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After signing the Bologna Declaration in 2003, the structure of the educational process was altered by introducing three cycles of studies and the European Credit Transfer System ECTS as a measure of the scope of studies.

The reformed higher education system is characterized by quality assurance and continuous quality control, the introduction of “diploma supplement” as an accompanying document that describes the study program and acquired knowledge, skills and competences, increase in student and academic staff mobility, recognition of acquired qualifications and degrees in accordance with the Lisbon Convention, engaging students as partners in educational process and decision-making system and developing the lifelong learning concept.

The area of higher education is regulated by the [Law on Higher Education](#) [1], whose last amendments were adopted in June 2017, and they relate to:

- the introduction of a new 3 + 2 + 3 study model, being the dominant one in the European Higher Education Area, instead of the previous 3 + 1 + 1 + 3 model;
- free bachelor and master studies at public higher education institutions, i.e. the University of Montenegro, starting from 2017/2018 academic year for bachelor studies. Studies of the second cycle, i.e. master studies according to the reformed study model, will be free of charge as of 2020/2021;
- the introduction of a new higher education funding model, the so-called contractual model;
- mandatory practical instruction comprising 25% of total student’s workload by course, i.e. a year, depending on the learning outcomes for a particular study programme;
- establishment of the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education.

All of the strategic objectives for further higher education development have been formulated in the [Strategy for the Development of Higher Education 2016-2020](#) [2], and they include:

- improving the quality of higher education and creating competitive staff
- harmonizing education with the labour market needs
- improving scientific and research work and increased level of participation in EU projects
- internationalization of higher education
- lifelong learning
- Establishing a sustainable funding model.

Higher education in Montenegro can be acquired at the university, faculty, art academy and college. Higher education institutions can be established as public or private. A public institution is founded by the government. A private institution may be established by a national and foreign legal entity or natural person.

Study programmes that can be implemented at institutions are:

- **bachelor, comprising 180 ECTS**
- **master (postgraduate), comprising 120 ECTS**
- **doctoral, comprising 180 ECTS points.**

Study programmes may be interdisciplinary and organized from at least two fields.

Undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes can be accredited as academic and applied.

Doctoral study programmes can be accredited as academic.

First cycle programmes (undergraduate studies) take three years, and the majority of study programmes comprise 180 ECTS. In accordance with the Law on Higher Education, first-cycle programmes can also be organized as integrated bachelor and master programmes comprising 300 ECTS points, or 360 ECTS points. Persons who obtain a degree by completing integrated bachelor and master studies are entitled to apply directly to doctoral studies.

Programmes in the field of regulated professions (Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture, Pharmacy, Medical College of Vocational Studies) have been harmonized with a special European Union regulation governing the field of regulated professions, i.e. Directive 2005/36EC and Directive 55/13EC.

The accreditation of institution of higher education that have accredited the programs of bachelor, master and doctoral studies (3 + 2 + 3) after 1 January 2016, for a period of three years, is valid until the end of the study year 2021/2022.

Persons who complete the first-cycle programmes (academic and applied study programmes) have an option to continue education on second-cycle programmes.

Each study programme has to include practical training, as well as learning outcomes for the scientific area to which the relevant study programme belongs, i.e. competences for performing the relevant activities. Practical trainings make at least 25% of total student's workload by course, i.e. a year, depending on the learning outcomes for an individual study programme.

The condition that each higher education institution needs to meet in order to be able to carry out study programmes and enrol students is to have an accreditation certificate issued by the [Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education](#) [3] and a license to work issued by the [Ministry of Education](#) [4]. Among other things, the Agency:

- conducts the procedure of study programme accreditation and issues a certificate on accreditation of the study program
- conducts the procedure of higher education institution external evaluation and issues a certificate on reaccreditation of the higher education institution based on the reaccreditation report
- carries out periodic assessment of quality of licensed higher education institutions' work, following the request of an authorized body of institution or the Ministry
- establishes the list of experts for accreditation of study programmes, or reaccreditation of institutions based on a public call
- ranks higher education institutions.

Activities of improvement and development of higher education are conducted by the [Council for Higher Education](#) [5]. The Council is appointed and removed by the Parliament of Montenegro on the proposal of the Government. Members of the Council are appointed from among the eminent experts in the area of higher education, science, arts, from among students and the area of economy, social

matters and other relevant areas. Representatives from among students are appointed for a period of two years.

Among other things, the Council:

- analyzes the state and achievements in higher education and offers expert proposals to the Ministry of Education and the Government of Montenegro
- prescribes the conditions and criteria for appointment to academic titles
- provides opinion on the amount of resources required for funding public higher education institutions and students of these institutions, for each academic year
- provides opinion on the number of students and the amount of resources required for funding students attending programmes of public interest at private higher education institutions, for each academic year
- provides opinion on regulations in the field of higher education
- cooperates with higher education institutions in terms of quality assurance and quality improvement.

The Council for Higher Education, at its session held on 16 April 2019, determined [**Conditions and Criteria for Election to Academic Titles.**](#) [6]

The Government determines the number of students to be financed from the budget of Montenegro for a certain study programme, in accordance with the number prescribed in the license of the public institution. In the procedure of giving approval to the call for enrolment in study programmes, the decision is made by the Government, following the proposal of the public institution's management body.

Funding public institutions for implementing the first-cycle study programmes began in 2017/2018, whereas the funding of public institutions for the implementation of the second-cycle study programmes will begin in 2020/2021. This means that in 2017/18 academic year, all students enrolled in the first year of first-cycle studies attend public institutions free of tuition fees, whereas from 2020/21 academic year, students enrolling master studies in public institutions will be exempt from paying tuition fees.

A foreigner is entitled to be enrolled in study programmes in Montenegro under the same conditions as Montenegrin citizens, in accordance with the Law and the statute of the institution.

Students with disabilities in public and private institutions are exempt from paying the fee. For persons with disabilities, the principle of affirmative action is applied on the occasion of enrolment in a study programme.

Students are involved as partners in the decision-making process, the improvement of studies and the quality of studies. Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education and the Statute of the institution, a student is entitled to elect and be elected to the bodies of the institution. Students have their representatives in the governing board, the highest governing body of the institution, the senate and the council of the faculty. At least 20% of the total number of members professional and management bodies are students.

In accordance with the Law on Academic Integrity, the Government appointed new members of the [**Ethics Committee**](#) [7], on its session held on 11 March 2021.

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[1]

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[2]

<http://www.mps.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rid=244534&rType=2&file=Strategija%20razvoja%20visokog%20obrazovanja%20u%20Crnoj%20Gori%202016-2020.doc>

[3] <http://www.akvo.gov.me/>

[4] <http://www.mps.gov.me/ministarstvo>

[5] <http://www.svo.gov.me/direktor>

[6]

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjDh4GV-8jvAhVGxoUKHbzFCYcQFjAAegQIBBAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fmps.gov.me%2FResourceManager%2FFileDownload.aspx%3Frid%3D364563%26rType%3D2%26file%3DUслови%2520i%2520kriterijumi%2520za%2520izbor%2520u%2520akademska%2520zvanja.docx&usg=AOvVaw0ULyIP01WsnssQvEFrtKD6>

[7] https://mps.gov.me/rubrike/eticki_komitet/