



**CRITERIA FOR THE ACCREDITATION
OF STUDY PROGRAMMES
– QUALIFICATION OF TEACHING STAFF –**

Version 1.1

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1. Minimum reference criteria on the qualification of the teaching staff for the accreditation of degree programmes

The regulatory framework for the assessment and accreditation of degree programmes objectively establishes some minimum qualifying criteria to be met by the relevant teaching staff. However, such criteria are not always easily articulated with each other, which asks for a particular effort to integrate the set of rules applicable to every situation. Decree-Law 115/2013, of August 7, which amended and republished Decree-Law No. 74/2006, of March 24, recognizing these difficulties, clarified and improved the materialisation of some of these criteria. Particularly relevant, in this regard, are the legal requirements on article 57 of the new version of Decree-Law No. 74/2006, which refers to the special requirements set out in Articles 6, 16 and 29 of the same legal document.

Additionally, articles 6, 7, 42, 44, 47 and 49 of Law No. 62/2007, on the legal status of higher education institutions (RJES), are also relevant.

Decree-Law No. 369/2007, which created the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, provides, in article 7, paragraph 5, that "the rules pertaining to the accreditation procedure and its relation to the assessment procedure are approved by the Agency's Management Board".

The minimum qualifying criteria to be met by the teaching staff of an institution for the accreditation of a degree programme are systematized in the next paragraphs, both for university education and for polytechnic education.

1.1 University education

For the purposes of accreditation of study programmes, the teaching staff of a university education institution must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Have a total teaching staff to ensure the teaching of the study programme who is "*próprio*" (own), academically qualified and specialised in the fundamental education and training area or areas of the study programme¹.
- Have the human and material resources indispensable for guaranteeing the level and quality of the acquired training.
- A full-time coordinator of the study programme holding a PhD in the fundamental area of the study programme.

¹ The fundamental education and training areas of the study programme are those that under the classification of the education and training areas (Ordinance no. 256/2005 of 16th March) represent at least 25% of all credits (article no. 3, item h of Decree-Law no. 74/2006 as altered by Decree-Law no. 63/2016 of 13th September).

For the accreditation of a first cycle (*licenciatura*) it is considered that the teaching staff is:

- “Own” teaching staff², when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by a minimum of 60% of full-time staff³.
- *Academically qualified*, when the total teaching staff is composed by at least 50% of FTE teachers holding a PhD.
- *Specialised*, when:
 - At least 50% of the total teaching staff is composed of FTE specialists of recognised experience and professional competence in the fundamental training area(s) of the study programme, or of staff holding a PhD and specialised in those area(s).
 - At least 20% of the total teaching staff is composed of FTE staff holding a PhD and specialised in those area(s).

For the accreditation of a second cycle (master) it is considered that the teaching staff is:

- “Own” teaching staff, when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by a minimum of 75% of full-time staff.
- *Academically qualified* when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by at least 60% of FTE teachers holding a PhD.
- *Specialised*, when:
 - At least 50% of the total FTE teaching staff is composed of specialists of recognised experience and professional competence in the fundamental training area(s) of the study programme, or of staff holding a PhD and specialised in those area(s).
 - At least 40% of the total FTE teaching staff is composed of staff holding a PhD and specialised in those area(s).

For the accreditation of a third cycle (PhD) it is considered that the teaching staff is:

- “Own” teaching staff, when the total teaching staff is composed by a minimum of 75% of full-time staff.
- *Academically qualified*, when the total teaching staff is composed only of teachers holding a PhD. However, in special circumstances the staff may integrate teachers not holding a PhD but having an academic, scientific or

² Own teaching staff is composed of those academics, who independently from the nature of their contracts are teaching in full-time in the study programme under consideration (article no. 3, item k, Decree-Law no. 74/2006 as altered by Decree-Law no. 63/2016 of 13th September).

³ Full-time regime is the working regime of those academics who make of their teaching and research activities an exclusive or predominant activity and who cannot be considered as such in more than one higher education institution (article no. 3 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006 as altered by Decree-Law no. 63/2016 of 13th September).

professional curriculum recognised in the accreditation process as having the capacity to lecture in the study programme.

- *Specialised*, when at least 75% of the total teaching staff is composed of FTE teachers holding a PhD in the relevant specialisation area.

Those criteria are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – Minimum percentages (composition) for the teaching staff (university education)

Teaching staff	1st cycle	2nd cycle/ Integrated Masters	3rd Cycle
Full-time staff – “own teaching staff”	60%	75%	75%
Full-time PhDs	50%	60%	100%
PhDs/Specialists in the fundamental areas of the study programme	50%	50%	-
PhDs specialised in the fundamental areas of the study programme	30%	40%	75%

Note: All percentages calculated relative to the total number of teachers and all values in FTE.

1.2 Polytechnic education

For the purposes of accreditation of study programmes, the teaching staff of a polytechnic institution must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Have a total teaching staff to ensure the teaching of the study programme who is “*próprio*” (own), academically qualified and specialised in the fundamental training area or areas of the study programme.
- Have the human and material resources indispensable for guaranteeing the level and quality of the acquired training.
- A full-time coordinator of the study programme holding a PhD or being a specialist of recognised experience and professional competence in the fundamental area of the study programme.

For the accreditation of a first cycle (*licenciatura*) it is considered that the teaching staff is:

- “*Own*” teaching staff, when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by a minimum of 60% of full-time staff.
- *Academically qualified*, when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by at least 15% of FTE teachers holding a PhD.
- *Specialised*, when at least 50% of the total FTE teaching staff is composed of specialists of recognised experience and professional competence in the

fundamental training area(s) of the study programme or of staff holding a PhD and specialised in those area(s).

For the accreditation of a second cycle (master) it is considered that the teaching staff is:

- *“Own” teaching staff*, when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by a minimum of 75% of full-time staff.
- *Academically qualified*, when the total FTE teaching staff is composed by at least 40% of FTE teachers holding a PhD.
- *Specialised*, when:
 - At least 50% of the total FTE teaching staff is composed of specialists of recognised experience and professional competence in the fundamental training area(s) of the study programme or of staff holding a PhD specialised in those area(s).
 - At least 20% of the total FTE teaching staff is composed of FTE staff holding a PhD specialised in those area(s).

Those criteria are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 – Minimum percentage (composition) for the teaching staff (polytechnic education)

Teaching staff	1st Cycle	2nd Cycle
Full-time staff – “own teaching staff”	60%	75%
Full-time PhD	15%	40%
PhDs/Specialists in the fundamental areas of the study programme	50%	50%
PhDs specialised in the fundamental areas of the study programme	-	20%

Note: All percentages calculated relative to the total number of teachers and all values in FTE

1.3 Area of specialisation and adequacy in number

The minimum limits of PhD holders or specialists referred to in the aforementioned criteria should be met by teaching staff specialised in the several scientific areas that integrate the curriculum of the study programme, in a reasonable proportion to their relative weight expressed in number of credit units. In those cases where there is more than one fundamental area in a *licenciatura* or master programme, the teaching staff should have an allocation adequate to the relative weights of those areas.

Most importantly, for purposes of verifying that the teaching staff is adequate to “ensure the level and quality of teaching”, as specified in the law, all the programme’s course units should be taught by teachers suitably qualified in the respective area of knowledge and their teaching loads should be acceptable.

1.4 Other requisites at institutional level

From an institutional perspective, the RJIES provides, in article 47, paragraph 1, that "the teaching staff of university education institutions must meet the following requirements:

- a) To fulfil, for each degree programme, the requirements set in the law for their accreditation;
- b) To have, among all the teachers and researchers who work in any capacity at the institution, at least one PhD holder for every 30 students;
- c) At least half of the PhD holders referred to in the previous paragraph must be full-time".

Similarly, article 49, paragraph 1, of RJIES states that "the teaching staff of polytechnic institutions must meet the following requirements:

- a) To fulfil, for each degree programme, the requirements set in the law for their accreditation;
- b) To have, among all the teachers and researchers who work in any capacity at the institution, at least one PhD holder or a specialist for every 30 students;
- c) In the group of teachers and researchers who develop teaching or research in any capacity at the institution, at least 15% should be PhD holders in full-time and, besides these, at least 35% must hold the title specialist, who may also be holders of a PhD degree. "

The EPCDESP further provides that, in polytechnic institutions, at least 20% of the teaching staff shall consist of invited lecturers.

The verification of compliance with these requirements demands a comprehensive approach that is not feasible in the process of assessment and accreditation of degree programmes. It will be done periodically through monitoring mechanisms, namely through the exercise of rebuilding the database that will be performed at the end of the regular 5-years cycle of assessment/accreditation.

2. Criteria relating to the practice of research

The legal framework established by RJIES places special emphasis on the practice of R&D both at the level of principles and at the level of the requirements to be met by higher education institutions.

Indeed, the nature of university education implies that "universities, university colleges and other institutions of higher education are high level institutions devoted to the creation, transmission and dissemination of culture, knowledge and science and technology, *through the articulation of study, teaching, research and experimental development*" (article 6, paragraph 1); therefore, it is a requirement for the establishment

and operation of an institution of university education that it "*develops activities in the field of teaching and research*, as well as in the creation, dissemination and transmission of culture" and "*has or participates in research and development centres duly assessed and recognized*" (article 42, paragraphs d) and e).

The nature of polytechnic education implies that "the polytechnic institutes and other institutions of polytechnic education are high-level institutions oriented to the creation, transmission and dissemination of culture and knowledge of a professional nature, *through the articulation of study, teaching, targeted research and experimental development*" (article 7, paragraph 1); it is a requirements for the establishment and operation of a polytechnic institution that it "*develops targeted research activities*" (article 44, paragraph e).

The Decree-Law No. 74/2006, as amended by Decree-Law No. 115/2013, also highlights the role of research, by establishing as one of the special requirements for the accreditation of degree programmes:

- A ***programme leading to a master degree*** in a particular area of expertise requires that the institution "*develops a recognized activity of education and research or of high-level development of a professional nature, either by itself or through its participation or collaboration, or of its teachers and researchers, in external scientific institutions, with relevant publications or scientific production*";
- A ***programme leading to a doctoral degree*** in a particular field of knowledge or area of expertise requires that the institution "*demonstrates that it owns, in that area, the human and organizational resources necessary for conducting research*" and "*demonstrates that it owns, either by itself or through its participation or collaboration, or of its teachers or researchers, in external scientific institutions , an accumulated experience of research materialized in a relevant scientific and academic production in this field of knowledge or its specialty*".

2.1 Conclusions on research requirements

It clearly results from the mentioned legal framework that one of the necessary conditions for the accreditation of a doctoral programme is the demonstration that the institution's teaching staff plays an active, relevant and internationally recognized research role in the programme's scientific area. Only thus one can effectively ensure, as required by article 28 of the mentioned Decree-Law, that the graduates demonstrate "ability to conceive, design, adapt and perform significant research respecting the requirements imposed by standards and academic integrity" and "have done a significant amount of original research work that has contributed to extending the frontiers of

knowledge, some of which merits national or international disclosure in publications with the peer review".

It also follows that for the accreditation of a university programme leading to a master degree it is necessary for the teaching staff to develop duly recognized research activities in the relevant scientific areas, because without supervisors with a strong background in scientific research it is not possible to create the necessary conditions for an adequate supervision of dissertations. A high scientific level is an essential element for a master's degree, because it is exactly this aspect that essentially differentiates a master's from a postgraduate programme.

In the case of a polytechnic programme leading to a master's degree, it is necessary for the teaching staff to develop targeted research or high-level professional development in the relevant scientific areas. Only under these conditions one can ensure that students have the knowledge and ability to understand at a level that permits and forms the basis for development and or original applications, in many cases in the context of research (article 15, paragraph 1, of Decree-Law No. 74/2006, as amended by Decree-Law No. 115/2013).

For 1st cycle degree programmes no specific requirements associated with research and experimental development are explicitly set by law, but are applicable the general principles established in RJIES linked to the nature of higher education, particularly with respect to the articulation of study and teaching with research (or targeted research) and experimental development, which are not separable from an effective integration of a significant part of the teaching staff in research, targeted research or experimental development activities.

For the purpose of conducting duly recognized research activities in the areas integrating the degree programme, these could be developed in the institution itself, or through its participation or collaboration, or of its teachers and researchers, in recognized scientific institutions.