



Europe and International Department

# EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMMES

Except for doctorates/PhDs

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## CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>FIELD 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Standard 1: The study programme is consistent with the institution's educational teaching strategy. ....	4
Standard 2: The study programme is open to international students in line with the priorities defined by the institution. ....	4
Standard 3: The study programme benefits from research links that are coherent with its outcomes.....	4
Standard 4: The study programme maintains links with the socio-economic world.....	4
<b>FIELD 2: PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Standard 5: The structure of the study programme and the teaching methods used are adapted to the target skills.5	5
Standard 6: The study programme develops and diversifies its teaching practices to foster student success. ....	5
Standard 7: The programme's content and mechanisms are adapted to its effective international dimension .....	5
Standard 8: The study programme content is consistent with the needs of the socio-economic sector and lifelong learning .....	6
<b>FIELD 3: STUDENTS' PATHWAY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Standard 9: The programme ensures the quality of its students' guidance and recruitment, as well as its attractiveness to its different target groups .....	6
Standard 10: The programme ensures the quality of student success .....	6
Standard 11: The programme ensures the quality of the professional integration and further study of its graduates in relation to its objectives and the labour market.....	6
<b>FIELD 4: ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Standard 12: The programme is managed and implemented by a formally identified teaching team. ....	6
Standard 13: The study programme has the resources required to achieve its objectives. ....	7
Standard 14: The study programme defines an evaluation process that facilitates its development in a process of continuous improvement. ....	7
Standard 15: The study programme relies on a quality- and ethics-based approach. ....	7
<b>ANNEX .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Correspondence table for Hcéres standards and the ESG .....	8

## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the external evaluation standards for international study programmes. It is consistent with the general framework of principles defined at the European level.

Indeed, the member countries of the European Higher Education Area participating in the Bologna Process have pledged to conform to the common principles defined in the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)", which deal with the management of quality, both internally within the institutions, and externally as implemented by the evaluation agencies, and finally as applied to the agencies themselves. The principle of the independence of evaluation agencies is therefore reflected in France by the Hcéres' status as an independent public authority. More generally, the recognition of the Hcéres and its inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) guarantee that its practices closely conform to European principles.

With respect to external evaluation processes, the ESGs state that:

- the aims and objectives of the evaluation should be clear and widely disseminated;
- evaluation methods must meet their objectives and be based on appropriate procedures;
- the procedures used must be known to the evaluators and the evaluated entities;
- in particular, the criteria must be explicit and published.

These standards should enable the former conditions to be met, but their objective is also to help institutions in their continuous improvement process, and to provide stakeholders with the best possible information.

Hcéres has developed its evaluation and accreditation process on the basis of a set of objectives that the programme must meet to ensure a certain level of quality. This set of objectives is presented in this document in the form of standards (objectives to be achieved) and evaluation criteria (actions that can be carried out). These objectives and the evaluation criteria have been divided into four fields of quality management in a study programme:

- its policy and characterisation;
- its pedagogical organisational structure;
- the students' pathway;
- its management and continuous improvement.

## FIELD 1: TEACHING POLICY AND CHARACTERISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Four standards (1 to 4) define the scope of this field, with the purpose of assessing the policy and characterising the study programme. More specifically, the aim is to assess their impact on the study programme's activities and results, and the manner in which the institution monitors them in light of its objectives.

### Standard 1: The study programme is consistent with the institution's educational teaching strategy.

- C1. The programme defines its objectives and outcomes in line with the institution's ambitions, teaching guidelines and thematic priorities.
- C2. The programme positions itself in the local, national or international training landscape.
- C3. The programme is developed in a coherent and complementary manner with other study programmes in the same academic cycle, and by forging links with programmes in other higher education cycles to which it is related in terms of continuity.
- C4. The programme ensures that its partnerships with other higher education institutions at local, regional and national level are effective and provide added value.
- C5. The study programme identifies the contributions of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity to its outcomes.
- C6. The study programme incorporates sustainable-development-related issues.

### Standard 2: The study programme is open to international students in line with the priorities defined by the institution.

- C1. The study programme develops international partnerships and ensures that they add value.
- C2. The study programme includes incoming and outgoing student mobility programmes and receives support, including a financial one for this purpose.

### Standard 3: The study programme benefits from research links that are coherent with its outcomes.

- C1. The programme is clearly positioned regarding the research community. The programme clearly identifies its supporting structures such as the research units, doctoral programmes and other structures in higher education institutions, possibly international.
- C2. The study programme includes research training (projects or internships in laboratories, research centres, seminars, etc.), or simply promotes awareness of research in a manner that is adapted to its outcomes.
- C3. Professors and researchers from the disciplines involved in the study programme participate in the courses.
- C4. The study programme and the research units to which it is affiliated establish a system for hosting, supporting and training students through research.
- C5. The study programme includes training in research integrity and ethics
- C6. The research-based programme relies on documentation services, particularly in terms of resource acquisition, access to these resources and contribution to training content involving documentation services staff.

### Standard 4: The study programme maintains links with the socio-economic world

- C1. The study programme takes into account socio-economic needs in order to define and promote its job opportunities, its outcomes and its contents. It involves socio-economic actors in these processes.
- C2. The programme defines its work-linked training and continuing education policy in line with the institution's positioning and strategy.
- C3. Partnership agreements have been signed between the institution and companies, organisations representing an activity or a profession, associations or institutions engaged in an activity related to the programme.

- C4. The study programme prepares students for job-market integration and entrepreneurship. To this end, it involves socio-economic actors.

## FIELD 2: PEDAGOGICAL ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Four standards (5 to 8) define the scope of this field, with the purpose of assessing the pedagogical organisation of the study programme. More specifically, the aim is to assess its impact on the study programme's activities and results, and the manner in which the institution monitors them in light of its objectives.

### Standard 5: The structure of the study programme and the teaching methods used are adapted to the target skills.

- C1. The study programme's objectives, educational contents, teaching methods and learning outcomes are defined and implemented in an approach that promotes pedagogical alignment. It adopts a curriculum-based and skill-based approach.
- C2: The programme structure is adapted to different student pathways. It enables the progressive specialisation of students and flexibility in their career paths. Bridges between programmes enable students to change study programmes.
- C3. The programme's objectives in terms of knowledge and skills to be acquired are known to the students and other stakeholders.
- C4. The study programme recognises the value of the skills acquired within or outside the programme, for example by enabling students to build a portfolio including the skills the students should acquire, or a similar tool.

### Standard 6: The study programme develops and diversifies its teaching practices to foster student success.

- C1. The programme diversifies its teaching methods (collaborative tools, project-based teaching, inverted teaching, serious games, active lecture classes, etc.) in order to foster its students' success.
- C2. The programme proposes specific measures to promote student success: refresher courses, individual monitoring, tutoring, division into groups according to their level, etc.
- C3. The programme offers a variety of teaching methods, including full or partial distance learning, to better accommodate and support its diverse target groups.
- C4. The study programme offers students an opportunity to learn or to be trained in the use of information and communication technologies.
- C5. The programme is based on various types of teaching environments, in line with its objectives and teaching methods.

### Standard 7: The programme's content and mechanisms are adapted to its effective international dimension

- C1. The programme enables students to acquire language skills that will be beneficial for their job-market integration or postsecondary studies– especially abroad – through the teaching of foreign languages and teaching *in* foreign languages, and through certifications
- C2. The program includes, in addition to foreign language instruction, measures to prepare students for both incoming and outgoing mobility.
- C3. In the European Higher Education Area, the degree is accompanied by a descriptive annex or supplement which specifies the knowledge and skills acquired by the student.
- C4. In the European Higher Education Area, the acquisition of credits (ECTS) depends on a formalised process known to students, in order to facilitate international exchanges.

## **Standard 8: The study programme content is consistent with the needs of the socio-economic sector and lifelong learning**

- C1. The programme includes opportunities to study and learn about entrepreneurship and involves socio-economic actors.
- C2. The programme comprises periods of work immersion for students through internships and special projects. A dedicated scheme helps students to find internships and develop their career plans.
- C3. Courses enabling students to acquire additional skills relevant to their job-market integration are offered. Means of monitoring and acquiring certifications are made known to students.
- C4. The programme ensures effective access for continuing education or work-study participants by implementing tailored arrangements for their hosting, support, and training needs.
- C5. The programme develops a specific offering within its scope for continuing education participants, supported by tailored training design and methodology.

### **FIELD 3: STUDENTS' PATHWAY**

Three standards (9 to 11) specify the scope of this field. Their purpose is to assess the training outcomes as they manifest in the pathways of its various participants, and in terms of its attractiveness, performance, and relevance. The aim is also to evaluate how it monitors and proposes changes, in light of its objectives.

## **Standard 9: The programme ensures the quality of its students' guidance and recruitment, as well as its attractiveness to its different target groups**

- C1. The information systems about the program, implemented by the institution or the program itself, contribute to its visibility and attractiveness, as well as to the quality of guidance provided to its various audiences.
- C2. - The program measures its attractiveness by analysing the evolution of applications and registrations from different types of audience.

## **Standard 10: The programme ensures the quality of student success**

- C1. The programme ensures the quality of its students' success by implementing support systems, assistance for achievement, and adjustments of their studies, while relying on the analysis of trends in their success rates and the impact of these measures. These success rates are publicly available.

## **Standard 11: The programme ensures the quality of the professional integration and further study of its graduates in relation to its objectives and the labour market.**

- C1. The programme ensures the quality of its graduates' futures by analysing their employment outcomes and the nature of their further studies, based on follow-up surveys regarding professional integration and cohort studies. This data is made public.

### **FIELD 4: ACADEMIC PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Four standards (12 to 15) define the scope of this field and are used to assess the management and continuous improvement of the programme. More specifically, the aim is to assess their impact on the activities and results of the study programme and the manner in which they are monitored in light of the programme's objectives.

## **Standard 12: The programme is managed and implemented by a formally identified teaching team.**

- C1. The allocation of responsibilities and the degree of subsidiarity implemented in the programme management contribute to the coherent and efficient functioning of the programme.

- C2. The teaching team's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
- C3. The list of contributors to the programme and their status are known to the students and more generally to the audiences concerned. The proportion of courses taught by external contributors is in line with the outcome of the study programme. Their level of expertise and responsibility is maintained at a level that is consistent with the programme.

### **Standard 13: The study programme has the resources required to achieve its objectives.**

- C1. The institution's human resources policy takes into account the management needs of the programme.
- C2. In order to fulfil its mission, the programme has sufficient administrative and pedagogical resources, such as secretarial offices, rooms, libraries, computer rooms, etc.
- C3. Members of the teaching staff are supported, assisted and/or trained as teaching staff and professors when appropriate. They ensure that their teaching practices are disseminated within the team.
- C4. Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility schemes and create favourable conditions for hosting visiting teaching staff.
- C5. The study programme relies on tools and indicators to measure the study programmes' cost in order to monitor and manage its sustainability.

### **Standard 14: The study programme defines an evaluation process that facilitates its development in a process of continuous improvement.**

- C1. The courses of the programme are formally assessed by the students, and the results of these evaluations are taken into account in the development of the programme.
- C2. The study programme has a consultative body, such as an improvement council, which includes students and people from outside the programme. It meets periodically to analyse the results of the programme and contribute to its internal evaluation.
- C3. The programme undergoes regular and periodic external evaluation.

### **Standard 15: The study programme relies on a quality- and ethics-based approach.**

- C1. Student recruitment procedures are transparent and clearly defined.
- C2. The evaluation of knowledge and the validation of skills are conducted according to precisely established procedures that are known to the students.
- C3. The procedures for the evaluation of courses by students, their analysis and the resulting actions are transparent.
- C4. The programme has defined and implemented anti-plagiarism, anti-fraud and/or anti-corruption measures.

## ANNEX

### Correspondence table for Hcéres standards and the ESG

ESG	DEI standards
1.1 – Policy for quality assurance	Standard 15
1.2 – Design and approval of programmes	Standard 1, Standard 5
1.3 - Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 5, Standard 6
1.4 – Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 5 (C4), Standard 7 (C3-C4), Standard 15
1.5 - Teaching staff	Standard 12, Standard 13
1.6 - Learning resources and student support	Standard 13 (C4), Standard 3 (C6), Standard 6 (C5)
1.7 - Information management	Standard 9, Standard 10, Standard 11
1.8 -Public information	Standard 4 (C1), Standard 5 (C3), Standard 10, Standard 11, Standard 15
1.9 - Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 4(C1), Standard 14
1.10 - Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 14(C3)

