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Regulation for online Higher Education in Spain

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Drafting a Regulatory Framework for Online Higher Education Programs

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 - A. Indicators

1. The **PROPOSAL** must define the following points:
 - 1) Full degree title
 - 2) Affiliated with a specific branch of knowledge: Each branch has a verification committee.
 - Arts and Humanities
 - Sciences
 - Health Sciences
 - Social Sciences and Law
 - Engineering and Architecture
 - 3) Can be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary:

2. CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

European Credit Transfer System - ECTS = the standard unit in Europe for quantifying the volume of work and time a student must dedicate to completing a course or academic program. 1 ECTS = 25/30 working hours.

- 1) Curricula are structured around 60 ECTS per academic year.
- 2) Bachelor's degrees will have 240, 300, or 360 ECTS.
- 3) Master's degrees will be 60, 90, or 120 ECTS.

3. TEACHING METHOD: The relevance of the proposed method(s) must be adequately justified.

- 1) IN-PERSON:** All teaching activities are conducted in person, that is, hours involving physical and synchronous interaction between faculty and students.
- 2) BLENDED:** This modality combines in-person and online teaching. A teaching method is considered hybrid when the sum of ECTS for online subjects/courses is between 40% and 60% of the total ECTS for the degree.
- 3) ONLINE:** This modality is characterised by its intensive use of digital technologies. The vast majority of activities do not require interaction between students and faculty in the same learning environment.

4. OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand, and be able to do at the end of a training and learning process, specified as follows:

- **Knowledge or content acquired** through the **assimilation** of theories, information, data, etc.
- **Skills, attitudes, and values** to **apply knowledge** in order to complete tasks and solve problems.
- **Demonstrated abilities** to **apply knowledge, skills, and abilities** in work or study situations, as well as in professional and personal development.

5. Description of the STUDY PLAN.

The following should be specified in general terms:

- 1) Which modules and subjects will be **taught in each of the modalities** (in-person, hybrid, and online)?
- 2) For each module/subject/course in each modality, the **specific learning activities** and assessment methods should be **differentiated**.
- 3) The mechanisms in place to **verify student identity** during the assessment processes should be specified.

6. The VERIFICATION COMMITTEE of each Branch will assess the suitability of:

- 1) The method associated with the degree.
- 2) JUSTIFICATION of the academic, scientific, professional, and social INTEREST of the degree, as well as its relevance within the strategic planning of the institution or the university system.

7. GUIDELINES for submitting information on degrees in the blended or online modalities.

A. Academic and teaching support STAFF.

- **Given the particularities** of these teaching modalities, **the university must present the structure, profile, and role of the academic staff involved**, as well as their dedication.
- The **specific faculty member responsible** for coordinating and designing the degree program must be clearly identified. This faculty member must be a contracted professor with a permanent position at the university.

B. LEARNING RESOURCES: materials and infrastructure, practices, and services.

The Institution shall provide specific information on:

- **The technical and material resources available** for achieving the objectives, the functionalities must be described.
- **How the reliability and security** of the system are guaranteed, as well as its availability and access.
- **The mechanisms used to guarantee student identity and control** of the environment to prevent fraud.

D. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM.

An Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) applicable to the study program must be in place, which must comply with the criteria and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

To this end, the following must be done:

- Provide the processes and manual of the IQAS applicable to the study program.
- Indicate whether it is an institutional IQAS that has been externally certified by an external evaluation agency.

8. ASSESMENT. The planned system must pursue quality in all aspects of the teaching-learning process. All its components shall be analysed so that, if deviations or negative results are detected or perceived, measures or improvements can be introduced.

What is assessed?	The conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal objectives and content are assessed.
Who assesses?	The teacher or tutor conducts the assessment, and the students also participate .
When to assess?	The assessment process accompanies the learning process itself and is continuous .
How to assess?	The assessment techniques and methods depend largely on the teaching methodology adopted in the course.

9. ASSESMENT

A. QUALITY, EFFICIENCY, AND TRANSPARENCY INDICATORS FOR AN E-LEARNING PROJECT.

It is advisable to evaluate content-based e-learning models, distributing the indicators across three main areas:

A. INFRASTRUCTURE: LMS (Learning Management System) platform.

B. VIRTUAL CLASSROOM: Teaching and training content.

C. ADMINISTRATION: Tutoring support.

For each area, the main quality, efficiency, and transparency indicators that a project must meet to ensure its success are defined.

10. KEY ASPECTS.

- A. Technological environment.** The actual connectivity options of users must be taken into account. Access from a computer, tablet, or phone must be planned.
- B. Content:** Basic content, such as PDFs, is not acceptable as the sole option. Content should be delivered through dynamic and engaging resources. Mobile web design (responsive design) offers the best viewing experience on the widest variety of devices.
- C. Teaching staff:** It is essential to have staff trained in digital teaching. This is a guarantee of success.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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Thank you!

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