EVALUATION OF FOREIGN STUDY PROGRAMMES

EXTERNAL EVALUATION STANDARDS

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INTRODUCTION

This document presents the accreditation criteria and standards for external evaluation of foreign study programmes. It complies with the broad framework of principles defined at the European level.

The member countries of the European Higher Education Area participating in the Bologna Process have undertaken to comply with common principles defined in the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). These principles cover internal quality assurance within institutions, external quality assurance as implemented by evaluation agencies, and finally, quality assurance as it applies to the agencies themselves. To illustrate this, the principle of evaluation agency independence is expressed in France through the status of Hcéres as an independent administrative authority. More generally, the recognition of Hcéres and its inclusion on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) guarantee that its practices comply with European principles.

With regard to the external evaluation of institutions, the ESG state that:

— the goals and objectives of the evaluation must be clear and made publicly available;
— the evaluation procedures must fulfil their objectives and be based on appropriate procedures;
— reviewers and those being evaluated must be familiar with the evaluation procedures;
— in particular, the criteria must be explicit and made publicly available.

These standards are intended to meet these conditions, as well as helping institutions in their continuous improvement efforts, and informing stakeholders as best as possible.

HCÉRES STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMMES

Hcéres has built its evaluation and accreditation process based on a set of objectives that higher education institution study programmes must achieve to ensure a certain level of quality. This set of objectives is presented below in the form of standards (objectives to be met), evaluation criteria (actions to be completed), and accreditation criteria (to check compliance).

These objectives and evaluation and accreditation criteria are divided into four quality management areas in a study programme:

— Its aims

— Its position in its environment

— Its teaching structure

— Its management

AREA 1: AIMS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Standard 1-1: The study programme has explicit objectives with regard to knowledge and skills to be acquired.

— The objectives of the study programme with regard to knowledge and skills to be acquired are clearly defined and communicated to students and other stakeholders.

— The name of the study programme is clear with regard to its objectives and content, and can be understood by all stakeholders.

— In the European Higher Education Area, a description or Diploma Supplement is appended to the degree to specify the knowledge and skills acquired by the student.

Standard 1-2: Outcomes in terms of job opportunities and further studies are explicitly stated.

— The study programme is clearly positioned in terms of further study programmes.

— Students and other stakeholders are aware of outcomes in terms of job opportunities and further studies.

— The study programme is positioned with regard to the business world in which graduates will eventually be employed.

AREA 2: POSITION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Standard 2-1: The study programme states its position in the local, regional, national or international environment, as applicable.

— The study programme is positioned within the local, regional, national or international range of study programmes.

— The study programme has identified its current or future partnerships.

Standard 2-2: There is a clear link between the study programme and research.

— The study programme has an explicit position with regard to the world of research. The laboratories, doctoral schools and other higher education bodies or institutions, including international institutions, which support the study programme, have been clearly listed.

— The contribution of associate or guest lecturers or researchers supports strong links between teaching and research.

— The study programme includes components of teaching through research or just in association with research (laboratory-based project or internship, seminars, etc.).

Standard 2-3: The study programme explicitly states its relationships with businesses, associations and other cultural or industrial partners, including international partners.

— There are partnership agreements between the institution and businesses, associations or institutions involved in an activity linked to the study programme.

— There are agreements in place with organisations that represent a business sector or profession.

Standard 2-4: The study programme explicitly states the added value of its partnerships with foreign higher education institutions.

— Cooperation agreements or partnerships (regardless of whether they award qualifications) have been signed with foreign institutions and are adapted to the aims of the study programme.

— Mechanisms are implemented to encourage the mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff.

AREA 3: STUDY PROGRAMME TEACHING STRUCTURE

Standard 3-1: The structure of the study programme is adapted to the different student academic pathways.

— The study programme includes a set of teaching units that is consistent with the objectives defined. The duration of each module (in hours) and the workload expected of students (in hours) are explicitly stated and known.

— The study programme is organised so that students can gradually specialise.

— The study programme has taken into account the challenges associated with lifelong learning and new forms of distance learning.

— The study programme is able to accommodate students with special needs or requirements (disability, students with sporting commitments or in employment, etc.).

Standard 3-2: The content of the study programme is consistent with the requirements of the socioeconomic world.

— The study programme includes components to prepare students for employment and inform them about the working world.

— The study programme includes components that focus on understanding the world of research and its results.

— The study programme includes practical work components.

— The study programme includes teaching components in at least one foreign language.

Standard 3-3: Projects and internships are a key teaching tool, with specific support mechanisms.

— Internships and projects are included in the study programme curriculum.

— The objectives, methods and assessment of projects and internships are explicitly stated and understood by students.

— A service is in place to support students in looking for internships and developing their career plans.

Standard 3-4: The study programme allows students to acquire additional skills that are useful for employment or further study.

— Courses that allow students to acquire additional skills that are useful for further study or employment are proposed and students are made aware of their monitoring and validation or certification methods.

— In the European Higher Education Area, the additional skills acquired are listed in the description or Diploma Supplement appended to the degree.

Standard 3-5: The study programme encourages the use of digital technologies and other innovative teaching methods.

— The study programme offers students teaching on information and communication technologies.

— Interactive (e.g. online courses and exercises, collaborative tools, etc.) or innovative teaching practices (e.g. project-based learning, serious games, active learning in lecture theatres, etc.) are encouraged.

Standard 3-6: The study programme offers specific tools for successful programme completion.

— There are refresher courses for some students starting the study programme.

— Students receive individual support (from a personal tutor or via another system).

— The study programme implements tools for successful programme completion (tutoring, division into ability groups, etc.).

— There are opportunities to transfer to other study programmes for a change of career plan while retaining some or all of the European credits acquired in the European Higher Education Area.

Standard 3-7: The study programme prepares students for the international environment.

— Learning one or more foreign languages is clearly identified in the curriculum.

— Some modules are taught in a foreign language.

— The study programme encourages international mobility through sending and receiving students via international partnerships.

— In the European Higher Education Area, European credits acquired under international exchanges are subject to a formally defined process communicated to students.

AREA 4: MANAGEMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Standard 4-1: The study programme is implemented by a formally identified teaching team.

— The study programme is managed and has sufficient administrative and teaching resources (administration office, classrooms, libraries, computer rooms, etc.) to enable it to fulfil its mission.

— One or more consultation bodies that bring together all study programme players (teachers, students, administrators) meet on a regular basis.

— Students, and more broadly, any audiences concerned, are aware of the list of teachers and their roles. Teachers receive training.

— The role and responsibilities of members of the teaching team are clearly defined.

— The proportion of teaching entrusted to external teachers from the industrial, socio-economic or cultural sectors is consistent with study programme aims. Their skills and responsibility level is consistent with the study programme.

Standard 4-2: Knowledge is assessed according to specifically stated methods communicated to students.

— The composition, role and meeting arrangements of the various examination boards are defined and communicated to students.

— Methods for testing knowledge are explicitly stated and consistent with the expected results of the study programme.

— The rules for validation of skills are clearly stated.

— In the European Higher Education Area, the rules for attributing European credits are explicitly stated and comply with national and European regulations or directives.

Standard 4-3: The study programme works to monitor skills acquisition.

— Teaching and practical professional units are expressed as skills.

— The study programme uses a skills portfolio or similar tool to help students formally record skills acquired.

— In the European Higher Education Area, the skills and competencies acquired are listed in the descriptive annex to the degree or in the Diploma supplement.

Standard 4-4: Student numbers and the different enrolment regimes for the study programme are clearly identified.

- — Student numbers for the study programme are monitored regularly.
- — Study programme recruitment and appeal are analysed with regard to the applications and context.
- — Student recruitment methods are transparent and clearly defined.
- — Flows of international students are identified and analysed.

Standard 4-5: The study programme has comprehensive information on graduate outcomes.

- — The study programme collects and tracks graduate data.
- — The methods and results of graduate surveys to collect information about their situation, employment level and business sector are defined and implemented by the institution and/or study programme.
- — Stakeholders are aware of the pass rates, proportion of graduates who continue their studies and graduate employment rates. This information is regularly updated and published.

Standard 4-6: The study programme is based on a publicly available quality assurance and ethics policy

- — Methods for student evaluation of teaching, analysis of this evaluation and any follow-up actions are explicitly defined.
- — Student and graduate evaluation of the study programme is taken into account in the self-evaluation process.
- — The study programme is subject to regular and periodic external evaluations.
- — The study programme has defined and implemented anti-fraud and/or anti-plagiarism and/or anti-corruption measures.

APPENDICES

Hcéres and ESG correlation table

ESG	Evaluation of study programmes	Evaluation of institutions
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	4-6	5-1, 5-2, 1-1-3
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	1-1, 1-2, 3-1 3-2	2.2.1, 2.2.2,
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	3-1, 3-4, 3-6, 3-7, 4-2, 4-3	2.2.2, 3-1, 3.2, 3-3, 2-2-4
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	4-2, 4-3, 4-4	3-1, 2-2-4
1.5 Teaching staff	4-1, 2-2	6-2, 2-3
1.6 Learning resources and student support	3-6, 3-5, 3-1	2.2.3, 2.2.2, 2-4 2-2-2, 3-2, 3-3
1.7 Information management	4-4, 4-5	6-3, 2-2-5, 3-1
1.8 - Public information	4-4, 4-5	1-3, 2-2-5, 3-1
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	4-6	2-2-5, 5-1
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	4-6	5-1