities for the purposes of doctoral students' instruction and research have been built up in compliance with the specifics of the scientific major:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working places are ensured for the full-time doctoral students; - Laboratory area and scientific appliances for research purposes are ensured for the full-time doctoral students; - Availability of other specific educational facilities.



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	<p>3.1.2. The instruction and research are sufficiently ensured with computer and information facilities in accordance with the specifics of the scientific major:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - library; - computer facilities; - information centers, etc.
<p>3.2. The HE institution supports and stimulates the scientific research (artistic and creative) activities of the doctoral students in the field of the scientific major.</p>	<p>3.2.1. The doctoral students of the scientific major take part in the fulfillment of research (artistic and creative, etc.) projects.</p> <p>3.2.2. Possibilities are made available to the doctoral students to publish the results of their scientific research activities.</p> <p>3.2.3. The scientific contribution of the doctoral students to research and educational projects, as well as their participation in scientific forums in the country and abroad, is supported.</p>

3.2.2 Characteristics of the Criteria:

Characteristics included in the content of the criteria for program accreditation of the instruction in the educational and scientific degree ‘Doctor’, about which quantitative information can be gathered and submitted.

Characteristics of the Criteria	Possible Indicators
<p>1.1.1. The experience of the HE institution to educate doctoral students in the scientific major</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of doctoral students who have been educated in the scientific major within the last five years; - Number of doctoral students who have been admitted in



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	<p>the major within the last five years;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of doctoral students who have successfully defended doctorates in the scientific major within the last five years.
2.1.1. Habilitated faculty to carry out the instruction in the scientific major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of full-time habilitated faculty within the HE institution's unit where the instruction in the major is carried out, by the code of their scientific major. - Relative portion of full-time habilitated faculty of the scientific major's field, compared to the total number of all habilitated faculty in the HE institution's unit where the instruction in the major is carried out. - Relative portion of doctoral students of the scientific major's field, compared to the total number of the habilitated faculty of the scientific major's field.
2.1.2. Publication activities of the habilitated faculty who take part in the instruction of the doctoral students in the scientific major.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relative portion of the scientific publications of the habilitated faculty who carries out the instruction of the doctoral students, on topics within the field of the scientific major, compared to the total publication activities of the HE institution's unit, where the instruction is carried out.
3.1.1. Physical and technical facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of doctoral students per one working place; - Laboratory area floorage in sq. meters for research purposes per one full-time faculty; - Characteristics of other specific educational and scientific facilities.



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3.1.2. Computer and information facilities.	- Number of doctoral students per one computer (not counting the computers used for student instruction purposes); - Number of the scientific journals that publish in the field of the scientific major in the HE institution where the education is carried out.
3.2.1. Participation of the doctoral students in research (artistic and creative, etc.) projects.	- Relative portion of the doctoral students who have taken part in national and international research and educational projects within the last five years.
3.2.2. Publishing activities of the doctoral students.	- Relative portion of the publications of the doctoral students of the scientific major, compared to the total publishing activities of the HE institution's primary unit in which the instruction is carried out.
3.2.3. Scientific contribution of the doctoral students	- Relative portion of the doctoral students who have taken part in scientific forums (conferences, symposia, etc.) within the last five years, compared to the total number of the doctoral students in the scientific major.

3.2.3 The legal organisation framework

The doctoral training has to answer the requirements of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) of the Republic of Bulgaria:

NQF Level 8 – Doctor's Degree. No ECTS credits required.

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