



## Higher Education Policy as it applies to EIE programs in Portugal

### Overview of Quality Assurance

A3ES (Portuguese Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) is the controlling authority for educational activity at all Portuguese Universities and Polytechnics.

Through an evaluation procedure A3ES decides on the recognition of the Institutions' internal quality assurance systems and carries out checks to see if their educational provision meets national quality standards.

Thus A3ES performs:

- Accreditation of the institutional quality assurance systems
- Accreditation of new study programs (Bachelor, Master, PhD)
- Evaluation of existing study programs (Bachelor, Master, PhD)
- Analyses and reports regarding the Portuguese Higher Education landscape (Ref: A3ES web page <http://www.a3es.pt/>).

### External Evaluation

A3ES (Portuguese Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) is the controlling authority for educational activity at all Portuguese Universities and Polytechnics.

### New programme creation

For accreditation of new study programs, A3ES evaluates an application from the institution. The application must be written in a pre-defined structure, containing elements covering all the below mentioned items.

The evaluation process covers the following themes, and evaluates if these are fulfilled according to a predefined set of criteria.

The legal organization framework, covering:

- The institutional bodies responsible for the study program



- Rules and regulation of the institution, regulating the actual study program
- Quality assurance system
- Diplomas, diploma supplements etc
- Organizational bodies, like complaints board, student representatives etc

## **Changes to existing programs**

The changes to programmes have to be approved by A3ES. Only minor changes can be approved by the University bodies.

## **Student influence of program content**

There are a body in the structure of the University where the students are represented. The programs have to be approved by this body.

At the end of the semester the students have to answer an inquiry about the content of the program and can make their comments to the program content.

## **Industry influence of program content**

Periodically the University send inquires to the big employers of the former students asking them their opinion about the course structure and the program content.

## **Students with disabilities/special needs/unconventional needs**

There a National policy about the students with special needs. There are an office at the Universities and Polytechnics that take care of the special needs of these students.

## **Mobility and life-long learning processes**

The students can ask permission to use the Laboratories out of the normal hours. The University has a policy to facilitate the exchange of students with other countries (Erasmus Programs and others).

## **Information management**

In the University website the information is provided in Portuguese and in English without any password.

The information about a program is available in Portuguese and English for the students that are registered in that program and is necessary a password.



## Any other relevant information

Types of study programs.

The structure of higher education in Portugal follows the standard Bologna structure:

- Bachelor - 3 years (180 ECTS)
- Master – 2 years on top of Bachelor (120 ECTS)
- Master - 5 year integrated (300 ECTS)
- PhD – 3 years on top of Master

Type of higher education institutions

In Portugal there are broadly two categories of higher education institution: Universities and Polytechnics, having different accreditation status:

- Universities, have the right to establish academic degrees at all levels by decisions taken by the University Board.
- Polytechnics are accredited to establish Bachelor and Master Degrees. Polytechnics are not accredited to establish PhD degrees.

Polytechnics are mainly providing vocationally oriented studies, like engineering, teacher training, various health professions etc.

Classical universities are giving education in more classic academic areas, like natural sciences, history, languages, social sciences, engineering, etc, without a specific vocation in mind. Some exceptions are medicine, dentistry and psychology.

A Polytechnic is similar to a (former) Polytechnic University in UK, and to a Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences) in Germany.

## References:

- The Portuguese Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – A3ES (<http://www.a3es.pt/>)
- DL 62/2007 RJIES [http://www.a3es.pt/sites/default/files/L\\_62-2007\\_RJIES.pdf](http://www.a3es.pt/sites/default/files/L_62-2007_RJIES.pdf)