



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

## RULES OF PROCEDURE on the preparation and organisation of new programmes

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Guarantors: ÞK/SK/IH  
Approved by the  
University Council:  
4 March 2010  
Case number:  
HÍ10020375  
Authorised translation

### 1. Purpose and scope

These rules of procedure are intended to ensure that the preparation and organisation for new degree or diploma programmes is carried out correctly, in conformity with the provisions of Article 53 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009 and Article 8 of the Higher Education Institution Act no. 63/2006.

Higher education institutions must regularly account for the ways in which they ensure that the programmes they offer meet the *National Qualification Framework*, cf. Article 5 of the Higher Education Institution Act. In preparing and organising new programmes, the University shall publish information explaining how the programme meets those conditions and requirements outlined in the National Qualification Framework.

These rules of procedure apply to all programmes established at the University of Iceland, as well as to the roles, responsibilities and cooperation of those parties involved in preparing programmes.

These rules of procedure are part of the quality assurance system of the University of Iceland.

### 2. Criteria and definitions.

The University of Iceland is accredited by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (2007-2009) to offer programmes for bachelor, Master's and doctoral degrees in certain fields of science. The definitions of fields of science and their subcategories are based on the definitions given in the *OECD Frascati Manual*, which also apply to these rules of procedure. [See Article 6.]

The fields of science are: Social sciences, health sciences, humanities, engineering and technology, and natural sciences, as well as agricultural sciences which are not studied at the University of Iceland. Each field of science is divided into sub-categories, which are those subjects/disciplines belonging to the field of science. The organisational units of the University of Iceland (i.e. the schools and faculties) do not always directly relate to the categorisation of fields of science and their subcategories in the Frascati manual. Thus, educational sciences and psychology are subcategories of the social sciences in the Frascati manual, but belong to other organisational units within the University. However, this difference does not affect the way in which programmes are defined.

On the basis of the aforementioned criteria and terminology usage in the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009, the definition of terms in these rules of procedure are as follows:

A *subject/discipline* is a sub-category of a field of science, e.g. mathematics, chemistry, electrical engineering, medicine, business administration, law, teacher education, political science, history, philosophy, languages and literature. In other words, a subject is the foundation or common denominator for university degree programmes.



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A *programme* is defined as a collection of courses and assignments/theses/vocational training in a subject/discipline which form an academically logical whole and confer a certain degree or diploma.

A *specialisation* is a particular line of study within a programme. This is also described as a *field of specialisation* (in the Regulation for the University of Iceland) and a *line of specialisation*.

A *degree* is awarded when a student has completed to an appropriate standard all stipulated courses and assignments required for the degree.

A *diploma* is a qualification awarded for the completion of a shorter programme than those which confer a degree at the relevant level. At the undergraduate level this is based on a programme of no fewer than 90 credits; at the postgraduate level the minimum standard is 30 credits.

*Learning outcomes* are a description of that which a student is expected to know, understand and/or be capable of on completing a programme.

A *diploma supplement* is included with a degree certificate, describing in a standardised format the nature, level, context, content and position of the programme completed by the individual in question to a satisfactory standard.

The *National Qualification Framework* is a systematic description of the structure of qualifications and degrees, emphasising definition of a student's knowledge, skills and competences on completing a qualification or degree. This is published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and forms a framework for individual institutions' descriptions of learning outcomes.

### 3. Programmes and specialisations.

Study in subjects at the University of Iceland is divided into programmes in conformity with the National Qualification Framework published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Each programme confers a degree or diploma; the degrees offered at the University of Iceland are enumerated in Article 55 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. A degree is awarded in a subject within a faculty or an interdisciplinary subject, for which two or more faculties are responsible. Subjects within faculties and degrees awarded in them shall be enumerated in the faculty chapters in the University central regulation. These shall also outline diploma studies. Subjects shall fall within the framework outlined by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture's accreditation of fields of science at the University of Iceland, cf. the Higher Education Institutions Act no. 63/2006 and the Regulation on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions no. 1067/2006.

Full-time study is considered to be 60 credits (ECTS credits) per academic year. Individual degree programmes can be of different lengths, from one and a half years (90 credits) to six years (360 credits). Programmes at the bachelor level (level 1.2 in accordance with the National Qualification Framework) are usually 180 credits (three years), but in certain cases 240 credits (four years). A University faculty may specify different fields of specialisation within programmes, e.g. so that an undergraduate



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programme includes a major and a minor. Three-year programmes at the bachelor level may then be composed of a major (120 credits) and a minor (60 credits). A degree is then awarded in the major, except in cases where the student has studied two majors, in which case a degree is awarded in both majors.

A diploma programme (level 1.1 or level 2.1 in accordance with the National Qualification Framework) may be shorter than 60 credits, though no shorter than 30 credits, and does not confer a formal university degree. However, a diploma programme often counts, on certain conditions, towards a degree programme. If this is the case, rules will be stipulated in the faculty regulations.

Programmes may often have different *specialisations* or lines of specialisation. A specialisation involves a field or line of choice within a programme. The specialisation can comprise a different combination of courses and/or emphasis regarding the choice of final assignment. In cases where more than one specialisation exists within the same programme, they shall have common core courses. When more than one faculty is involved with an interdisciplinary programme, the faculties shall serve the roles of specialisations within the programme, cf. Article 62 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009, unless the regulation on the interdisciplinary study stipulates an alternative structure. In other words, under no circumstances shall independent versions of an interdisciplinary programme be established within each faculty involved.

When organising programmes, at least half of the courses and assessed assignments for course components must differ in order to justify a new, distinct programme. For example, in the case of a 180-credit bachelor programme, at least 90 credits shall differentiate a new programme from another in the same subject. If the specialisation of the programme involves a difference totalling fewer than 90 credits, it shall be organised as a specialisation (line of choice) within a pre-existing programme. The comparable difference, in the cases of 90 or 120-credit Master's programmes, shall be 30-45 credits in course components.

The specialisation (including majors and minors) shall appear on the degree certificate, with a more detailed description in the diploma supplement.

#### **4. A new programme: Preparation, organisation and establishment.**

##### **4.1 Preparation at the faculty and school levels.**

University faculties are the basic academic units of the University, within which studies in individual subjects are organised. The programmes and courses offered at each time are determined, depending on which applies, by a faculty forum, faculty council, department or board of study, cf. Articles 12-21 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. A new programme shall be prepared at the faculty level, and a supported proposal for a new programme sent to the governing board of the relevant school for consideration. In the case of a new specialisation within a pre-existing programme, in accordance with the conditions in Article 3, the governing board of the school shall decide whether the new specialisation will be offered.



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In accordance with Article 12 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009, the governing board of a school shall address faculty proposals for new programmes. If the governing board approves the proposal, they shall, on behalf of the relevant faculty, present a supported proposal to the University Council for the programme and appropriate amendments to the regulation, provided that the programme is unambiguously separate from existing programmes in those subjects enumerated in the faculty chapters within the University regulation.

Before contacting the University Council regarding a new Master's or doctoral programme, the governing board of a school must first seek a reference and confirmation from the Graduate School, cf. Article 4.3.

#### **4.2 Information about a programme, the reasoning and rationale behind it.**

A new programme must be comprehensively defined and information presented explaining how it meets those conditions and requirements outlined in the National Qualification Framework, cf. Article 8 of the Higher Education Institutions Act no. 63/2006. The academic and financial rationale for the programme shall be formally explained. This information shall accompany the proposal from the governing board of a school, along with a reference from the Graduate School where applicable.

Information on the structure of the programme must include the following:

- a) The title of the programme, level of study and degree conferred, number of credits, specified length and mode of study, the language used for teaching/examination, admission requirements, main objective and subject matter, study requirements, learning outcomes and parties involved within and outside of the University. When applicable, information shall furthermore be given on comparable programmes at foreign universities, conferred access to further study and professional recognition;
- b) courses that will be available, both mandatory and elective;
- c) programme supervisors, proposed teaching staff, access to facilities, appliances and equipment etc., if applicable;
- d) target group, estimated number of students and need for the programme.

The objective and learning outcomes of the programme shall be thoroughly explained, as well as its context and connection with other programmes, and that need which it is intended to meet. Academic reasoning shall be given for the establishment of an independent programme, cf. the criteria specified in Article 3.

Predicted expenses due to the new programme shall be accounted for, as well as whether and how funding will accommodate it.

Information on expenses must include the following:

- a) The expense of new courses;
- b) teaching staff, facilities, special appliances and equipment;
- c) expenses for services rendered by the school.



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#### **4.3 The Graduate School. Reference and confirmation.**

In accordance with Article 66 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009, the University of Iceland Graduate School shall oversee and follow up on established criteria and requirements concerning the quality of postgraduate study at the University. The Article also stipulates that the Graduate School shall confirm faculty proposals for new postgraduate programmes. In other words, when a new postgraduate programme is established (study at higher education cycle 2 or 3 in accordance with the National Qualification Framework), a reference and confirmation shall be sought from the Graduate School before the matter is submitted to the University Council. All things being equal, the Graduate School shall address the matter within four weeks of receiving the proposal.

#### **4.4 Time frame for preparation and handling.**

Due to preparation of the course catalogue and budget for the coming academic year, completed proposals for new programmes, as well as a confirmation from the Graduate School, shall be submitted to the Division of Academic Affairs office before 30 October each year.


The Division of Academic Affairs shall then submit the matter to the University Council. All things being equal, the University Council shall have taken a position on the matter before the end of December of the same year. The Division of Academic Affairs together with the lawyer of the University of Iceland shall oversee the finalisation of regulation amendments to be published in the Law and Ministerial Gazette, and the updating of regulations on the University website.

On receiving the approval of the University Council, a representative of the course catalogue for the faculty or interdisciplinary study shall oversee the establishment of the programme within the student intranet Ugla, cf. Article 4.5, in consultation with the editor of the University of Iceland course catalogue.

#### **4.5 Setting up a programme within the Ugla IT system.**

When formal permission is officially granted for a new programme, a representative of the course catalogue for the faculty or interdisciplinary study shall create the programme within the Ugla system using the predetermined format. The faculty, length of study in credits, organisational units and assignment numbers, title of the programme, degree conferred and learning outcomes, etc., shall here be specified, as well as other points covered in the course catalogue and diploma supplements, which are enumerated in Article 4.2. This information shall be specified in both Icelandic and English. It is vital that this work is carried out with care and that the text is reviewed and approved by knowledgeable parties.

When information on the new programme is saved, a notification will be sent to certain staff members in the Division of Academic Affairs who have the task of reviewing new programmes and approving them so that students may be registered.

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When a programme has been approved, a representative of the course catalogue for the faculty shall set up the courses or ‘steps’ of the programme and provide further details in the appropriate section of the course catalogue.

## 5. Review.

Four years after a programme has been established, whether at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, the head of the relevant faculty shall send a written report on whether it has been successful to the governing board of the school, the Quality Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee of the University Council. The report shall indicate developments in attendance and the number of students, any changes that have been made to the programme, information on assessment, academic performance and progress of students, e.g. information on drop-out rates and the number of students graduated, the financial return of the programme and other points considered relevant by the head of faculty. The Quality Committee and Academic Affairs Committee of the University Council shall review the report and issue a statement on it.

## 6. Legislation, regulation and criteria.

*Frascati Manual 2002:* [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/frascati-manual-2002\\_9789264199040-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/frascati-manual-2002_9789264199040-en)

*Revised Field of Science and Technology (FOS) Classification:*  
<http://www.oecd.org/science/inno/38235147.pdf>

Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006 (draft translation):  
<http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-PDF-Althjodlegt/Higher-Education-Act-no.-63-2006nytt.pdf>

Regulation on the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, no. 1067/2006, on the basis of Article 3 of the Higher Education Institutions Act, no. 63/2006 (draft translation):  
[http://www.hi.is/sites/default/files/accreditation\\_of\\_heis.pdf](http://www.hi.is/sites/default/files/accreditation_of_heis.pdf)

National Qualification Framework, no. 530/2011:  
<http://www.stjornartidindi.is/DocumentActions.aspx?ActionType=Open&documentID=afd35930-4c5a-4de4-bd7e-2134da404446>

Act on Public Higher Education Institutions, no. 85/2008 (draft translation):  
<http://eng.menntamalaraduneyti.is/media/MRN-PDF-Althjodlegt/Act-on-Public-Higher-Education-Institutions-no-85-2008---amended-2010.pdf>

Regulation on Quality Assurance for Teaching and Research, no. 321/2009:  
<http://www.stjornartidindi.is/Advert.aspx?ID=0291e0b1-b673-46d3-b037-f22772902b22>

Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009:  
[http://www.hi.is/adalvefur/reglur\\_fyrir\\_haskola\\_islands](http://www.hi.is/adalvefur/reglur_fyrir_haskola_islands)