
**HUNGARIAN ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE (HAC)
STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR MASTER PROGRAMS¹ AND EX POST ACCREDITATION OF
INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS**

The Hungarian accreditation system consists of ex ante and ex post procedures, which together serve to assure the quality of higher education. The focus of this compilation of criteria is master programs. A second section summing up the main ex post criteria for accrediting institutions, and for accrediting programs (in groups of disciplines), is presented in order to facilitate comparability with other national systems.

All applications are submitted to the Higher Education Authority, which requests the HAC's expert opinion on the quality of the application.

I. Ex ante accreditation on 2 levels (no site visits involved):

- A. *Education and Outcome Requirements (KKK)*²
 - national level, decree of the Minister of Education and Culture
 - initiated and designed by applicant institution

- B. *New program launched at HEI (college or university)*
 - institutional level, but has to comply with existing KKK
 - initiated and designed by applicant institution

- C. Additionally, the HAC has *Guidelines for Evaluating Joint Programs*³

II. Ex post accreditation (5-year cycles, involves site visits)

- A. institutions
- B. programs (in groups of disciplines)

I. EX ANTE ACCREDITATION

I. A. Accreditation Standards and Criteria for Master Program KKKs

- a. Reasons for establishing the new program
 - 1. The KKK for a new master program should be compatible with the bachelor program structure structured and build on one or more or a group of bachelor programs.
 - 2. The KKK for a new master program should be relevant for the labor market and fulfill the needs of society.

¹ The English standards and criteria are a compilation of various Hungarian texts (HAC resolutions 2012/7/III/4 and 2012/7/III/6)

² Government Decree 289/2005 (XII.22.) on Bachelor and Master programs and procedures for launching new programs

³ HAC resolution No. 2012/7/III/7

3. The master program should fit into the structure of master programs developed in Europe, and should be internationally competitive. At the same time it should uphold the values of Hungarian university education.
4. The new program should be justifiable as a master program that is new in the profession and society and stand as an independent program; it should differ markedly from already existing programs and provide comprehensive knowledge.
- b. The program's education and outcome requirements (that will appear as a government decree)
5. The name of the program should correspond to the attainable qualification
6. The qualification designated as a specialization in the diploma should be designated as such with the appropriate competences and knowledge, and should encompass studies comprising at least 30 credit points
7. The master program should correspond in content and quality to the earlier (5-year) university studies with regard to its entrance requirements, general core, relevant knowledge and appropriate proportion of theoretical and practical knowledge by providing more in-depth knowledge than a bachelor program.
8. The KKK should show the general and professional competences to be attained or broadened during the studies.
9. The KKK should lay the foundations for doctoral studies.

I. B. Accreditation Standards and Criteria for a New Program to be Launched at a HEI

1. The admission requirements for the program should conform to the KKK, and the institution should have a plan in place on how missing knowledge can be attained.
2. The overall educational plan and the curriculum
3. as well as the course descriptions should conform to the KKK:
 - The main study areas (foundations, core knowledge, special knowledge) and the elective courses should be within the subscribed credit limits.
 - In order to attain the educational goal and designated competences, the knowledge to be provided – as reflected in the course descriptions and reading list – should be coherent and up-to-date with respect to content and the sequence of courses. If there are specializations, this should also apply to each of them.
4. The educational process, assessment methods and procedures together should
 - ensure the attainment of the general and special competences and educational goal,
 - prepare the student for conducting research and doctoral studies,
 - ensure that the assessment methods and exit examinations adequately assess the attainment of the students' knowledge and achievement of the KKK,
 - ensure in an organized manner the progress of outstanding students,

- provide an information catalog about the program.
5. The KKK apply also to programs taught in a foreign language, whereby the curriculum should be the same as for the Hungarian program with differences only where they do not affect the attainment of the educational goals and competences.

Academic staff

Staff with specific responsibilities should comply with the following criteria.

- a. Program supervisor: Full-time staff member who is a university or college professor or associate professor (*Dozent*) who will not reach the age of 70 when before the end of the educational cycle. He or she should be responsible of only one program or subject. The program supervisor's professional competence and field of research should be related to the field and educational aims of the program. He/she should demonstrate his/her qualifications, experiences and results in the field. Professional references for master program supervisors include dissertation supervision, participation in doctoral schools and research achievements.
- b. Specialization supervisor: Academic staff member with a scientific degree and at least five years' teaching experience, of which at least three years have been carried out after his or her scientific degree were attained. He or she should show recognized professional references, and also be responsible for at least one course.
- Subject supervisors: The subject supervisors' professional competence and field of research should be related to the field of the subject. They should demonstrate qualifications, experiences and results in the field. At least two thirds of the subject supervisors must be employed at the HEI full time, hold a scientific degree (Ph.D.) in the subject of the program, and be university or college professors, associate professors (*Dozents*) or, if justified, assistant professors or other teaching or research staff who have at least five years' teaching experience, of which at least three years have been carried out after his or her scientific degree were attained. They should have at least five years of teaching experience. Those not employed at the HEI full-time should have at least five years' teaching experience, of which at least three years have been carried out after his or her scientific degree were attained.
- c. Academic staff teaching the program: At least 80% of the academic staff in the program are either full- or part-time. Of the full-time academic staff, two-thirds should have a teaching load of no more than 25 credits and teach or supervise no more than five subjects per degree program. For maximum one third of the full-time academic staff the teaching load may reach 35 credits (from bachelor and master programs combined) and seven supervised and/or taught subjects. The teaching load of the part-time staff should not exceed 15 credits and four supervised subjects (but the same subject for different programs or faculties counts once). Guest professors should not exceed 20% of the total staff and each should teach a maximum of 8 credits and/or two subjects.

Information on the academic staff

1. The personal information and publications of the academic staff teaching the program should show that
- his or her professional competence is related to the taught subject,

- his or her scientific activity in the field ensures the successful transfer of knowledge on a master level.
2. The academic staff teaching in a foreign language should comply with the same requirements as for the Hungarian program, and
 3. Have the language proficiency that enables him or her to teach in the foreign language.

Professional background of the program

1. The institution should conduct scientific work in a field that prepares students for doctoral education, by
 - having at least one nationally and one internationally recognized project and team in the field,
 - the staff publishing regularly in the discipline and showing scientific, engineering or artistically creative, developmental project results.

Infrastructure

1. The infrastructure necessary for conducting the program should ensure that the facilities, laboratories and equipment are sufficient for the projected number of students, academic and non-academic staff and that the support and administrative structures are in place.
2. The library facilities, whether central or in the faculties or departments, should provide the key journals in the field or interdisciplinary area either physically or electronically.
3. An up-to-date IT network should be in place to which students have access in an organized manner and on a regular basis.
4. The conditions for preparing term papers and theses, including research, planning, measuring, etc. should be in place.
5. The program should have the necessary infrastructure for practical teaching, including practice places.
6. For programs taught in a foreign language the necessary additional material, such as teaching aids and texts in the language, should be available in sufficient number and quality.

Special requirements are set for **distance education** programs,
 The HEI should possess the academic and other staff, infrastructure and all other conditions necessary for the program in relation to the number of students planned for the program.

I. C. Guidelines for Evaluating Joint Programs (Excerpts)

With respect to programs taught jointly between Hungarian and foreign higher education institutions the 2011 National Higher Education Act states,

Section 78 (3) Hungarian and foreign higher education institutions may provide joint programmes awarding a Hungarian and foreign or joint diploma or certificate if all the following criteria are met:

- a) the higher education institutions concerned are recognised higher education institutions in the state of the registered seats,
 - b) the diploma or certificate issued is accepted as a diploma or certificate awarded in higher education pursuant to the relevant national law of the countries concerned,
 - c) the Hungarian and the foreign higher education institutions are authorized for the programme, the programme and outcome requirements of which are identical to those of the programme subject to the agreement,
 - d) the credit transfer committee of the Hungarian higher education institution declares that the credit equivalence between the programme the higher education institute is authorized to launch and the programme subject to the agreement reaches at least 75%,
 - e) the student completes at least 30 credits in the Hungarian higher education institution which is authorized to launch the programme.
- (4) No authorisation for operation in Hungary shall be necessary if foreign higher education institutions offer the programmes set forth in subsection (3).
- (5) The Educational Authority shall register the agreement and the training, if the Senate of the Hungarian institution establishes that the requirements set forth in Paragraph (3) are met. Otherwise, the general rules of launching study programmes shall be applied.

It follows that programs that have KKK **and** license for the same – if not joint - program may register the joint program with the Higher Education Authority and the HAC is not involved.

In all other cases the institution must apply to the Higher Education Authority for KKK and/or an new program and the Authority will ask the HAC for its expert opinion.

For **KKK applications** the regular HAC guidelines and forms apply, but the application should indicate that the program will be provided only in a Hungarian/international partnership. The HAC will examine whether there is a sufficient difference between the applied for program and existing KKKs.

For **new program applications** the regular HAC guidelines and forms apply, but the application should indicate that the program will be provided only in a Hungarian/international partnership. The HAC will examine the conditions for the program in the Hungarian and partner institutions as a whole. The application should therefore contain also the content, staff and infrastructure of the program according to the guidelines.

The applications should additionally contain the following,

- Copy of the agreement between the partner institutions,
- The name of the foreign institution/s and proof of its recognition as a foreign institution in the state where it is registered,
- Proof of the institution/s right to teach the field,
- Authentic information on the program's foreign accreditation, if applicable (website link, copy of the accreditation document, etc.),
- Proof that the diploma is considered a higher education diploma in the foreign state/s,

- The names, positions and scientific degrees of the supervisors of the program and subjects in the foreign institution/s,
- Where the students will enroll and how many semesters he or she spends in the partner institutions, as well as how the credits will be recognized,
- The type of degree (double, multiple, joint) and the name of the institution/s issuing it,
- Proof of the relevant language proficiency of the Hungarian staff teaching the program.

The HAC will support such joint programs

- a. that have an added value as compared to each individual program via the synergy the cooperation produces, and where the joint program ensures a higher quality and novel form of education. An element of added value may be the foreign experience of the students.
- b. where each of the Hungarian HEIs contributing to the joint program has a Hungarian program supervisor who meets the set HAC criteria. The principal program supervisor should be a staff member of one of the Hungarian applicant institutions, and the institutions must already include the discipline to which the planned joint program belongs among its educational provision, and this should be set down in its statutes.
- d. Regarding the further (content, research, infrastructure, etc.) criteria, the HAC assesses the elements at all contributing partners together.

II. EX POST ACCREDITATION

II. Ex post accreditation (5-year cycles, involves site visits)

- A. institutions
- B. programs (in groups of disciplines)

II. A. Criteria for institutional accreditation

In the process of ex post institutional accreditation the HAC evaluates a HEI's compliance with the provisions for HEIs in the HE Act and the compliance of the HEI's quality assurance mechanisms with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

The **institution should comply with HE Act**, including the key sections given below.

Section 6

(2) The state shall recognise higher education institutions which satisfy conditions deemed necessary for the provision of activities and which are authorised to provide a minimum of 4 programmes in at least two fields or disciplines in the available programme structure defined below under Points a) to d):

- a) Bachelor programme,
- b) Bachelor and Master programme,
- c) Bachelor, Master and doctoral programme,
- d) Master and doctoral programme.

(3) The higher education institution shall be deemed to satisfy conditions required for providing tasks, if, by taking account of its activities defined in its statutes, it disposes of the personnel and organisational requirements necessary for continuous operation, material and financial instruments, as well as institutional documents.

Section 7

(3) The requirement regarding the availability of permanent teaching and research staff shall be met, if the higher education institution directly employs at least 60% of its teaching and research staff or employs this staff on the grounds of a public service employment contract.

For **universities** the following clause additionally applies:

Section 9

(3) A university shall be defined as a higher education institution which

- a) is authorised to launch Master programmes in at least two fields of study, as well as doctoral programmes in at least two disciplines and is entitled to award a doctoral title;
- b) at least 50% of its teaching and research staff employed directly or on a public service employment basis has a doctoral degree;
- c) disposes of at least three university faculties;
- d) operates an academic student workshop;
- e) is capable of offering foreign language courses at some of its departments.

Section 91

(4)... higher education institutions providing **religious training** shall be entitled to use the designation university even if they are authorised to offer a Master programme only in one field of training, and to organise a doctorate programme and confer a doctoral degree in at least one discipline of science or area of art.

Section 101

(4) **Art** higher education institutions may use the university or college status, even if they are entitled to provide Bachelor or Master programmes in one field of training, and to offer doctorate programmes and confer doctoral degree in one discipline of science. Subject to its statutes, the institution may deviate from the general requirements applicable to the number and type of faculties.

For **colleges** the following clause additionally applies:

Section 9

(4) Colleges shall also operate in a faculty structure; at least one-third of its teaching and research staff employed directly or on a public service employment basis shall be required to hold a doctoral degree. Colleges shall be entitled to operate academic student workshops.

Additionally, the rule for faculties applies also to those **colleges that have no separate faculties**, as follows,

Section 108

- b) *College faculty* means an organizational unit where
 - ba) the number of full-time lecturers it at least 35,
 - bb) at least one third of full-time lecturers has a scientific degree.

Section 91

(5) ... higher education institutions providing **religious training** shall be entitled to obtain state recognition and to use the designation college, even if they are authorised to offer Bachelor programmes only in one field of training in one faculty.

Section 101

(4) **Art higher** education institutions may use the university or college status, even if they are entitled to provide Bachelor or Master programmes in one field of training, and to offer doctorate programmes and confer doctoral degree in one discipline of science. Subject to its statutes, the institution may deviate from the general requirements applicable to the number and type of faculties.

HEI faculties should comply with the Act's requirements for faculties.

Section 108

11. *Faculty* means the organisational unit in charge of the instruction, research, and artistic activities of related degree programmes in one or more fields of study or discipline of science as defined in the educational programme,
- a) *University faculty* means an organizational unit where
 - aa) the number of full-time lecturers is 40 or more

- ab) at least half of the full-time lecturers and researchers have a scientific degree, and lecturers with a scientific degree carry out regular research activity
- ac) the number of students participating in full-time day-time education is no more than 35 students per full-time lecturer with a scientific degree
- ad) at least three of the full-time lecturers and researchers are core members of the university's doctoral school.
- b) *College faculty* means an organizational unit where
 - ba) the number of full-time lecturers it at least 35,
 - bb) at least one third of full-time lecturers has a scientific degree.

With respect to **religious education** the university and college faculty makes the following exception,

Section 92

(6) With respect to religious studies,

f) the provision on the minimum number of lecturers required to establish university or college faculties shall not be applicable.

HAC Criteria

Deriving from

- A) the legislation the HAC evaluates based on the following information, and
- B) the ESG.

A) General criteria

Information about the institution in general,

- Description of the institution's/faculty's past and vision of the future,
- Actions taken after previous accreditation decisions and recommendations,
- The HEI's/faculty's basic documents, organization, governance and strategy,
- The HEI's/faculty's educational structure,
- Cooperation between faculties in teaching and making optimal use of the institutional infrastructure,
- Participation of the Student Union in the HEI's/faculty's leadership,
- Procedures for joint programs,
- C-SWOT analysis and action plans.

Key achievements of the HEI/faculty,
in teaching,

- Education outcomes, student numbers (enrollment, graduation rates, drop-out rates, national student competition results) in the past five years,
- Employment figures, student tracking in the labor market,

in R&D and/or artistic activity,

- Main scientific publications, development, innovation and tender results (in Hungary and internationally),
- Regional, national and international relations and their results,

in financing,

- Financial figures of the HEI/faculty,
- External financial resources.

B) Criteria based on the ESG

HEI quality assurance mechanisms should comply with the European Standards and Guidelines Part 1. In addition to listing the guidelines in the ESG, the HAC criteria elaborate detailed guidelines and lists institutional background documents for each standard, the headings for which are presented in the English summary below each standard.⁴

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance: Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programs and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programs and awards: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programs and awards.

Additional HAC criteria are,

- The institution should ensure that the conditions for teaching in a foreign language,
- New programs should be compatible with the HEI's/faculty's strategy,
- Program development should take into consideration the results of student evaluations.

1.3 Assessment of students: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff: Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

1.5 Learning resources and student support: Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each program offered.

1.6 Information systems: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for the effective management of their programs of study and other activities.

An additional HAC criterion is,

⁴ The guidelines appearing in the ESG, which are part of the Hungarian guidelines, are not repeated here.

- The information system should show how the institution is placed in comparison with other Hungarian and foreign HEIs.

1.7 Public information: Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programs and awards they are offering.

II. B. Criteria for disciplinary accreditation

In each disciplinary accreditation process the HAC evaluates all programs in the selected discipline taught at all HEIs in the country with one expert pool within a timeframe of several months.

The experts develop evaluation criteria based on a core set of HAC criteria and adapt them to the requirements of the given discipline. The core accreditation criteria are the same as for ex ante accreditation for

- *I.A. new programs launched at HEI (college or university)*

and incorporating the criteria for

- *I.B. Education and Outcome Requirements (KKK).*