

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Since 1991 the higher education in the Republic of Moldova is being continuously reformed. Areas include review of the theoretical concepts and aims for which education is intended, subsequent redirection of objectives for desired outcomes, structural and institutional reform, the humanization and democratization of the educational process, curricular reform and implementation of related methodologies and techniques of learning and teaching, and reform of evaluation and assessment practices.

The most recent priorities of the reforms are those related to Bologna Process.

### HEI development basic figures<sup>1</sup>

Study programs offered: to 137 specialties. The most demanded are *Economy* - each fourth student ( 91% on contract basis) and *Law* - each fifth student ( 89% on contract basis).

Academic staff: Total: 5700 persons. Holders of an academic title - about 40% of the total academic staff.

**Table 1.** Number of institutions and students

Academic year	Number of institutions			Number of students		
	Total	State owned	Private	Total	In the state owned HEI (including students on contract basis, %)	In the private HEI
2001-2002	52	14	31	86 414	63 541 (57%)	22 873
2002-2003	46	14	28	95 039	71 203 (66%)	23 836
2003-2004	41	15	26	104 029	80 892 (72%)	24 250
<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>117 213</b>	<b>93 418 (76%)</b>	<b>23 795</b>

### Current deficiencies in higher education

- Insufficient financing from state budget
- Unconformities:
  - Legal framework - academic reality
  - Qualifications required by the labor market - qualifications offered by universities
- Difficulties in quality assurance:
  - Lack of teaching staff in some universities;
  - Unequal development of the institutional infrastructure, material and didactic basis

### Recent outcomes

- Improved and updated normative basis (regulations, normative documents, including Governmental decisions);
- Adjusted curricula according to market economy needs;

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education in Moldova seen in the context of Bologna Process. Valentin Beniuc, Minister of Education, 27 Nov.2004, Chisinau.

- Academic evaluation system and accreditation system implemented;
- New organizational strategies developed for educational process, including ECTS;

### **Educational Standards elaboration**

<b>2000</b>	Higher Education Framework Plan was developed and approved
	Classified List of university education specialties approved by law
<b>2001</b>	Specification of study duration, of titles and classificatories in HE
<b>2003</b>	Concept of the national educational standards elaborated
<b>2004</b>	University curriculum developed
	Educational standards elaborated by specialties and universities

### **Implementation of the ECTS**

#### Year 2000

- The credit transfer system started to be implemented; State University of Moldova was appointed as the pilot institution;
- An Advisory Center was created within the State University on the ECTS implementation;
- Curricula are adjusted to ECTS.

### **Implementation of the diploma supplement**

#### Since 2002:

Graduates can receive a Diploma Supplement

### **University Autonomy**

- University administration strive for managing the budget by themselves; univ. budgets are mostly made up from other sources than the state ones;
- Universities are looking for possibilities to keep and stimulate academic staff.

### **STRATEGY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT (in pipeline, draft paper)**

The strategy is to be implemented in three stages:

Stage I: 2004-2005 – elaboration of the normative basis for modernizing the higher education in the context of the Bologna Process;

Stage II: 2005-2010 – organization of the higher education into three cycles; assurance of the quality of the higher education and promotion of mobility for students and university teaching staff;

Stage III: 2010-2015 – creation of a higher education system in a post-industrial society capable of self-organization and self-development

Basic elements:

- Restructuring of the university education programs towards two cycles system;
- University educational standards implementation;
- Recently approved Classified List of university education specialties to be implemented;
- Institutionalization of the Education Credit Transfer System;
- Modernization of the university curricula;
- Further implementation of Diploma Supplement.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Higher education in Moldova is provided by universities, academies, institutes and university colleges. Colleges can be affiliated to universities or function autonomously.

The current higher educational system has three academic levels:

- undergraduate and college levels (4-6 years);
- graduate level (Master, 1-2 years);
- postgraduate level (doctoral and postdoctoral).

The period of studies is 4-6 years. Admission to higher education is for graduates from general secondary schools and lyceums, holders of Certificate of studies, in the first case, and holders of Baccalaureate Diploma, in the second case. Higher education finalizes with graduation exams and a Diploma thesis. The graduates receive a Diploma of License or Diploma of higher education in a certain subject area. Diploma of License is for students with an average mark for all years of studies higher than 7.5. Those students, whose average mark is less than 7.5, but not smaller than 5.0, get Diploma of higher education. Higher education can be short-term (2-3 years provided by Colleges) and long term higher education (4-6 years provided by Universities).

Admission to long-term higher education is for graduates from lyceums, secondary schools, colleges, professional schools (technical schools which include general comprehensive program). The admission period is July-August.

Graduate education aims at training specialists for HEIs, research institutes, etc. Holders of master's degree have the right to apply for doctoral studies. Master programs are offered by universities in various fields. The period of studies is 1-2 years depending on the specialization. Nowadays graduate education is by full-time attendance. Students enrolled due to the plan of the Ministry of Education get stipends. But it is possible to attend master's courses by paying tuition fees, for those students enrolled additionally to the plan of enrollment. Admission is by exams and students must show good results.

The postgraduate education has several levels: doctoral, postdoctoral, postgraduate advanced courses. Candidates for doctoral and postdoctoral degrees should pass additional examination and prepare extended papers before writing a dissertation under the guidance of an academic or a senior researcher. Postgraduate education is provided by long-term HEIs or by the Institutes of Research within the Moldovan Academy of Science.

Doctor's degree is awarded after a 3 years (full-time) and 4 years (correspondence) period of research activity finishing with presentation of a Doctor thesis which is to be defended at one of the Scientific Councils qualified by the Higher Attestation Commission.

Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) degree is for persons holding Ph.D. Postdoctoral studies consist of research. The Doctor of Science's degree is awarded after the presentation of thesis.

Continuing education is also organized within some universities. Universities set up Centers for Continuing Education offering short term (1/3/6 months) and long term (2.5 years) courses. Long-term courses allow people attending them to get another Diploma of higher education in a related to the former specialization field if somebody had already got a Diploma of higher education.