

AGÊNCIA DE AVALIAÇÃO E ACREDITAÇÃO DO ENSINO SUPERIOR

A3ES Decision no. 2392/2013

Modification of the elements characterizing a study cycle

Article 76-A of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, amended by Decree-Law no. 107/2008 of 25 June, Decree-Law no. 230/2009, of 14 September and Decree-Law no. 115/2013, of 7 August, enunciate a series of elements which characterize a study cycle. Additionally, article 76-B of the same Decree determines that any alterations to these elements which result in changed objectives of the study cycle can only be implemented following an accreditation process complying with the requirements set by the Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, its subsequent registration by the Direção Geral do Ensino Superior and the publication in the 2nd Series of the Diário da República. The same legislation entrusts the Executive Board of the Agency, after consultation with the Direção Geral do Ensino Superior, the publication of a decision in the 2nd Series of the Diário da República defining the conditions under which an alteration of the elements characterizing a study cycle will imply a modification of its objectives.

Those conditions are defined by A3ES Decision no. 1859/2013 of the Executive Board of the Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior and published in Diário da República, 2nd Series, no. 200, of 16 October 2013.

However, the contents of this decision have raised some doubts that need clarification.

Therefore, as determined by no.2 of article 76-B of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, modified by Decree-Law no. 107/2008 of 25 June, Decree-Law no. 230/2009, of 14 September and Decree-Law no. 115/2013, of 7 August, the Executive Board of the Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior decides:

1. It is considered that there is a modification of the objectives of a study cycle when one or more of the elements characterizing a study cycle referred to in article 76 of Decree-Law 74/2006, of 24 March, have been altered and these are not included in any of the situations listed in the next number.
2. There is no modification of the objectives of a study cycle in any of the following situations:
 - a) Alteration of the normal duration of a 2nd or 3rd study cycle, which results only from the increase in duration of its dissertation, project, training period or thesis component;
 - b) Alteration of the number of credits necessary to complete the study cycle, which results only from the increase in duration of its dissertation, project, training period or thesis component;
 - c) Suppression or merger of alternative academic routes;

- d) Alteration below 5% of the weight of any of the fundamental training areas of the study cycle in the total number of its credits, provided that it continues to represent at least 25% of the total number of credits;
 - e) Change of compulsory training areas not included under d) with a fixed number of credits determined by the curricular structure, whenever:
 - i. Alterations change by less than 3% the weight of any of these areas in the total number of credits of the study cycle;
 - ii. Any of the suppressed areas represents less than 5% of the total number of credits of the study cycle.
 - f) Alterations of the study cycle not changing the curricular structure of the study cycle and not considered under e).
 - g) Alteration of the number of contact hours below a 15% limit of its total.
- 3. The analysis referred to in the previous numbers is based on the characterization of the study cycle that has been accredited by the Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior.
- 4. Whenever a study cycle has obtained preliminary accreditation, the characterization to be considered for the analysis referred to in the previous numbers is the characterization of the last alteration that was communicated before Decree-Law no. 115/2013 of 7 August has come into force.
- 5. Institutions must submit alterations made under no. 1 to the appraisal of the Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior. The agency will decide if they can be accepted, allowing the institution to pursue its subsequent registration, or if they need to be submitted for a previous accreditation procedure as a new study cycle.
- 6. Alterations made under no. 2 must be sent by the higher education institution to the Direção Geral do Ensino Superior for registration purposes.

Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, 12 November 2013.

The President of the Executive Board, Alberto Manuel Sampaio de Castro Amaral.