

Accreditation Commission Standards for assessment of applications for granting, expanding and extending accreditation of study programmes and their fields of study

The standards characterise the general minimum requirements of the Accreditation Commission Czech Republic (ACCR) on study programmes and fields of study. The standards are used for assessment of applications for granting, expanding and extending accreditation of study programmes and their fields of study (hereinafter „applications“) and for evaluation of quality of study programmes. If the study programme is divided into fields of study, the requirements apply to the particular fields of study. Aside from these general standards, other criteria can be specified for particular groups of fields of study.

For all types of study programmes

Content of the application for accreditation:

1. Content of the application corresponds to the requirements of the Decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) No. 42/1999 Col., on the content of applications for accreditation of study programmes.
2. When creating the application, it is necessary to emphasize the essential and fundamental data and strive for their utmost conciseness and explicitness.
3. If the study programme is also realised outside the higher education institution's domicile (on a detached site), the data must be duly filled in for that site as well.
4. The ACCR prefers the applications to be created using the forms published on the website in the section *Terms of application*:

<http://www.akreditacnikomise.cz/en/terms-of-application.html>

- a) Forms for Bachelor and Master study programmes
- b) Forms for Doctoral study programmes
- c) Forms for creating an application that is connected to the application for state approval to operate as a private higher education institution

Please note that there is additional material related to other kinds of applications available in Czech: <http://www.akreditacnikomise.cz/cs/nalezitosti-zadosti.html>

5. The electronic version of the application submitted on an electronic medium has to be formally structured with regard to utmost coherency and user-friendliness towards the assessors. The structure must correspond to the requested form of the application submitted in the paper version. One file represents one study programme (or one field of study if the programme is divided into fields of study). Names of the files should not be long and should not include diacritics. Applications are submitted in the .pdf (or .doc) format. The electronic version must not be created by scanning the documents but by conversion of the text to the pdf format, which is smaller in file size and enables the use of search functions.

Content of studies

1. Aims of study, graduate's profile, graduate's job prospects, selection of compulsory courses, content of the state exam and proposed topics of the qualification theses have to be in mutual correspondence and thus create a coherent integral entity.
2. The standard period of study must correspond with the average workload, content and aims of study and with the graduate's profile.
3. If specific standards exist for the specific groups of study programmes and their fields of study, these specific standards must be fulfilled.

4. Study in the study programme and its field of study is carried out in accordance with the respective internal regulations of the higher education institution registered at MEYS (e.g. the content of the study programme must not be in conflict with the internal regulations).
5. In case of accreditation of a new study programme or a new field of study it must be assured that no significant overlap in content with another existing study programme or field of study at the respective institution occurs. New specialisations can be realised in the framework of the existing study programmes and fields of study in the form of optional courses, modules or selection of qualification theses topics. Purposeless fragmentation of the structure of study programmes and fields of study should be avoided.
6. In case of extending accreditation, the quality of previous realisation of the study programme and the quality of its outputs are assessed as well.
7. The content of a study programme realised outside the institution's domicile must be the same as that realised at its domicile.

Information and technical resources

1. Direct access of students to computer equipment and the internet must be ensured in a scope adequate to the number of students and the specialisation of study.
2. An internal information system must be set up enabling the students to get information and to access study materials, study agenda, internal evaluations etc.
3. Composition of the non-periodical literature must correspond with the state of development of the field of study and of the related fields of study in at least the last five years and this literature collection must be accessible. Composition of the periodical literature must include at least the fundamental titles in the particular field of study and this literature collection from at least the last five years must be accessible for on-site use. Students must have access not only to Czech but also to foreign-language expert periodical and non-periodical literature. If electronic databases exist in the respective field of study, at least the most significant of them must be available to students.
4. Access to the study literature (including the internationally renowned literature) which is specified in the annotation of the particular courses must be ensured at least in cases of the compulsory and compulsory elective courses.
5. Machine, laboratory and technical equipment must correspond with the character of the study programme and its fields of study, with the aims and content of study courses and with the number of students. For the practical laboratory education individual work of each student must be ensured.
6. Regular consultations must be provided on-site at the particular higher education institution for both full-time and distance students.
7. Information and technical resources of a study programme realised outside the institution's domicile must be the same as in its domicile.

Scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activities

Scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activities in the area corresponding with the specialisation of the particular study programme must fulfil the requirements placed on the given type of study programme in compliance with Sec. 46 to 47 of the Act No. 111/1998 Coll. on Higher Education (Higher Education Act).

Guarantor of the study programme

1. Each study programme must be guaranteed by an associate professor ("docent") or a professor, in compliance with Sec. 70, par. 5 of the Higher Education Act. If a study programme is divided into fields of study, ACCR specifies the requirements for the particular fields of study in a special document (published on its website).

2. The guarantor must be an academician of the particular higher education institution (if the application is submitted for a component part of the institution, the guarantor must be an academician of this particular part) with a full employment contract (i.e. 40 hours per week). Another employment at another institution cannot exceed a half-time workload (i.e. 20 hours per week); this applies also to engagement at institutions abroad (including the Slovak Republic).
3. A professor or associate professor can be a guarantor of only one Bachelor, one Master and one Doctoral study programme at a time. Professor or associate professor can guarantee different language versions of the study programme provided the contents are the same.
4. A guarantor can be only a professor or an associate professor habilitated/appointed in the field of study in which s/he should be a guarantor of quality and development, or in a related field of study, and whose publication or artistic activities within the last five years related to the guaranteed field of study are sufficient (depending on the character of the field of study these cover especially publications in renowned periodicals with a significant impact factor, reviewed expert journals, monographs, invited plenary lectures at conferences abroad, in the artistic fields of study relevant artwork). A guarantor who spent a significant part of her/his career abroad where it was not possible to habilitate or to be appointed professor must have a Ph.D. and have a long-term research, publication and pedagogical record fulfilling the requirements for the position of associate professor or professor.
5. In case of study programmes with a medical specialisation, the employment of an academician at the faculty and in the faculty hospital is considered one employment.

Academic staff

1. Personnel resources of the study programme must be sufficient to ensure the existence of a standard higher education environment in which the students have the possibility to work continuously together with their teachers. This is reflected in the composition of the academic community in which most of the academicians have an employment contract with the higher education institution. The workload and the period for which the contract is signed have to ensure high quality realisation of the study programme throughout the duration of studies.
2. For the assessment of the personnel of the study programme (field of study), the overall academic staff structure is essential. The main aspect taken into account is whether there exists a core of sufficiently qualified academic staff with appropriate expert and publication activities in the last five years (5 most significant publications in the last 5 years are assessed) and who have adequate time capacity for developing the field of study, i.e. they do not teach extensively at other higher education institutions. The age structure of the academic staff of the study programme is also considered in the light of the prospective development of the study programme and its assurance during the period for which accreditation is granted (the activities of younger or middle generation close to habilitation or the level of their involvement in the Ph.D. studies are assessed).
3. The profile courses of the study programme (in case the study programme is divided into fields of study, then of the field of study) are courses that affect the graduate's profile. Profile courses cannot be taught by teachers that do not have an employment contract with the higher education institution (or its part that carries out the study programme). The majority of profile courses must be taught by teachers who are employed at the higher education institution on a full-time basis and who carry out scientific, research, development, artistic or other innovative activities appropriate for the type of study programme for this institution.

4. Teachers must be active in the expert fields of the courses which they teach. The qualifications are to be demonstrated by academic achievements or by obtaining a scientific degree (associate professor or professor) and the most significant scientific outputs related to the field of study (depending on the character of the particular field of study mainly publications in periodicals with a significant impact factor, reviewed expert journals and monographs; in the artistic fields of study relevant works of art). When assessing the publications, their quality and relevance to the course(s) taught are taken into account.
5. An academician's involvement at the institution (his/her workload) must allow for a sufficient time capacity to assure instruction in the respective accredited study programme, to carry out a scientific, research, development, artistic or other innovative activities at the institution and to fulfil other duties like consultation, preparation for tuition, preparation of teaching aids, participation in the department's activities, carrying out the lifelong learning programmes, engagement in scientific communities, activity in the institution's managing positions etc.
6. If the sum of all workloads of the contracts and other activities at higher education institutions and other institutions of an academician exceeds 1,75 or 70 hours per week, this academician will not be taken into account in the assessment of the academic staff composition of a study programme at any of these institutions. This provision applies also to involvement at institutions abroad.
7. Teachers with less than a Master's degree are not permitted to guarantee courses. Experts outside of the academic sphere who do not have a Master's degree can be in well-founded cases invited to courses or to supervise student internships and placements, but these must be organized and evaluated by a teacher with an appropriate erudition.
8. The number of academicians employed on a full-time basis at the institution who participate in the respective study programme/field of study has to correspond with the character of the study programme and with the number of students indicated in the application for accreditation.
9. If the study programme is realised also outside the higher education institution's domicile (on a detached site), the academic staff must be qualitatively equivalent to that at its domicile.
10. The qualification theses (bachelor, master, advanced master, dissertation) supervised by external teachers must be under supervision of an academician of the respective higher education institution.

Bachelor study programme

Content of studies

1. The contents of a bachelor study programme and its respective field of study (hereinafter "bachelor programme") has to be based on the application of contemporary knowledge and methods of research, development, artistic or other innovative activity in the given field, must correspond with the aims of study and enable achievement of the defined graduate's profile.
2. The graduate must have the qualities of a graduate of a higher education institution – that means ability to conduct independent innovative work, ability to follow the scientific subject literature, ability to interpret and apply the results of common research.
3. The content must include the basic theoretical and methodological disciplines in the form of compulsory courses.

Academic Staff

1. The profile courses of the bachelor programme must be taught mostly by academicians who have at least the academic degree “candidate of sciences” (CSc.), or the academic-pedagogical doctoral degree (Dr.), or the academic doctoral degree (Ph.D., Th.D.) (hereinafter “scientific degree”); at least 40% of the lectures must be taught by professors or associate professors of the corresponding scientific specialisation.
2. Summary from the last five years of research, development, artistic or other innovative activities of the academicians involved in carrying out the bachelor programme must be submitted.
3. The active engagement in the respective field of study of external experts and experts outside of the academic sphere who guarantee practical and applied courses must be specified.

Innovative activity

1. The innovative activity in the area related to the bachelor programme must be tied to the unit¹ for which the institution applies for accreditation of the respective programme.
2. In the framework of the innovative activities, the institution has to be involved in solving scientific problems, for example in the form of seminars, workshops, own publishing activities, realisation of internal scientific projects, participation in the external scientific projects, including possible participation of students in these activities.

Master study programme

Content of studies

1. The contents of a master study programme and its respective field of study (further only “master programme”) has to be based on the current state of scientific knowledge, research and development, art or other innovative activity in the given field, must correspond with the aims of study and enable achievement of the defined graduate’s profile.
2. The graduate must have the qualities of a graduate of a master programme of a higher education institution – that means ability to undertake independent scientific work, ability to analyse the latest trends in the development of the scientific field, ability to prepare and take part in research.
3. The application procedure for admission to a master programme that builds on a bachelor programme has to be open to all graduates of bachelor programmes in the same or related field of study. Admission to the programme can be tied only to fulfilling pre-defined requirements. Within the framework of the master programme the institution can, however, require the student to take and pass certain essential courses which the student has not taken and passed during the bachelor programme.

¹ The unit is, in the context of accreditation, understood to be the higher education institution. If the higher education institution is divided into faculties, the unit is understood to be the faculty. The employment of faculty staff at a unit with institution-wide scope, at which they carry out exclusively scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activities, is not considered as employment at another unit for accreditation purposes. In the context of accreditation, the total extent of the staff member’s employment at the faculty and other non-faculty scientific units of the same higher education institution is considered in these cases.

Academic Staff

1. Instruction in the master programme must be provided predominantly by academicians who have at least a scientific degree; at least 60% of lectures must be taught by professors or associate professors with the respective scientific specialisation.
2. Academicians participating in realisation of a master programme must list their publications that demonstrate their scientific, research, development, artistic or other innovative activity in the field of their specialisation in the last five years.

Scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activity

1. Scientific, research, development or art activity in the area related to the master programme must be tied to the unit² for which the institution applies for accreditation of the respective programme (and field of study if the programme is divided into fields of study).
2. The higher education institution must have among other things in the last five years conducted external research projects which are thematically related to the respective master study programme; participation of the students in scientific, research, development or artistic activities is anticipated.

The authority to perform the advanced Master state examination

1. The contents of the examination and the topic of the thesis must be thematically related to the master study programme and to the field of study for which the authority is sought and must be based on the current state of scientific knowledge, research and development, artistic or other innovative activity in the field of study.
2. The higher education institution (if the respective study programme is realised by a faculty, then the faculty) has to realise a doctoral study programme, the content of which is related to the master study programme and the field of study for which the authority is sought. Realisation of the doctoral study programme provides a guarantee of appropriate expertise of the unit and of a scientific background essential for performance of the advanced Master state examination.

Doctoral study programme

Content of studies

1. The content of the doctoral study programme and its respective field of study (further only “doctoral programme”) has to be focused on scientific research and independent innovative activity.
2. The proportion of the theoretical knowledge has to be defined in the rules for creating individual study plans.
3. The selection of study courses and their content must differ from the selection and content of courses in Bachelor and Master studies.

² The unit is, in the context of accreditation, understood to be the higher education institution. If the higher education institution is divided into faculties, the unit is understood to be the faculty. The employment of faculty staff at a unit with institution-wide scope, at which they carry out exclusively scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activities, is not considered as employment at another unit for accreditation purposes. In the context of accreditation, the total extent of the staff member’s employment at the faculty and other non-faculty scientific units of the same higher education institution is considered in these cases.

4. Any other duties which the students have to fulfil in the course of their studies have to be directly related to the studies and must not jeopardize their studies.
5. The dissertation topics must unambiguously imply that their elaboration requires independent innovative activity of the student in the area of research or development or independent innovative activity in an artistic field.
6. When assessing the application, it is taken into account whether the dissertation topics correspond with the research specialisation of the unit.

Academic Staff

1. The preparation within the doctoral study programme must be assured by associate professors, professors or other distinguished experts (hereinafter “the lecturers”).
2. Only associate professors, professors or other distinguished experts approved by the Research Board or Arts Council can become tutors of students in the doctoral study programme.
3. The tutors, lecturers and members of the doctoral boards must declare their scientific, research, developmental, artistic or other innovative activity from the last five years in their expert field and related to the doctoral study programme, especially publications in renowned scientific journals, possibly authorship of monographs or art or engineering works³.
4. A sufficient number of academicians who have a full-time employment contract at the respective institution must be represented in the departmental council.
5. The number of dissertations supervised by one tutor must be adequate. The total number of theses supervised by one tutor in different programmes/fields of study and at different units/institutions is taken into consideration, as well as the issue whether the tutor has adequate time to tutor the students in appropriate quality.

Scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activity

1. Scientific, research, development or artistic activity in the field related to the doctoral study programme must be tied to the unit⁴ for which the institution is applying for doctoral study programme (field of study) accreditation.
2. Realisation of fundamental research (or research equivalent to fundamental research) in an area related to the doctoral study programme (field of study) must be a part of the scientific specialisation of the unit; this applies to the artistic study programmes adequately (results and presentations of the results of creative art or artistic-scientific activity on a comparable level).
3. The unit for which the institution is applying for doctoral study programme accreditation must demonstrate consistent scientific activity and give evidence that significant domestic or international projects and grants (for example of the Czech Science Foundation) in the area related to the doctoral study programme (field of study) have been carried out in the last five years.

³ Accreditation Commission can specify more detailed criteria for particular fields of study.

⁴ The unit is, in the context of accreditation, understood to be the higher education institution. If the higher education institution is divided into faculties, the unit is understood to be the faculty. The employment of faculty staff at a unit with institution-wide scope, at which they carry out exclusively scientific, research, development, artistic and other innovative activities, is not considered as employment at another unit for accreditation purposes. In the context of accreditation, the total extent of the staff member’s employment at the faculty and other non-faculty scientific units of the same higher education institution is considered in these cases.

Distance mode of study and combination of full-time and distance mode

1. Bachelor or Master study programme must be backed up by study aids in all the courses taught in the distance mode. A study aid consists of a set of information which substitutes direct teaching. It cannot be an excerpt from a textbook or another reduced text. Study aids must include tasks for student's individual work, rules for communication with the tutor etc. For a doctoral study programme no other data or documents are required on top of those provided for the full-time mode of study.
2. Bachelor or Master study programme must be backed up by study aids for at least one third of the theoretical courses at the time of submitting the application, and at least the first semester should be backed up completely. Study aids for the distance part of a study programme in a foreign language must be provided in the respective foreign language.
3. The proportion of contact and distance part of studies must be clearly defined and the ways in which instruction will take place in the contact part (organization of sessions and work of the students during the sessions) and in the distance part (study aids, e-learning, contact with the teachers, information about the presumed number of students per tutor etc.) must be precisely described. The application for accreditation (in the characteristics of study courses) must include the concrete tasks for student's individual work and the mode of their evaluation or this information must be a part of a separate methodology of the distance or combined mode of study of the respective study programme/field of study.
4. The possibility of communication with the teacher via the internet must be assured.
5. The system of consultations and a selection of other education options must be established.

Accreditation for realisation of a study programme in a foreign language

Fulfilment of the following standards is verified by rector's signature, i. e. they are not a part of the application for accreditation of a study programme in a foreign language as such:

1. The content of the Bachelor, Master or Doctoral study programme must be identical with the corresponding accredited study programme in Czech language.
2. Changes in the internal regulations of the higher education institution or of the faculty that are required in relation to conducting the study programme in a foreign language must be assured.
3. If the character of the field of study requires, specific conditions for admitting students must be established.
4. Internships and placements must be enabled in the foreign language (if they are a part of the study programme).
5. Exams, state exams or state doctoral exams must be assured in the foreign language.
6. Bachelor theses, diploma theses or dissertations must be written in the foreign language in which the study programme is taught, including opponent reports in the foreign language.
7. Information about study documentation, registry and other administrative acts pertaining to students studying in the foreign language must be provided.
8. The list of study courses must be published in the foreign language.
9. Lecturers and other teachers participating in the lectures, seminars and other forms of instruction in the foreign language must have sufficient language knowledge (state exam in the respective language, long-term stays abroad, lecturing and active participation in conferences in the respective language etc.). If the institution applies for expansion of accreditation, the qualification and publishing activities of the staff must correspond with that in the field of study taught in Czech.

10. The administrative department and the relevant academic departments of the higher education institution must provide for communication in the respective language.
11. Suitable information technology software in the respective language must be provided.
12. Scientific literature in the respective language must be provided.
13. If applying for accreditation of a study programme in the combined mode of study, the study programme must be backed up by study aids for combined mode of study in the respective foreign language.

Determining the duration of validity of a study programme accreditation

1. For the doctoral study programmes, duration of 8 or 4 years is recommended depending on the quality of provisions and of the related research or artistic activity.
2. For the bachelor and master study programmes duration of 8 or 6 years is recommended depending on the quality of provisions and of the related research or artistic activity. In exceptional cases it is possible to grant an accreditation valid for 4 years or less (this concerns generally new study programmes/fields of study and cases when the quality of study programme provisions does not provide sufficient perspective for development for a period longer than 4 years).
3. In case of expanding accreditation by an additional mode of study, the validity is granted for the same period as the accredited study programme (and field of study if applicable).
4. Validity of accreditation of a study programme (field of study if applicable) in a foreign language is assigned for the same period as for the relevant study programme (field of study if applicable) accredited in the Czech language.

Recognition of courses taken in tertiary professional schools

1. Upon admitting a graduate or a student of a study programme of a tertiary professional school (“*vyšší odborná škola*”) into a study programme at a higher education institution it is not permissible to recognize as completed the courses that lead to achieving the aims of study and the profile of the study programme’s graduate. These courses must be completed at the higher education level, which can only be ensured by completing them in the framework of an accredited study programme. This concerns particularly compulsory courses and compulsory elective theoretical courses that enter into the state final examination.
2. It is permissible to recognize only those courses that are not essential for achieving the graduate’s profile or whose character makes it acceptable to complete them elsewhere. This concerns courses of the common basic knowledge, languages, placements for professional training, applied practical courses and elective courses.

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no. 5/2013 in November 2013, no. 2/2014 in April 2014, no. 4/2014 in September 2014, no.
1/2015 in February 2015 and no. 1/2016 in February 2016.