

Albania

STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Description:

The Higher Education in Albania is public and private. In the public sector there are 9 universities, 2 Academies (Academy of Arts and Academy of Sports), the Inter-University Center of Albanological Studies, the Academy of Public Order (Police) and the Military University. There are 21 private universities (until September 2008). With the exception of the Military University, all the HE institutions are governed as provided in the Law on HE (2007). There are:

- a) Universities and Academies which can offer up to third cycle study programs;
- b) Higher Schools and Professional Colleges, offering mainly first cycle, and sometimes even second cycle study programs.

Research is done only at universities and academies.

Study programs are offered full time, part time as well as online.

Admission.

There is an Admission Agency under the Ministry of Education and Science governing the admission procedures. The admission to all the public HE institutions requires the completion of the secondary education (12 years) and the 4 State Matura Exams. The State Matura Exams has 2 compulsory exams (Maths and Literature for general secondary schools) and 2 elective exams from a 10-subject list. The 2 compulsory exams mark the completion of the secondary education. The 2 elective exams are needed for the listing of the competing candidates in the preferred study programs at the preferred public HE Institutions. Those entering private HE institutions do not need to take the elective exams. In certain study programs, that require special skills, like arts, sports, architecture, in some foreign languages, there is an admission/entrance examination at the HE institution which determines who are the successful candidates. The numbers for admission in the public HE institutions is determined by the Government, with a special Act each year, also considering the proposals from the HE institutions.

Study Programs:

Pre_Bologna Programs. The first cycle usually consisted of 4 years (for primary teachers and a few others, there were 3-year study programs), to be followed by the Post-Graduate School (1-2 years) with Research, which would then lead to the PhD, consisting of the doctoral thesis only. With the 2007 HE Law, the 4-year programs have been recognized at the level of Integrated Second Level/Cycle (Bologna's 3 + 2). The Post-Graduate School has been recognized at the level of Master of the Second Level (which can also cover the 60 ECTS of the first doctoral year – see below).

After-Bologna Programs:

There are non-university HE study programs of 120 ECTS, basically in applied fields.

The first cycle study programs are no less than 180 ECTS with 60 ECTS per year. The completion of the first cycle leads to the second cycle of 120 ECTS or the Master of the First Level, which is usually 60 ECTS, with professional lining. Only the completion of the second cycle program of 120 ECTS, with the Diploma of the Second Level awarded at the end, leads to the third cycle study programs.

Third Cycle:

- a) Long term Specialisation, basically in medical fields, but also in law and economics, lasting 2-4 years.
- b) Master of the Second Level, for those who want to advance their theoretical and professional knowledge, also involving research.
- c) Doctoral programs ending with the award of the Diploma of the Doctor of Sciences. Doctorants have to take 60 ECTS of taught subjects and prepare and defend a thesis. The holders of the Master of the Second Level or the former Post-University School, may have such credits transferred and have the 60 ECTS completed, passing directly to the doctoral thesis.

Following 2007, research is mainly at universities. The former Research Institutes were integrated at universities and academies. There can be units at department level, faculty level focused mainly on research, also doing a certain part of teaching. The other departments, do basically teaching, but also a certain part of the research. There is a separate institution, at university level, designed as inter-university center, called Inter-University Center of Albanological Studies, which is basically focused on research.

Accreditation:

Accreditation is the responsibility of the National Agency of Accreditation. There is accreditation of the Institution and accreditation of the study programs at the three cycles. A new HE institution will first need the Government Act (recognition), based on the proposal from the Ministry of Education and Science. Prior to the Act, the National Agency of Accreditation does the pre-accreditation. Following recognition, the new HE institution will have to undergo accreditation, and only after that a HE institution can award degrees. Accreditation is usually every 6 years (different provision if accreditation has been conditional).

Stages of studies:*University level first stage: Diplomë e Nivelit të Parë (first cycle degree - Bachelor)*

It is no less than 3 years, with undergraduate study program of no less than 180 ECTS, at a university, academy or professional college. If the profession is not regulated, such diploma gives access to the labour market.

Academically, it can give access to the second cycle of HE study programs, or the Master of the First level (particularly for teachers). A thesis is not a standard requirement. The study programs must be accredited.

*University level second stage: Diplomë e Nivelit të Dytë (Second cycle degree or Master); Master i Nivelit të Parë (Master of the First Level)**Diplomë e Nivelit të Dytë (Second cycle degree or Master)*

It is graduate studies – second cycle of HE study programs. It is 120 ECTS with 2 years of study. Students must prepare a thesis. It is the required standard for a number of professions. In certain fields like medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, veterinary medicine, architecture, the universities offer only integrated first and second level study programs – length no less than 5 years of study. The study programs must be accredited. It provides for entry to the third cycle study program – a) Master of the Second Level; b) PhD study programs and c) long-term specialisations in medicine, law etc.

Master i Nivelit të Parë (Master of the First Level)

It is open to those with at least a first cycle degree. It is mainly professional. The teachers in particular need this Master of the First Level of the first degree in their field. It is no less than 60 ECTS. It does not give access to the third cycle. It includes taught subjects and training. It can not lead to the third cycle programs.

*University level third stage: Master of the Second Level; Doktor I Shkencave (Doctor of Sciences)**Master of the Second Level*

Studies lasting for 1-2 years. It is post-graduate study program, open to holders of the Second Level Diploma who want to advance theoretical and professional knowledge and skills. It involves taught subjects and research. The student, under the supervision of a scientific researcher, must prepare and defend a thesis. Holders of this diploma may enter the doctoral program and may not need to take the 60 ECTS of taught subjects which are obligatory for the doctoral program. The Master of the Second Level is the bottom for the University professor and it is an advantage including a formal Government Act for special supplementary pay in public administration.

Doktor I Shkencave (Doctor of Sciences)

It is 6 to 10 semesters. It includes 60 ECTS of taught subjects and a doctoral thesis after individual study and research (while working). The title of Doktor I Shkencave is conferred. The candidate, under the supervision of a scientific researcher, must prepare and defend a dissertation thesis. There is a grading system. Part of the requirement for the award of PhD is 3 publications, with one at least in a known international journal, and 3 presentations in conference or other scientific activities, with one at least being international.

Distance higher education:

Part time distance learning and correspondence courses are offered but they need special approval. Online study programs are also provided in the Law on HE.

ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to non university higher education studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: Deftese Pjekurie (Maturity Certificate)

Minimum score/requirement: Minimum score of 15 out of 30

For entry to: all HE programmes.

Admission requirements: Entrance Examination for all programmes.

Numerus clausus: At national level (State Matura)

Admission to university-level studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: Deftese Pjekurie (Maturity Certificate)

Minimum score/requirement: Minimum score of 25 out of 100

For entry to: all HE programmes.

Admission requirements: Entrance Examination for all programmes.

Numerus clausus: At national level (State Matura)

Foreign students admission:

Definition of foreign student: All students who do not have Albanian citizenship.

Quotas: Quotas for foreign students to be admitted at Albanian HE Institutions, are determined by a) the Government (sub-legal) Act for admissions at public HE Institutions and b) under the provisions of bilateral agreements.

Admission requirements: Foreign students must hold a Diploma of Maturity.

Entry regulations: Entrance requirements depend on the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Health requirements: Foreign students can purchase security against accidents. There is no health guarantee for foreign students.

Language requirements: Students must sit for the Albanian Language Examination at the Faculty of Languages and Literature.

RECOGNITION OF STUDIES

Quality assurance system:

The first moment of QA is the recognition procedure. Within the framework of the Government's Act for the opening of a new HE Institution or a new study program, the National Agency of Accreditation checks the fulfilment of the standards and requirements. Only a positive evaluation from the Accreditation Agency can make the Government give the consent. Until the award of the first diplomas, the new HE institution will have to undergo institution and study program accreditation. The new HE Law provides for internal QA which is under the responsibility of the HE Institution. The external QA leads then to the final procedures for accreditation. The National Agency of Accreditation is responsible for the procedures. The Accreditation Council evaluates the findings of the External QA experts and presents its evaluation to the Minister of Education and Science for the Accreditation Decision.

Bodies dealing with recognition:

Sektori I Njohjes se Diplomave dhe Bashkepunimit Nderkombetar (Sector of Diploma Recognition and International Cooperation)

Head: Edmond Cane

Specialist: Edit Dibra

Rruga e Durrësit, 23

Tiranë

Tel: + 355(4) 222 7975

Fax: + 355(4) 222 7975

Services provided and students dealt with: Responsible for the policies and procedures for diploma (professional) recognition, coordination and assistance for academic recognition. It is the Albanian ENIC. International cooperation in HE, coordination, policy recommendations, contacts, etc., have also been added to the responsibilities of the Sector.

Agjencia Kombëtare e Akreditimit të Arsimit të Lartë - AAAL (National Agency for Accreditation of Higher Education)

Director: Dhurata Bozo

Rr. Leke Dukagjini, Nr. 5

Tiranë

Tel: + 355(4) 225 7954

Fax: + 355(4) 225 7954

WWW: <http://www.aaal.edu.al/>

Services provided and students dealt with: Responsible for the procedures for External QA and Accreditation. The Agency provides support for internal QA. It advises on and provides assistance with regard to the proper legislation in this field. The External QA Evaluation is made by the Accreditation Council and is presented to the Minister of Education and Science.

Special provisions for recognition:

Recognition for non-university level studies: The new HE Law provides for the Academic Recognition, leaving it to the host HE Institution (Article 38 of the Law No. 9741 on HE) and the recognition for professional purposes to the Ministry of Education, through its recognition unit (Article 37 of the same Law). Albania has ratified the Lisbon Convention on Recognition.

Further provisions about recognition, the requirements and the procedure, should be found in the HE Institutions' charters.

For details on the recognition procedures and requirements by the Ministry of Education and Science, see www.mash.gov.al (Arsim I Larte (Higher Education), Njohja e Diplomave (Recognition)).

Recognition for university level studies: The new HE Law provides for the Academic Recognition, leaving it to the host HE Institution (Article 38 of the Law No. 9741 on HE) and the recognition for professional purposes to the Ministry of Education, through its recognition unit (Article 37 of the same Law). Albania has ratified the Lisbon Convention on Recognition.

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For access to advanced studies and research: The new HE Law provides for the Academic Recognition, leaving it to the host HE Institution (Article 38 of the Law No. 9741 on HE) and the recognition for professional purposes to the Ministry of Education, through its recognition unit (Article 37 of the same Law). Albania has ratified the Lisbon Convention on Recognition.

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For exercising a profession: Until now, the diploma gives access to the pursuit of a profession. There is a State Exam only for Barristers. The medical doctors can have access to the pursuit of the profession as GP on the basis of the diploma in medicine. Specialist doctors have to complete the specialisation courses in medical fields (2-4 years). Access to such specialisation requires the diploma in medicine with the GPA above 8.0, and passing the entrance examination.

Efforts are being made to introduce standards such as those of the 2005/36 EU Directive.

NATIONAL BODIES

Ministria e Arsimit dhe Shkences (Ministry of Education and Science)

Minister: Fatos Beja

Head: Gavrosh Muzaka

Rruga e Durrësit, 23

Tiranë 1001

Tel: + 355(4) 222 6307

Fax: + 355(4) 223 2002

E-Mail: mashadmin@mash.gov.al

Role of national body: Responsible for all national policies in HE. The Ministry monitors the HE Institutions as provided in the Law. The Ministry is also responsible for the other education levels (primary, secondary, professional).

Drejtoria e Politikave te Arsimit te Larte (Department of Policies on Higher Education)

Director: Elida Hoxha

Rruga e Durrësit, 23

Tiranë

Tel: + 355(4) 222 7975

Fax: + 355(4) 222 7975

Role of national body: Responsible for national HE policies, monitoring and implementation or coordination of all HE policies.

Data for academic year: 2008-2009

Source: IAU from Sector of Diploma Recognition and International Cooperation, Tiranë, 2008