# STANDARDS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR FIRST BACHELOR CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMS

Approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 531, dated 11.09.2018

*"On the Approval of Higher Education Quality Code"*

**STANDARDS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR FIRST *BACHELOR* CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMS**

**STANDARDS AND CRITERIA**

## II.     ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF STUDY PROGRAMS

**Standard II.1     Study programs are organized in compliance with national legal stipulations and sublegal definitions in force on the said study programs.**

**Criterion 1**     Study programs are structured in courses and modules evaluated in credits in compliance with the national legislation in force and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

**Criterion 2**     First cycle study programs* aim at developing special skills in a broad range of professions and specialties.

**Criterion 3**     First cycle study programs* provide advanced knowledge in a study field or employment area, including critical understanding of academic theories and principles of the area.

**Criterion 4**     First cycle study programs* develop advanced knowledge, abilities and competences in academic or occupational fields that are necessary for solving complex and unforeseen issues in a specialized study field or occupational area.

**Criterion 5**     First cycle study programs* consist of all elements that comprise the study program structure provided for by legal and sublegal acts.

**Criterion 6**     Study programs clearly formative activities grouping courses/modules according to certain categories and relevant credit load.

**Standard II.2     Main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets legal requirements for these units.**

**Criterion 1**     Main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets legal requirements for the review and accreditation.

**Criterion 2**     Main/basic unit responsible for every study program assigns a person in the role of the study program coordinator, who is responsible for the progress and development of the program and practicums in compliance with its objectives. The program coordinator continuously informs the relevant unit head.

**Criterion 3**     Main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets legal and sublegal requirements for the academic organization and structure.

**Criterion 4**     Main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets obligations on the number and level of academic staff qualification.

**Criterion 5**     Main/basic unit responsible for the study program meets legal and sublegal requirements for the academic organization and structure.

**Standard II.3**     **First cycle study programs are detailed, informative, structured and organized in compliance with formative stipulation and objectives of first cycle programs.**

**Criterion 1**     The main/basic unit, responsible for the first cycle study program*, has the necessary information on study program organization, structure and content.

**Criterion 2**     The study programs are organized into courses, modules, professional training and practicums, in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.

**Criterion 3**     The study program is organized into courses and modules evaluated with credits according to the national and European system, divided into academic years and semesters.

**Criterion 4**     The study program has a detailed syllabus, which incorporates the necessary information on the teaching workload, hours in/outside the auditorium, attendance/program follow-up and the knowledge assessment methods, etc.

**Criterion 5**     The study program provides students with all the necessary information related to the general and specific criteria for admission, transfer and studies equivalence.

**Criterion 6**     The study program contains the necessary information on course programs (detailed syllabuses) for each course, training, seminars or laboratory classes, as well as all the components of each program in and outside the auditorium in accordance with the approved formats.

**Criterion 7**     The content of the study program is subject to continuous improvement and update and at the beginning of each academic year the eventual changes are approved, and the complete file is archived.

**Standard II.4** **The structure and organization of the study programs is in accordance with the training objectives, the qualification level based on the National and European Qualifications Framework, learning outcomes and competences, and labor market requirements.**

**Criterion 1** The workload of the study program is structured in accordance with the applicable legal and sub-legal provisions.

Criterion 2 Activity content, denomination, courses and practicums allocation provide knowledge, abilities and/or student employment.

**Criterion 3** The courses / modules, division into years and semesters, and credit and classes evaluation enables the achievement of study program academic objectives and the expected results of learning and training formation.

**Criterion 4** Study program structure, subjects and their designation, credits, and theory vs. practice ratio is in line with the profile of the bachelor program and approximated with similar international programs.

**Criterion 5** The division based on training activities and theory versus practice ratio enable teaching objectives achievement, transfer of studies, mobility and employment at the end of the study programs.

**Criterion 6** Syllabuses of course/module programs are updated continuously based on the required and recommended literature of the last 5 years.

**Criterion 7** The content of the study programs guarantees the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences intended for the first cycle study programs.

**Criterion 8** Study programs content promotes further study opportunities and / or hiring of students in line with expectations and labor market demands.

**Criterion 9** In order to improve the study programs content and adjustment to labor market requirements, the responsible structures consult and take into account the proposals of partners from the labor market.

**Standard II.5** **The responsible academic and support staff for carrying out the study program fulfils legal requirement and has the proper and special academic qualification to ensure teaching standards.**

**Criterion 1** The full-time and part-time academic staff engaged in study program delivery meet the applicable legal requirements.

**Criterion 2** The full-time and part-time academic staff engaged in delivering the study program have the appropriate academic qualification, at the required level to manage study program course modules.

**Criterion 3**      The qualification level and general and specific academic and research field of academic staff covering the study program is in accordance with the study program, and its modules nature and specifications.

**Criterion 4**      The institution, in agreement and collaboration with other higher education institutions, as well as business representatives and companies provides sufficient, appropriate and qualified staff for students mentoring, counselling and supervision f during practicum, diploma thesis and other specific activities, depending on study program nature.

**Criterion 5**      The institution provides and guarantees support teaching and scientific staff engagement for the delivery of laboratory classes and maintenance of laboratories and other teaching facilities, according to the specific study program nature.

## III.   TEACHING, LEARNING, EVALUATION AND COMPETENCES

**Standard III.1**   **The Institution pursues a clear policy to guarantee and promote the quality of teaching and develops special guidelines and directives designed for teaching methods development and monitoring.**

**Criterion 1**      The institution drafts guidelines at the institutional level for the development and use of various and innovative teaching methods based on the field of study and courses/ modules.

**Criterion 2**       The responsible central structures design monitoring mechanisms and periodically evaluate the academic staff teaching and innovative skills.

**Criterion 3**      The institution guarantees students' engagement in the teaching methods periodic assessment, competences assessment, including complaints addressal.

**Criterion 4**      The responsible structures for teaching quality monitoring and assurance, make public the evaluation results.

**Criterion 5**      The institution, through evaluation mechanisms and achieved results, promotes examples of best practices, as well as encourages and motivates the academic staff to further improve teaching.

**Standard III.2**   **The institution guarantees the development of the teaching, learning, and professional and scientific training with the best methods and practices.**

**Criterion 1**   The most common channels of teaching, learning process, and knowledge transfer are lectures, seminars, laboratory work, course assignments, projects, professional clinical practice, public lectures and any other models approved by the institution.

**Criterion 2**   The academic staff must accept, observe and respond to students' diversity and needs, by providing various forms, methods and alternative teaching and learning opportunities, in accordance with the scope and nature of the study program in general, and course modules and training activities in particular.

**Criterion 3**   The institution supports its academic staff to improve didactic competences. The institution enables the use of diverse and flexible pedagogical methods, which are appropriate and consistent with the expected learning outcomes, teaching objectives and labor market demands.

**Criterion 4**   The academic staff engaged in teaching is competent in explaining knowledge and concepts, by using various teaching methods according to topics and profiles.

**Criterion 5**   The institution periodically evaluates and improves teaching forms and methods, including students' participation in the process and reflecting their thoughts and suggestions.

**Criterion 6**   The academic Staff uses interactive methods and discussions making classes more attractive to students.

**Criterion 7**   Teaching forms and methods encourage student's sense of autonomy, by concurrently providing teacher supervision and support and building a mutual respect relationship between them.

**Standard III.3**   **The responsible units guarantee the development of teaching, learning, and professional training, by making available all the necessary physical, didactic and logistic infrastructure to successfully carry out the teaching and scientific activity.**

**Criterion 1**     The teaching and scientific process is carried out in adequate and quality premises, which are clean and appropriately maintained.

**Criterion 2**     The premises dedicated to the learning process are functional and equipped with the necessary logistics for a qualitative learning process.

**Criterion 3**     The academic staff and students use various IT systems, and consolidated IT infrastructure necessary for the learning process.

**Criterion 4**     The required and recommended literature, made available to students in the study program language (in hard copy or soft copy), guarantees the acquisition of knowledge required for the study program.

**Criterion 5**     The library of the institution guarantees a sufficient number of recent publications in the main field of the study program and sufficient and comfortable reading premises for students during the learning process.

**Criterion 6**     In terms of teaching and learning process, the academic staff and students have access to online libraries in similar fields to the study program.

**Criterion 7**     The necessary laboratory infrastructure for lab classes, course assignments, diplomas and specific studies is continuously used by the students.

**Criterion 8**     In terms of teaching, the academic staff uses online (and e-learning) platforms and supports and encourages the academic staff and students to use them.

**Criterion 9**     The academic staff and students use internal communication systems to access electronic documents and their personal dedicated profile.

**Criterion 10**    The academic staff guides students in selecting their diploma thesis topics, and assists and supports them during their development.

**Standard III.4**  **The institution establishes special institutional structures, which raise awareness on improving the study program teaching and learning quality.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution establishes structures/ units at the institutional level to promote the continuous improvement of teaching, and coordinate its activity with the main/ basic units in the framework of improving the quality of teaching.

**Criterion 2**    The main/basic unit is responsible for teaching quality and raising the academic staff and students' awareness on the quality the study programs provides.

**Criterion 3**    The structures and responsible units support the experimentation and development of innovative teaching methods.

**Criterion 4**    The academic and support staff are constantly qualified in the field of scientific research to assist in the further improvement of teaching.

**Criterion 5**    The responsible structures and units continuously train the academic staff to improve their teaching skills and implement new methods.

**Criterion 6**    The academic and support staff are responsible for implementing the study program and committed to improve teaching and implementing new methods.

**Criterion 7**    The academic and support staff test new teaching methods, analyze effects/expectations and report periodically on results to the responsible structures and units.

**Standard III.5**    **The institution drafts regulations and special procedures on testing and assessing professional competences and skills and guarantees their implementation.**

**Criterion 1**    The criteria and the testing and assessment method of professional competences and skills are defined in special regulations and are announced to the students.

**Criterion 2**    At the beginning of each course/module, students are informed on testing and assessment methodology of professional knowledge and competences, as well as professional and research skills provided for in the course/module syllabus by the head of the course/module.

**Criterion 3**    The testing and assessment method of professional competences and research skills is realized in various models and ways, providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate the acquired competences and knowledge.

**Standard III.6 The institution guarantees a fair and transparent evaluation based on each student's merits.**

**Criterion 1**  The testing and assessment of professional knowledge, abilities and competences is carried out throughout the entire academic year.

**Criterion 2**  The institution makes use of electronic testing and evaluation systems, which eliminate various forms of abuse and enhance transparency.

**Criterion 3**  The testing and assessment of professional knowledge, abilities and competences is carried out by examination commissions composed of at least 2 members, one of whom is the head of the course/module.

**Criterion 4**  The testing and assessment of written competences is anonymously conducted with codification and the institution provides a dedicated infrastructure monitored by the appropriate trained staff and/or security cameras.

**Criterion 5**  The assessment of competences and skills is accompanied by comments/feedback (if necessary) and includes recommendations for the learning process in order to help students improve in the future.

**Criterion 6**  Responsible units and academic staff avoid plagiarism and do not tolerate exam and assignment cheating.

**Criterion 7**  The results of checking professional competences and skills are merit-based and delivered in time, based on the stipulations in the relevant regulations.

**Criterion 8**  The institution guarantees students' right to be acquainted with the assessment procedure, and to request the assessment be reviewed in accordance with the regulations and evaluation procedures.

**Criterion 9**  Any claim or complaint is reviewed by the evaluation commission and then by the ad-hoc commission. The followed procedure is documented and archived.

**Standard III.7**  **Study program delivery guarantees students' creativity and practical skills enhancement, by simultaneously providing in-depth knowledge on professional and scientific competences.**

**Criterion 1**  The study program is delivered in a way that guarantees students' competences acquisition and provides professional and special skills development.

**Criterion 2**     The study program guarantees the development of specific skills in the field of information technology, including human, social, communication, and interaction (including foreign language) resources.

**Criterion 3**     Student's competences and skills, presented in the study program and syllabuses of each course, are analyzed and reviewed at the end of the course.

**Criterion 4**     At the end of each course/module, the academic staff points out the most important issues and guides students throughout their implementation.

**Criterion 5**     The academic staff delivers public lectures and workshops on new science and technology developments outside the study program.

**Criterion 6**     Teaching is carried out on a competences-basis in order to provide students the opportunity to develop their competences in labs and practicums.

**Criterion 7**     The academic staff supports discussions and teamwork in interpreting and solving certain problems/issues.

**Criterion 8**     The academic staff creates a suitable climate for the development of innovative ideas, advanced and scientific studies, and support.

**Criterion 9**     The institution promotes the development of innovative ideas, students advanced research and scientific studies, by providing them with financial support.

**Criterion 10**    The academic staff combine forms of teaching with partner institutions to enable and increase student mobility.

**Standard III.8**  **The institution pursues a clear student graduation procedure in the study program and provides the students with the necessary documentation.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution drafts a special procedure for the final exam or diploma defense before the graduation and publishes it.

**Criterion 2**     The responsible structures and academic staff assist students by providing the necessary information, instructions and materials in the framework of final exam and diploma defense.

**Criterion 3**      The special commission for the final exam administration is based on the testing of knowledge acquired during the last two academic years including all courses/modules based on their importance and specific significance.

**Criterion 4**      The academic staff guides and helps student to prepare for the final exam or study/diploma thesis topics.

**Criterion 5**      The institution assists students in carrying out measurements, analyses, and tests in or outside institution premises, according to the specific objectives and scope of study.

**Criterion 6**      Diploma Thesis Mentor assists the student in producing and processing the relevant results, as well as in drafting the thesis according to the approved instructions and guidelines. He guarantees the quality of the results and approves whether or not the work is complete and appropriate to be presented before the commission.

**Criterion 7**      At the end of the exam or diploma defense, the student is evaluated with a final grade.

**Criterion 8**      At the end of studies, the student is provided with a diploma and its supplement licensed by the ministry responsible for education.

**Criterion 9**      At the end of the studies, a full official copy of the study program is made available to the student.

**Criterion 10**     The institution retains a copy of the students' documentation for an indefinite period of time and issues attestations to the student, on a case-by-case basis, if required.

## IV. HUMAN, FINANCIAL, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LOGISTICS RESOURCES FOR STUDY PROGRAM DELIVERY

**Standard IV.1  The Higher Education Institution follows transparent legal procedures on recruiting, evaluating and selecting staff for the study program.**

**Criterion 1**      Each academic year, the institution collects, stores and updates the staff data engaged in the study program. These data include the academic staff involved in the program and the person responsible for organizing the study program,

workload and academic staff engagement in each academic semester and year, as well as the teaching and the scientific support staff.

**Criterion 2**   The institution drafts and implements procedures for academic staff recruitment, in accordance with the applicable legal basis and the institution's internal regulatory acts.

**Criterion 3**   The institution drafts special and specific procedures and criteria, for staff recruitment, which are part of regulatory acts and makes them public.

**Criterion 4**   The institution follows recruitment and evaluation procedures based on the announced general and specific criteria that ensure the selection of staff with the appropriate level of qualification and in accordance with the nature, structure, modules and the study program content.

**Standard IV.2**   **The Higher Education Institution is mainly responsible for the quality of staff who cover the study program and support for performing tasks efficiently and effectively.**

**Criterion 1**   The institution is committed to provide the staff with the appropriate environment and equal opportunities for performing their tasks professionally.

**Criterion 2**   The institution is committed to provide staff who administers the study program with continuous training and further professional development.

**Criterion 3**   The institution organizes specific programs regarding innovative teaching methods and use of new technologies for academic and scientific research staff's further professional qualification.

**Criterion 4**   The institution demonstrates an optimal employee commitment to meet first cycle study program objectives.

**Standard IV.3**   **The Higher Education Institution makes available the learning premises and the appropriate infrastructure for the delivery of study program teaching process and practical training, according to the nature and area of the study program.**

**Criterion 1**   The institution provides sufficient and appropriate teaching facilities for the development of theoretical teaching activity, depending on the number of

students and study groups, in accordance with the specific nature of the study program and respective modules.

**Criterion 2**     Learning premises such as classrooms, labs, studios and the like are equipped with electronic and information technology devices that guarantee the realization of the theoretical and practical teaching process through the use of contemporary teaching methodology and technology.

**Criterion 3**     Laboratories, studios, ateliers or other premises, according to the specific nature of the professional study program, shall contain the necessary equipment and tools to meet module requirements, theoretical and practical training, and the overall study program objectives.

**Criterion 4**     The institution provides at least one information technology lab, equipped with advanced programs appropriate to the nature of the study program/s it provides.

**Criterion 5**     The institution guarantees, with its available capacities and/or in cooperation with other institutions and entities that the premises are sufficient, appropriate and dedicated for the development of professional training and other practical activities.

**Standard IV.4 The Higher Education Institution provides students with learning support premises, library, special learning premises and the necessary literature to support the learning process for the students of each study programs.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution makes available to students the resources library, thus guaranteeing students equal access to the study program.

**Criterion 2**     The library should be equipped with the necessary literature such as: basic textbooks, recommended literature, both in Albanian and foreign languages, necessary and appropriate books or journals to cover all modules and courses according to each study programs.

**Criterion 3**     The institution should enable the adequate conditions for students' equal access to the online library for each study program course.

**Criterion 4**     The library should be equipped with computer programs and other technical equipment, enabling unrestricted use by all students.

**Criterion 5** The institution should develop and implement a detailed plan for adding new items to the library and updating the existing fund in order to assist students of each study program.

**Criterion 6** The library schedule should be in line with the teaching process schedule, but not limited to, and beyond, appropriate to students' number and needs, as well as its capacity.

**Standard IV.5** **The Higher Education Institution has an internal institutional management system, which is made available to the management, information and monitoring of academic, financial and administrative activity for the study program.**

**Criterion 1** The institution has in place a management system for the management of all student-related information and activity from enrollment to the study programs up to graduation.

**Criterion 2** The internal management system manages the information, documentation and activities of academic and support staff, administrative staff and partners involved in the program implementation.

**Criterion 3** The management system provides dedicated access to information and documents for all study program staff and students.

**Criterion 4** The management system has integrated platforms and modules that enable interactive communication and information exchange among staff and students.

**Criterion 5** The management system guarantees real-time monitoring of academic and administrative activity and enables individual and real-time reporting to governing bodies and unit heads.

**Criterion 6** Information related to the study program, academic staff, the various activities is published in the website in at least two languages, one of which is Albanian.

**Standard IV.6** **The Higher Education Institution guarantees the necessary financial support for the implementation of the teaching/research process, study program progress and students' support.**

**Criterion 1**    The institution drafts a financial report on the study program costs and the financial support plan required for the study program progress for at least one full cycle study program.

**Criterion 2**    A study program funding plan should include funding for human resources made available to the program implementation, operating costs for premises maintenance and teaching process support technologies, library and literature enrichment costs, and access to on-line libraries, financial obligations, national or international grants received and service contracts on the study program performance, and other items, according to its specific nature.

**Criterion3**    The institution conducts an annual audit, assesses and documents the financial situation and its financial effectiveness. The financial report contains a detailed financial statement of income deriving from tuition fees and other financial contributions for students or financial resources allocation.

**Criterion 4**    At the end of each full cycle study program, the institution documents the financial reports for the past three academic years and plans the special interventions and eventual diversification of the program funding to ensure its smooth performance and progress.

**Criterion 5**    The institution must demonstrate that it guarantees financial sustainability throughout the development of the study program and has the necessary financial capacity to improve the financial situation and generate the necessary income in the future.


## V.   STUDENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT

**Standard V.1**    **The Higher Education Institution drafts, follows and implements policies and procedures on students' admission, selection, progress, transfer, knowledge assessment and graduation in the study program.**

**Criterion 1**    The institution develops and implements policies and procedures that cover the full academic cycle study program, from enrollment to university up to graduation, in accordance with applicable legislation and regulatory acts.

**Criterion 2**    Policies and procedures from enrollment to graduation guarantee equality and equal rights to all study program applicants and students.

**Criterion 3**     Students' admission and selection criteria and procedure, progress throughout the study course, transfer, recognition of previous or part-time studies, competence assessment and graduation are easily understandable and accessible to the public.

**Criterion 4**     The institution drafts and publishes at the beginning of each academic year the criteria for the selection of candidates to be admitted to the first cycle study program.

**Criterion 5**     General and specific criteria are drafted and implemented in compliance with the sublegal acts of the ministry responsible for education and State Matura. These criteria provide for the enrollment of foreign students.

**Criterion 6**     Prior to the beginning of each academic year, the Higher Education Institution instructs the public and interested parties on study program general and specific criteria and requirements.

**Standard V.2**     **The Higher Education Institution makes available to the students of the study program detailed and comprehensive information on the academic progress, recognition, and knowledge assessment up to the studies completion and graduation.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution provides full and detailed information on the criteria and procedures for students' academic progress and transition from one academic year to the other.

**Criterion 2**     The institution informs students about diploma recognition procedures and criteria regarding previous qualifications or part-time studies.

**Criterion 3**     The institution informs students about the criteria and procedures on knowledge and skills assessment during the study program.

**Criterion 4**     The institution informs students about study program graduation criteria and procedures.

**Criterion 5**     Before the beginning of and throughout each academic year, the institution publishes special directives and organizes briefings to inform potential students about the study program.

**Standard V.3**     **The Higher Education Institution provides students with comprehensive and detailed information on training objectives, structure, organization, study program content, expected learning outcomes and employment opportunities.**

**Criterion 1**    Students are thoroughly informed on study program design, organization and duration.

**Criterion 2**    The institution provides students with the necessary information and documentation on modules/course content and training activities.

**Criterion 3**    The institution informs students on employment opportunities as well as institutional support on career counseling and labor market.

**Criterion 4**    Students are provided with extensive and up-to-date information on the teaching process development and organization, logistics, infrastructure and services in order to accomplish it.

**Criterion 5**    Information about the study program is provided through the internal information management system and should be easily accessible even to distance students.

**Standard V.4**    **The Higher Education Institution collects, manages, updates and maintains detailed information about the number of students attending the first cycle study program from their admission to university, as well as employment/career data through an internal IT management system.**

**Criterion 1**    The institution produces annual statistics on the number of current and graduated students in each study program.

**Criterion 2**    The institution produces annual statistics on the number of students enrolled to the first cycle study program, dropouts during the or before the end of the program, or the successful completion of the academic year in which the study program is delivered.

**Criterion 3**    The institution possesses data on the students' progress throughout the study program course from their admission up to their graduation.

**Criterion 4**    Student statistical data are managed through the internal information system and must be secured and easily accessible to authorized persons.

**Criterion 5**    The institution should develop periodic analytical reports on incoming and existing students' profile and quality, as well as their employment rate, along with appropriate measures to improve these indicators.

**Standard V.5**    **The Higher Education Institution includes and engages students in decision-making and advisory bodies such as drafting, approving, reviewing and improving the study programs, teaching methods and the quality of provided resources and services.**

**Criterion 1**    The institution envisages students and their representatives' involvement and engagement in decision-making and advisory bodies, according to HEI legal and regulatory acts.

**Criterion 2**    The institution should ensure that students and / or their representatives' involvement in decision-making, counseling or evaluation on the academic process be realistic, specific, productive and with easily verifiable and measurable results.

**Criterion 3**    In designing and improving the study program, the institution should take into account the academic load of students in the study program and the provision of the non-bureaucratic student progress procedures throughout the program, including recognition of their full or partial study programs.

**Criterion 4**    The institution guarantees students' involvement in drafting, reviewing and improving the study program on a regular basis and reflects their suggestions and contributions.

**Criterion 5**    Students are encouraged to give their input on equality and knowledge assessment and control, including their right to appeal, review and reflect on the part of the institution / unit / responsible lecturer.

**Standard V.6**    **The Higher Education Institution has special units and procedures for student admission, induction, counseling, complaints and issues management, which permanently function and are easily accessible and usable by students.**

**Criterion 1**    The institution has special units and procedures which ensure student information and assistance in accordance with the HEI legal provisions and regulatory acts.

**Criterion 2**    The institution has set up and introduced a special system for student information, counseling, progress and assistance in matters related to the teaching process and study program.

**Criterion 3**    The institution provides students with career counseling assistance. The Career Counseling Office/Unit welcomes students continuously and periodically,

providing specific information and guidance in terms of completing the learning process, selection and induction regarding professional training in other institutions (internships), and also advises them on labor market.

**Criterion 4** The Career Office/Unit follows-up students after graduation, by collecting, processing and storing data on the type and quality of study program student employment and makes them available to students and relevant bodies and authorities.

## VI.   STUDY PROGRAMS' QUALITY ASSURANCE

**Standard VI.1 The Higher Education Institution drafts and implements transparent policies and procedures on the study program quality assurance within the framework of internal quality assurance system.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution has in place policies, structures and procedures for Internal Quality Assurance (IQS), in accordance with applicable legal and sub-legal provisions and with institutional regulatory acts.

**Criterion 2**     The institution has established and introduced the Internal Quality Assurance System and implements an institutional strategy for continuous quality improvement, including students and external partners and experts.

**Criterion 3** External Quality Assurance in Higher Education is realized through external accreditation assessment processes, analytical and comparative evaluations, as well as other processes that promote and improve quality.

**Criterion 4**     The Institution has drafted a clear policy and follows periodic procedures to ensure and improve the quality of the study program it provides, within the IQA framework. They aim to create a quality culture at the institutional level, the constituent units and all institutional internal actors.

**Standard VI.2 The Higher Education Institution monitors and evaluates periodically through the special units the study program to ensure training objectives achievement and the intended learning outcomes.**

**Criterion 1**     The institution establishes a special unit for monitoring, reviewing, and supervising the first cycle study program.

**Criterion 2**    The institution uses formal and documented processes and mechanisms for reviewing, approving and supervising the first cycle study program periodically.

**Criterion 3**    The institution uses assessment methodology, measuring instruments and evaluation instruments for the study program progress and success.

**Criterion 4**    The results of these assessments are documented and put forward to the responsible and decision-making authorities for the study program.

**Criterion 5**    The evaluation reports should include the expected results, the assessment results of and the measures taken to address the issues and the ongoing quality improvement.

**Standard VI.3**    **The Higher Education Institution makes use of assessment procedures, methodologies, and instruments for the study program opening, development, and progress; graduation, entering the labor market as well as students' further studies.**

**Criterion 1**    The study program internal evaluation is periodically performed by the relevant internal quality assurance unit. The Higher Education Institution incorporates this information in the institutional self-assessment procedure within the accreditation and rating framework.

**Criterion 2**    In order to carry out the assessment, the institution uses various appropriate and adequate methods and instruments, in line with the nature and features of the study program scope.

**Criterion 3**    In the framework of evaluating study program performance and quality, the institution employs direct methods such as: quality assessment of teaching, didactics, curricula, learning outcomes; parallel assessment of student examinations or assignments, direct observations in the auditorium during exercises / practice, local or standardized tests, results achieved in inter-institutional or national tests such as state exam for regulated professions, etc.

**Criterion 4**    In the framework of study program quality and performance evaluation, the institution uses indirect assessment methods and instruments such as: students, graduates (alumni), and academic staff's surveys and interviews; academic and administrative assistance, employers and institutions that cooperate for the study program delivery and other parties involved in conducting the assessment of knowledge and competences acquired during this program.

**Standard VI.4** **The Higher Education Institution includes academic units, staff and students in the study program IQA process and informs interested parties on the results and the subsequent action plan.**

**Criterion 1** The institution should provide for and guarantee the involvement of internal and external actors, interested in ensuring and improving the study program in internal quality policies and procedures.

**Criterion 2** The institution defines the specific responsibilities and tasks of main units, individuals, students and other parties engaged in the study program internal quality assurance, and guarantees the responsible performance of these tasks.

**Criterion 3** During study program assessment and quality assurance it is important to guarantee the inclusion of the main unit responsible for the study program, academic staff, academic, support and administrative staff and study program students.

**Criterion 4** Internal actors' inclusion and engagement in the continuous assessment procedures should observe the academic integrity and avoid any kind of discrimination or inequality against staff and students.

**Criterion 5** Partners and/or external experts, who are related to the study program, or can provide valuable expertise and input about the program quality and improvement should actively participate in the assessment and internal quality assurance processes.

**Standard VI.5** **Policies, processes and activities for the study program Internal Quality Assurance should be made public, transparent, and effective, with the view to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Culture.**

**Criterion 1** The policy, strategy, organization and activities within the framework of study program Internal Quality Assurance system are transparent and are made public to all students and parties concerned.

**Criterion 2** The Institution publishes the results of the study programs assessment, by observing the academic freedom and ethics, as well as the legislation on personal data.

**Criterion 3**    The assessment results should go along with an action plan designed to address and improve the identified weaknesses and issues.

**Criterion 4**    The institution assesses and ensures activities' effectiveness and impact in the framework of monitoring and quality assessment, with the view to ensure the ongoing study program improvement.

**Criterion 5**    The institution organizes periodic activities with staff and students for their information and awareness raising on the long-term quality assurance and study program improvement.