

Structure of Higher Education in Albania

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1. Overall structure of higher education and various types of higher education institutions.

- a. The main legal act where Higher Education is based is **The Law No. 8461, date 25.02.1999 “Law for Higher Education in the Republic of Albania”**. All higher education institutions are acting according this law. The law permit opening of private higher education institutions as well. In general, articles of the law are dealing with public higher education.

Very soon the Council of the Ministers will pass a draft about nonpublic (private) higher education in the Republic of Albania.

According to the Law for Higher Education, all higher education institutions have their own statutes and rules of the studies. These documents are legislative documentation about organizing and functioning of the higher education.

- b. Higher Education system in Albania is a binary system. There are three kind of higher institutions in Albania:

1. Universities	(8 in whole the country)
2. Academies	(2 “)
3. Nonuniversity high schools	(1 “)

- c. All universities and academies give diplomas of university level (bachelor degree). Only Nursing Higher School gives nonuniversity level diploma. Nonuniversity level diploma give some university branches as well.

- d. System of Distance Education in Albania is composed by National Centre on Distance Education and the Departments on Distance Education at the University of Tirana, University of Shkodra and Polytechnic University of Tirana. This is a system integrated in the public higher education. This system was set up on 1998 starting its activity with nonuniversity level education. Its main activity is training in postuniversity level in economics and social fields.

- e. Nonuniversity level education development is one of the priorities of the Higher Education actually. Some nonuniversity level studies offered from different universities will be reconstructed as nonuniversity higher schools.

Nonpublic higher education will be developed in the near future.

2. Structure of higher education degrees/qualifications.

- a. Degree system is two-tier system

There are awarded those kind of diplomas:

Graduated

(1 or 2 years there are not given non-university diploma by the higher education institutions)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Nonuniversity diploma | 2 - 3,5 years |
| 2. ODL diploma | 3 years |
| 3. University diploma (equivalent to Bachelor degree) | 4 – 6 years |

Post-graduated

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 4. Postuniversity qualification | up to 1 year |
| 5. ODL qualification | up to 1 year |
| 6. Diploma of postuniversity specialization | up to 1 year |
| 7. Postuniversity deeper studies (equivalent to Master degree) | 1- 2 years |
| 8. Doctor Diploma (Ph.D) | 2 – 5 years |

Universities award all of them (1-8)

Academies award only university diploma / post-university qualifications.

Nursery schools award only non-university diploma.

- b. Courses offered in foreign language :

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Post-university School on Administration-Business (2 years) | In English |
| 2. Postuniversity qualification on administration (1 year) | In French |

- c. Actually only the last qualification in French is recognized from French universities
- d. We are working through bilateral agreements with different countries to get more university, nonuniversity and postuniversity qualifications with recognized curricula.

3. Admission and access systems to higher education

- a. We have a limited number for admission in higher education institutions. The right to be a university students have all students with a secondary education diploma testifying that the candidate has finished a comprehensive (4 years)/

vocational (4 or 5 years) school. In order to be accepted in a higher education institution as a student they must give the admission examinations, a selective system.

- b. Foreign student has the same procedures, like Albanian students. First they must have an exam on Albanian language. The number of places is limited.
- c. Developments in the future:
 - 1. Increasing of the number of admitted students in order to satisfy the requirements for higher education
 - 2. Improvement of the admission structure
 - 3. New criteria for admission of the students by correspondence

4. National and/or institutional credit system

- a. Actually there is not a national credit transfer/credit accumulation system
- b. Actually there are not rules and procedures for credit transfer after studies at another national institution abroad or in the country.
- c. Within the Ministry of Education and Science there are set up some task forces in order to prepare all acts and rules for introducing procedures for credit points system in our higher education system in order to start the school year 2000 - 2001 with credit points system. Next school year will be applied the credit transfer system as well.

5. Academic years/semesters/terms

- a. Usually academic year starts at the first week of October. The duration of academic year is from 38 - 42 weeks. The base unit of the academic year is the semester. One academic year has two semesters. There are three examination periods: the winter, summer and autumn sessions
- b. Courses/curricula are organized in modules. Generally they long a semester, but there are 2-3 semesters courses/curricula as well. There are some courses/curricula in the Medicine Faculty that are in half semester (three months)
- c. We are going to reorganize all subjects in curricula

6. Tuition fee system

- a. There is a national tuition fee system in Albania, which has been established those last years.

- b. Higher education institutions do not have autonomy in these matters, it is given by the Ministry of Education and Science, but the institutions may use for themselves up to 90% of the amount from these fees.

National system of the fees is based on economic level of the country. The fees are too low for the university education and are the same for all students, nevertheless of their level of studies, nationality etc. For the postuniversity level the fees are higher.

- c. The tendency is to rise the fees gradually and to apply fees for different services offered from the higher education institutions.

7. Student grant system.

- a. The Student Grant System is applied in all higher education system, it is of the national level. The granted students are:
 1. Students with incomes under the economic level of life
 2. The best students
 3. Students of Mathematics and Physics in the Natural Sciences Faculty of the University of Tirana
- b. Albanian students studying abroad within bilateral agreements with different countries or on a private way. For the first category there are grants from foreign countries according to the students' results. When the grant is too small and does not cover the essential student needs an additional grant is given from the state (mainly in East European countries).
- c. Information on national grant systems for foreign students.

Albanian government offers grants for foreign students, coming in Albania according to bilateral agreements. The grant is 20% higher than that of Albanian students. This grant is for accommodation and food expenses.
- d. Main developments expected/proposed.

Albanian government intends to offer grants to foreign persons wishing privately to study in Albania (not within bilateral agreements), according to their results.

8. Recognition and/or accreditation and quality assurance systems.

- a. All higher education institutions (actually only those of the public level) are recognized from the state, according to the decisions, law and other legal regulations.
- b. All diploma and educational programs are recognized by the state, according to the decisions and legal regulations that legalize their issues.
- c. All higher education institutions are recently at the same institutional level. Educational programs and opening of new courses are standardized according to the

rules established by the Ministry of Education and Science. Teaching and scientific structures of all higher education institutions are redesigned according to the standards approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

- d. Since 1999 in Albania there is a national Agency of Accreditation. Actually it is under designing criteria and procedures necessary for higher education institutions accreditation.
Its main activity is accreditation of the higher education institutions and their educational programs. Within 4 years all higher education institutions will be evaluated and accredited from the Agency.
The Agency reports to the Council of Accreditation about the results of the institutional evaluation and the educational programs of the higher education institutions.
- e. There is not any evaluation/quality assurance of the higher education institutions and their accreditation till now.
- f. - Setting up within 200 of the Council of the Accreditation
- Starting the evaluation of the higher education institutions

9. Procedures and systems for recognition of foreign degrees.

- a. Actually there are not established national/institutional for the academic and professional recognition of foreign degrees. For the students coming from foreign universities the recognition of the study years is made from higher education institutions (departments) themselves.
- b. - In 2001 will start working the National Bureau for Diploma Recognition.
- Then, during 2002-2003 is previewed to set up a network of diploma recognition. In each higher education institution will be an Office for diploma recognition.