

Standard of Higher Education

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This Regulation is established under clause 5 (2) 7) of the [Republic of Estonia Education Act](#), clause 3 (4) of the [Higher Education Act](#).

Chapter 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. Scope of Regulation

The Standard of Higher Education establishes:

- 1) uniform requirements for study at higher education level;
- 2) general requirements for the academic staff;
- 3) principles for recognition of prior learning and professional experience;
- 4) objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved at higher education level (Annex 1);
- 5) a list of broad areas of study, fields of study, and study programme groups (Annex 2);
- 6) a list academic degrees issued in study programme groups (Annex 3).

§ 2. Scope of Application

- (1) The Standard of Higher Education applies to all levels and forms of study of higher education level, regardless of the legal status of the educational institution.
- (2) The provisions of the Standard of Higher Education apply to medical training, veterinary training, pharmacist training, dentistry training, midwifery training, nursing training, architectural studies, and civil engineering studies taking account of the specifications arising from clause 7 (3) of the Higher Education Act established by a regulation of the Government of the Republic and to teacher training arising from the clause 7 (4) of the Higher Education Act taking account of the specificities laid down in the decree of the minister responsible for the field.
- (3) The Standard of Higher Education is a source document for granting the right to organise studies at higher education level, for conducting institutional accreditation and thematic evaluations, and organising studies in higher education institutions.

Chapter 2 STUDY REQUIREMENTS

§ 3. Requirements for study programmes and quality of studies

- (1) A study programme is in line with the areas of activity of the educational institution that are based on the development plan or statutes of the institution. A study programme contributes to fulfilling the mission of the educational institution and to achieving its goals and takes into consideration the needs of the labour market and the target group.

- (2) Study programmes and conducting studies are consistent with the internal quality standards of the educational institution as well as with national and international quality requirements and agreements.
- (3) The objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme are equal and comparable with the learning outcomes of the cycles of higher education level described in Annex 1 to this Regulation, meet the requirements and trends of international legal acts that regulate the professional field and take into consideration the relevant occupational qualification standard.
- (4) The title and content of a study programme are consistent. A study programme is composed of modules structured in a way that enables a student in the first or second cycle of higher education to specialise in a main field of study. Module is the unit of structuring of the content of the study programme which groups subjects into a purposeful set or which is constituted of one single subject.
- (5) The structure and content of a study programme support the objectives of the study programme and the achievement of its learning outcomes. Learning outcomes mean knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired at the level which is necessary for completion of the described study programme. The learning outcomes of a study programme are formulated in a way that they provide a basis for evaluation of the level of the knowledge and skills of graduates and the achievement of the objectives of the programme.
- (6) The study methods and means used in studies, including the load of independent work and practical training, support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.
- (7) The organisation of studies conforms to the requirements if:
 - 1) academic staff are available for the studies, who meet the qualification requirements established in legal acts and whose number is, based on their responsibilities, the volume of conducted studies and research and the number of supervised students, adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme;
 - 2) a member of the academic staff who conducts studies in a given subject has the necessary teaching competence and qualification that supports achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme;
 - 3) ordinary academic staff who are conducting studies have properly undergone evaluation, have received regular feedback on their activities and have regularly furthered their pedagogical skills;
 - 4) necessary premises for studies and research and development activities related to doctoral study are available (auditoriums, laboratories, seminar rooms and a library), the furnishings and equipment of which are ample and up-to-date for achieving the objectives of study programmes and the condition of which meet the health and safety requirements established in legal acts;
 - 5) necessary information technology tools for studies and research and development activities related to Doctoral study and connections to domestic and international

information networks are accessible and necessary data media for acquiring subjects in the study programme are available;

- 6) a support structure exists that supports the work of the academic staff and support systems for students are available (including for provision of study and career counselling and for counselling on recognition of prior learning and professional experience);
- 7) financing sources for conducting studies and for research and development activities related to doctoral study and a strategy supporting their obtainment are in place.

§ 4. Organisation of studies

- (1) Studies are undertaken in the forms of contact learning, practical training, and independent work.
- (2) Contact learning means lectures, seminars, practical training classes, laboratory work, individual classes or other study in a manner determined by the educational institution, aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills, organised for achieving learning outcomes. Contact learning takes place in a learning environment (including e-learning or workplace-based learning), where both a student and a member of the academic staff or an instructor participate.
- (3) Practical training means a purposeful activity organised to achieve learning outcomes, aimed at applying acquired knowledge and skills in a working environment in a form determined by the educational institution and under the supervision of an instructor.
- (4) In Bachelor's and Master's study, practical training is foreseen if it is necessary for achieving learning outcomes of the study programme. The load of practical training is determined in the study programme.
- (5) In professional higher education studies, practical training constitutes at least 15% of the study load determined in the study programme.
- (6) Independent work means acquiring knowledge necessary for achieving learning outcomes independently, according to tasks given by a member of the academic staff.
- (7) In Doctoral study, research, development or other creative activity (including the Doctoral thesis) constitutes at least 70% of the study load determined in the study programme.

§ 5. Language of instruction

- (1) The language of instruction and other languages necessary for achieving the learning outcomes are determined in the study programme. The ability to use those languages enables achieving learning outcomes of the corresponding cycle of higher education level described in Annex 1 to this Regulation.

- (2) In Doctoral studies, if necessary, more than one language of instruction can be determined in the study programme.

§ 6. Completion of studies

- (1) Studies at level of higher education end with the defence of a thesis or taking of an examination.
- (2) The load of a thesis or an examination is:
 - 1) in professional higher education studies and Bachelor's studies at least 5 ECTS;
 - 2) in Master's studies at least 15 ECTS.
- (3) Doctoral study ends with the defence of a Doctoral thesis.

Chapter 3 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

§ 7. Principles of establishing specific requirements for academic staff

- (1) When establishing minimum requirements for academic staff, an employer takes into consideration the requirements of this Regulation and, if necessary for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme, may establish higher requirements than those provided in this Regulation.
- (2) In justified cases, an employer may establish in addition to the requirements of this Chapter, for a position presuming a *doktorikraad*, a profession awarded at the 8th level of the qualifications framework as compatible with the requirements.
- (3) At least 85% of the subjects determined in the study programme of Doctoral study are taught by academic staff who have a Doctoral level degree or a corresponding qualification and are active in research and development in the corresponding field of study or creative persons recognised in artistic fields at a high international level.

§ 8. Professor

- (1) An internationally recognised specialist in their field of study who has been awarded a *doktorikraad* or a corresponding qualification and who has pedagogical skills and experience, including experience in supervising students and at least five years of experience in active scientific and development activities or other creative activities, is eligible for the position of a professor.
- (2) An internationally recognised specialist in their field of profession who has been awarded a *doktorikraad* or a corresponding qualification and who has pedagogical skills and experience, including experience in supervising students and at least five years of experience in active research and development activities or other creative activities, is eligible for the position of a professor of an institution of professional higher education.

- (3) An internationally recognised creative person who has been awarded a I or a corresponding qualification and who has pedagogical skills and experience, including experience in supervising students and at least five years of experience in active creative activities, is eligible for the position of a professor in fields of arts.
- (4) When a person, when applying for a position of a university professor (except for applying for a position of a professor in fields of arts), has worked as a professor for at least five years prior, at least one Doctoral thesis must have been defended under the candidate's supervision within the past five years.

§ 9. Lecturer

A person who has been awarded a *magistrikaad* or a corresponding qualification and who has pedagogical skills, experience in scientific and development activities or other creative activities in their field of profession, and professional work experience, is eligible for the position of a lecturer.

§ 10. Researcher

- (1) A person who has a research degree or a corresponding qualification is eligible for the position of a researcher.
- (2) A person who has a *magistrikaad* or a corresponding qualification, who has been matriculated to the Doctoral studies and who has entered into an employment contract with a legal person for completing their study and research plan, is eligible for the position of a junior researcher.

§ 11. Teacher

- (1) A person with higher education or a corresponding qualification is eligible for the position of a teacher.
- (2) Specialists who have secondary education, at least three years of work experience in their profession, and who have had pedagogical training, may teach practical courses of a study programme of studies in professional higher education.

Chapter 4

PRINCIPLES OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

§ 12. Purpose of recognition of prior learning and professional experience

The purpose of recognition of prior learning and professional experience is to value life-long learning and ensure equal opportunities for evaluating and recognising a person's knowledge and skills regardless of the time, place, and manner of their acquisition.

§ 13. Principles of recognition of prior learning and professional experience

- (1) The educational institution establishes the conditions and procedure for recognition of prior learning and professional experience of students.
- (2) Recognition of prior learning and professional experience may be applied under the conditions and pursuant to the procedure established on the basis of subsection (1):
 - 1) for compliance with the admission requirements established by the educational institution;
 - 2) for calculation of prior learning and professional experience as credit points;
 - 3) for completion of a continuing education programme by calculating independent learning and knowledge and skills acquired from professional experience as credit points.
- (3) The assessment and recognition of prior learning and professional experience shall not apply to compliance with the graduation requirements specified in clause 6 of this Regulation.
- (4) Establishing of the conditions and procedure for recognition of prior learning and professional experience and submission of an application, evaluation of an application and making of the decision on recognition and contestation of the decision on the basis thereof shall be based on the principles set out in the Administrative Procedure Act and this Regulation and quality requirements prescribed by legislation and established in educational institutions.

§ 14. Principles for certification and assessment of prior learning and professional experience

- (1) Outcomes of prior learning are certified by a corresponding diploma, certificate or another document certifying education.
- (2) Studies which were carried out through professional experience and through independent learning shall be certified by reference to the works prepared, a description of professional experience, a professional certificate, or other documentary evidence.
- (3) The senate of a University and the Board of a professional higher education institution has the right to establish additional requirements for certification in addition to the provisions of subsections (1) and (2).

Chapter 5 IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

[...]

§ 18. Entry into force

This Regulation shall enter into force on 1 September 2019.

[Annex 1](#) Learning outcomes to be achieved at higher education levels.

[Annex 2](#) List of broad areas of study, fields of study, and study programme groups.

[Annex 3](#) List of academic degrees issued in study programme groups.