

**INFORMATION NOTE No. 2/2024****GUIDELINES FOR FILLING IN STUDY PROGRAMME DATA ON THE SIA3ES PLATFORM****Scope**

The A3ES (SIA3ES) and DGES (SIMGES) process database platforms have recently been updated to make study programmes' assessment, accreditation, and registration procedures more efficient. The connection between the two platforms allows the automatic migration of the characterising elements of an accredited study programme in a format that guarantees its registration under the legislation and synchronising information in case of changes made between assessment moments. In addition to the operational advantages, this interconnection opens up an opportunity to rationalise the format of the information made available to the public on the aforementioned characterising elements, allowing for better clarity, transparency, and simplicity when accessed by the general public.

These objectives are aligned with the strategic plans of both DGES and A3ES (see the DGES Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and the A3ES Strategic Plan 2021-2024) in that they allow “to improve the interoperability of services and the integration of data” (DGES), and promote “transparent information and a climate of trust in relations with the various social agents that intervene in and benefit from higher education” (A3ES) and “simplification using digitalisation of the modes of operation” (A3ES). This means, for example, eliminating the need for separate procedures to publish study programmes in the Official Journal [Diário da República].

Below are guidelines for completing the proposals for new study programmes and changes to elements that characterise existing study programmes.

**Designation of the study programme**

The designation of a study programme should seek to synthetically inform on the scope and achievement of its objectives in a simple but rigorous and unequivocal way, corresponding to the designation of the academic degree. This information is filled in (mandatorily) in Portuguese and English when a request is made to open a new process for accreditation of a new study programme – NCE – but is already pre-filled in the case of the assessment of an existing study programme (ACEF or PERA).

Note 1: Normative Order No. 16/2022, of 30 December, which establishes the procedures for the publication of acts in the Portuguese Official Journal, requires that a study plan (curricular units) and its designation must always have a version in Portuguese. This does not inhibit the use of globally accepted technical terms without translation into Portuguese: *Design, Marketing, Software, Jazz, Media, Branding, Shipping*, etc. The publication of study programmes in the SIMGES will follow this obligation of a designation in Portuguese.

Some designations are subject to legal regulation (see Note 2), but even when this is not the case, the proposed designations may not be appropriate for the study programmes in question. The decision on the adequacy of the designation to the legislation (see articles 15 and 28 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, as amended) and to the objectives of a study programme is the responsibility of the Management Board of A3ES, after the recommendation of the experts of the External Assessment Team and the opinion of professional associations (when applicable).

Note 2: Examples of designations of regulated study programmes:

1. Medicine
2. Nursing
3. Architecture
4. Veterinary Sciences
5. Pharmaceutical Sciences
6. Teaching of [scientific area] (Teacher Training)
7. Therapies and rehabilitation (Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy)
8. Diagnostic and therapeutic technologies (Medical Imaging and Radiotherapy, Biomedical Laboratory Sciences, Medical Physiology, etc.)
9. Non-Conventional Therapies (Osteopathy, Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine, etc.)
10. Engineering
11. Psychology

The format for the submission of the designation shall be:

**Designation** – *Characteristic of the study programme*<sup>1</sup>

Two examples of a correct format are:

ü Civil Engineering

ü Techniques, Heritage, Territories of Industry: history, enhancement and didactics – Erasmus Mundus

The indication of the type of study programme must not be used in the designation:

r *Bachelor in Nursing*

The same applies to the indication of characteristics of the study programme in the designation:

r *Erasmus Mundus in Planetary Geosciences*

When in doubt, it is advisable to use the proposed designation to complete the sentence:

*The graduate holds a [Bachelor's/Master's/Doctorate] degree in \_\_\_\_\_*

## Types of paths

The different paths in a study programme enrich the students' experience in terms of diversity and adequacy to their expectations and objectives while maintaining a coherence subordinated to the scientific affinity of the content in the different paths of the study plan.

Choosing the path type must follow a logic of simplification and transparency. This means avoiding typifying different paths with the same terminology and using different terminologies to typify the same paths. The applicable legislation must also be accounted for (see articles 15 and 28 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, as amended by Decree-Law no. 65/2018, of 16 August).

The simplest type of path is the “**General Path**”. Due to the logic of structuring data on the platforms, a study programme must always have a path, even when there are no variations in the path followed by the student. In these situations, the “General Path” type must be adopted. This does not imply that there are no optional curricular units, but that these, if they exist, are

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<sup>1</sup> Examples: Executive or International (*Erasmus Mundus*, etc.)

available to all students from the outset (see chapter “Options and optional curricular units” below). This term should not be used when there are variations.

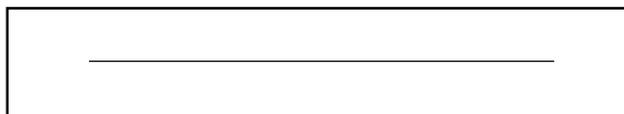


Figure 1. General path scheme

4.4. DESENVOLVIMENTO CURRICULAR | PERCURSOS DO CE

Digite para pesquisar (necessita seleccionar o botão Pesquisar após digitar) 🔍 ✕

Designação: Percurso Geral Sigla: PG

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**CARACTERIZAÇÃO DO PERCURSO** ✕

**Designação\*** Percurso Geral

**Designação (EN)\*** General Pathway

**Tipo de Percurso\*** Percurso Geral

**Sigla\*** PG

**Sigla EN\*** GP

**ECTS Totais\*** 120 ECTS

**Observações** N.A.

**Observações EN** N.A.

**FECHAR**

Figure 2. Example of a general path

A study programme can be structured in alternative paths, which may or may not impact the academic degree to be conferred. Each path must have a curricular structure and a study plan. The paths that **impact or affect the degree** differentiate, in some way, the primary learning outcomes of graduates who have opted for different paths in the study programme.

In this example, the path impacts on the degree:

Degree: Master

Designation: Nursing

Alternative Areas of Specialization: Child and Paediatric Health Nursing; Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing

*The graduate has a master's degree in Nursing, in the Specialization Area of Child and Paediatric Health*

In this other case, it has no impact:

Degree: Bachelor

Designation: Biochemistry

Alternative paths: Minor in Biology, Minor in Physics, Minor in Computer Science, Minor in Chemistry

*The graduate has a degree in Biochemistry.*

In the form, the types of paths are identified in “path characterisation” in section 4.4.

### Path designation

The designation of a general path (“path characterisation”, in section 4.4.) can be the designation of the study programme, or “general path”. As in the case of the designation of the study programme, this should not include the degree either.

ü Designation (path): Sales and Retail Management

r Designation (path): *Degree in Management and Sales and Retail*

Figure 3. Example of the designation of the general path

The designation of an alternative path should not include the path type nor a reference to the curricular structure or the study plan.

ü Designation: Child and Paediatric Health Nursing

r Designation: *Area of specialisation in* Child and Paediatric Health Nursing

r Designation: *Curricular Structure of* Child and Paediatric Health

r Designation: *Child and Paediatric Health* Study Plan

## Bachelor's degree

The "path" type should be used when a path does not impact the degree. This designation is suitable for any configuration of curricular divergence, in part or for the entirety of the study programme, and at any degree.

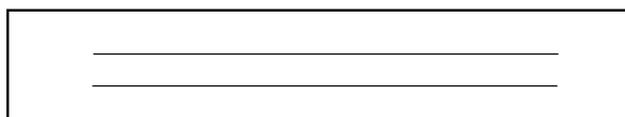


Figure 4. Alternative paths scheme for the entire study programme

The “**common core**” and “**branch**” path types are related. These paths imply that one part of the study programme has curricular units in common —the common core—and the other is divided into branches. The divergent branches have implications for the degree but generally maintain the predominant scientific areas of the curricular structure. These designations should only be used in study programmes for the bachelor's degree.

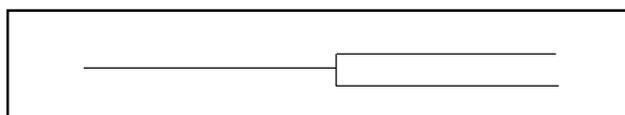


Figure 5. Common core and branches scheme

Figure 6. Example of branches for a bachelor’s study programme with the designation “Biology”. Each branch contains all the curricular units (CUs) of the path (including the CUs common to the other branches) so that each path presents a complete curricular structure.

Still within the exclusive scope of the bachelor's degree, and only when the areas of the different paths are in other scientific areas, types of paths designated “major” and “minor” can be used. In this case, the various paths have no impact on the degree, which is associated with the fundamental areas of the study programme.

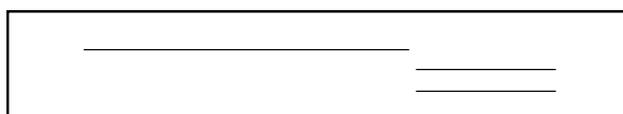


Figure 7. – Major/minor scheme

The figure displays two screenshots of the 'CARACTERIZAÇÃO DO PERCURSO' (Course Characterization) form. Both forms are for a 'Maior/Menor' (Major/Minor) type of course with 180 ECTS.

**Top Screenshot:**

- Designação\*: Bioquímica/Biologia
- Designação (EN)\*: Bioghemistry/Biology
- Tipo de Percurso\*: Maior/Menor
- Sigla\*: BQ/B
- Sigla EN\*: BC/B
- ECTS Totals\*: 180 ECTS
- Observações: 0 / 1000
- Observações EN: 0 / 1000

**Bottom Screenshot:**

- Designação\*: Bioquímica/Física
- Designação (EN)\*: Biochemistry/Physics
- Tipo de Percurso\*: Maior/Menor
- Sigla\*: BC/F
- Sigla EN\*: BC/P
- ECTS Totals\*: 180 ECTS
- Observações: 22 / 1000
- Observações EN: 21 / 1000

Figure 8. Example of major/minor for a bachelor study programme with the designation "Biochemistry"

### Master's degree

In a master's degree (including integrated master's degrees) in which the paths have an implication in the master's degree awarded, the designation "**area of specialisation**" must be used (as indicated in paragraph 2, article 15 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, as amended by Decree-Law no. 65/2018, of 16 August).

In cases of alternative paths that have no impact on the degree, the designation to be adopted is "**path**".

### Doctorate

In a doctorate, in which the paths have an implication in the doctoral degree awarded, the designation "**expertise**" must be used (as indicated in paragraph 2, article 28 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, as amended by Decree-Law no. 65/2018, of 16 August).

In cases of alternative paths that do not impact the degree, the designation to be adopted is “**path**”.

Note 3: The following path types, although they have been used in the past, should be abandoned:

- Free
- *Major*
- *Minor*
- Plan
- Pre-specialization
- Variant
- Bilingual variant
- Option
- Profile
- Specialization profile
- Branch/Specialisation (in PhDs)
- Branch/Variant
- Variant/Branches
- Area
- Vocational area

The different paths of a study programme (awarding any degree) must ensure that all students finish with the same number of credits. The possibility of crediting curricular units according to current regulations, or the exemption, duly established, from attending a “doctoral course” [curricular part of the study plan] (as described in paragraph 3, article 31 of Decree-Law no. 74/2006, of 24 March, as amended by Decree-Law no. 65/2018, of 16 August) should not be reflected in the study plan itself but described in the appropriate fields.

### **Options and optional curricular units**

To increase the diversity and richness of a study plan, and to allow for a certain degree of choice on the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be obtained through the completion of the study

programme, to achieve a certain number of credits, a student can opt for a set of **optional curricular units**.

The forms of the **optional curricular units** must be completed in the same section as the other curricular units (section 4.2. of the form for the new study programmes – see [www.a3es.pt](http://www.a3es.pt)).

Curricular units belonging to an “Option” set must have the same number of credits.

Section 4.3. allows the optional curricular units to be grouped into sets called “**options**”. **Options** are defined as sets of (optional) curricular units, and not curricular units per se. Thus, “options” must always include more than one curricular unit.

It is these sets/**options** (defined in 4.3.) that must be introduced in the **paths** in section 4.4., and not the optional curricular units (defined in 4.2.). It is not necessary to check the box in the “Optional” column in the table of the CUs associated with the path.

The master's curricular units corresponding to the choice between Internship, Dissertation, or Project must be added as separate curricular units grouped in an option set so that the number and type of contact hours are defined in the study plan for each of these modalities.

4.3. DESENVOLVIMENTO CURRICULAR | UNIDADES CURRICULARES DO CE (OPÇÕES)

Designação da unidade curricular	Duração	Horas de trabalho	Horas contacto totais	% HC a distância	Créditos ECTS	Horas de contacto	Unidades Curriculares	Áreas associadas à UC
UCs Opcionais	Semestral	810:00	00:00	0,00%	30,00	Consultar	3 UCs   Associar	Enfermagem Associar
		810:00	00:00		30			

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Os ECTS Totais de cada unidade curricular correspondem ao resultado da soma do ECTS associados a cada uma das áreas científicas dessa unidade curricular. Para preencher os ECTS deve associar as áreas e os respetivos ECTS.

**UNIDADES CURRICULARES** ✕

UCS OPCIONAIS

Designação da unidade curricular	Créditos ECTS
Opção I - Estágio com Relatório	30,00
Opção II - Dissertação de Natureza Científica	30,00
Opção III - Trabalho de Projeto	30,00

UNIDADES CURRICULARES ASSOCIADAS				
Mestrado em Enfermagem Comunitária na Área de Enfermagem de Saúde Familiar				
<input type="text" value="Digite para pesquisar (busca automática à medida que digita)"/>				
Unidade Curricular	Ano Curricular	Tipo de Duração	UC de opção	Opcional
Enfermagem Avançada	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Investigação em Enfermagem	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Gestão em Saúde	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Prática Clínica de Enfermagem Familiar	1	Semestral 2ºS		
Referenciais Sociopolíticos e epistemológicos em Enfermagem de Saúde Famil...	1	Semestral 1ºS		
A família como unidade de cuidados	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Comunicação e interação em contexto familiar	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Indivíduo ao longo do ciclo vital, inserido na família, aos diferentes níveis de pre...	1	Semestral 2ºS		
Modelos e técnicas de avaliação e Intervenção Familiar	1	Semestral 2ºS		
Ética e Deontologia	1	Semestral 1ºS		
UCs Opcionais	2	Semestral 1ºS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Figure 9 – Example of an option set

### Non-listed optional curricular units

In the particular case of the student being offered the possibility to choose between a very high number of curricular units for a given **option** (for example, all the CUs available in the unit or even in the proposing institution), it is not necessary to add all the files of the curricular units in section 4.2. It is enough to create, in this section, a curricular unit with a designation equivalent to “Any UC of the Institution” (associating a reference teacher, who can be, for example, the coordinator of the study programme, and a scientific area that can be “Any scientific area”, previously defined in section 4.1.). Only in this case is the indication “optional” to be ticked in the table of the CUs associated with the route in section 4.4.

**UNIDADES CURRICULARES ASSOCIADAS** ✖

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**PLANO DE ESTUDOS**

Digite para pesquisar (busca automática à medida que digita) ✖

Unidade Curricular	Ano Curricular	Tipo de Duração	UC de opção	Opcional
Ecossistemas Marinhos e Desenvolvimento Sustentável	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Princípios de Oceanografia	1	Semestral 1ºS		
Alterações Climáticas e Oceano	2	Semestral 1ºS		
Transporte Marítimo e Direito Comercial Marítimo Internacional	2	Semestral 2ºS		
Estatística	2	Semestral 1ºS		
Empreendedorismo e Modelos de Negócios para a Sustentabilidade	2	Semestral 2ºS		
Segurança Marítima e Relações Internacionais	2	Trimestral 2ºT		
Política e Economia Ambiental	2	Trimestral 1ºT		
Economia da Aquacultura e das Pescas	2	Trimestral 4ºT		
Energia do Oceano	2	Trimestral 4ºT		
Sistemas de Informação Geográfica	2	Semestral 1ºS		
Direito e Sustentabilidade	2	Semestral 2ºS		
Oceanos e Artes	2	Trimestral 4ºT		
Proteção e Restauro dos Recursos Vivos	2	Trimestral 3ºT		
Lixo marinho e Gestão de Resíduos	2	Trimestral 3ºT		
Planeamento de Infraestruturas Azuis e Soluções com Base na Natureza	2	Trimestral 3ºT		
Seminário Oceano	3	Semestral 2ºS		
Análise de dados, Inteligência Artificial e Sistemas	3	Semestral 1ºS		
Tecnologias Marinhas e Inovação	3	Semestral 1ºS		
Field LAB	3	Semestral 2ºS		
Ordenamento e Gestão do Espaço Marinho e Marítimo	3	Semestral 1ºS		
Opções Livres - 12 ECTS em disciplinas escolhidas de qualquer UO envolvida	3	Semestral 1ºS	✔	✔

OK

Figure 10. – Example of non-listed optional curricular unit

Master's curricular units corresponding to the Internship, Dissertation, or Project option must not be inserted as curricular units with the indication “optional” in this table.

### Scientific areas of the Options/Non-listed curricular units

The platform performs a validation of the coherence between the credits associated with the curricular units and the “options” sets (inserted in the “Areas associated with the CU” column, link “Associate”, sections 4.2. and 4.3.) and the sum of the credits associated with the paths (inserted in part 4.4., in the column “Scientific areas”, link “Associate”). Credits corresponding to Options or Non-listed CUs (example: “Any of the Institution's CUs”) must be placed in the column of “minimum optional ECTS”.

Área Científica	Sigla	ECTS obrigatórios	ECTS optativos mínimos
X Direito	DIR	0,00	0,00
X Ciências Informáticas	CINF	0,00	0

Figure 11. – Table of the areas associated with the path

The minimum optional credits must not exceed the difference between the total number of credits and the number of mandatory credits.

### Options/CUs contact hours

The optional curricular units grouped in an Option set may have different contact hours and typologies, as “all the curricular units of an Institution” will hardly be homogeneous at this level. Thus, in the contact hours of non-listed optional curricular units (section 4.2.) or Options (section 4.3), it is advisable to put the minimum hours per type the student must take to obtain the respective credits.

### Number of ECTS credits per period

The law indicates that a **year** must have **60 ECTS credits** (and 36 to 40 weeks) and that the number of ECTS credits in each segment of the year is to be proportional (Decree-Law No. 45/2005, 22 February). A year can be divided into two **semesters**, so each should have **30 credits** (and, proportionally, 18 to 20 weeks). If an academic year is divided into four **trimesters**, each should have **15 credits** (and, proportionally, 9 to 10 weeks). There is, however, a common practice of dividing the years into three rather than four “quarters” with 20 credits each. Although “trimesters” with 20 credits have previously been accepted, this practice should be abandoned, and the duration type should be replaced with “**Other**”.

The SIA3ES platform validates the sum of 60 credits for each year. Still, this verification is limited when using types of paths not associated with specific years (see table below) and when curricular units are identified as “optional” (in the UC association table in section 4.4).



Note 4: On the SIA3ES platform it is possible to assign school years and characterize the duration types with the following terms:

Duration type	Maximum ECTS	Year validation (60 credits)
Plurianual	--	Yes
Annual	60	Yes
Annual (no curricular year)	60	No
Semester	30	Yes
Semester 1 <sup>st</sup>	30	Yes
Semester 2 <sup>nd</sup>	30	Yes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year - Semester 1 <sup>st</sup>	--	No
4 <sup>th</sup> Year - Semester 1 <sup>st</sup>	--	No
5 <sup>th</sup> Year - Semester 1 <sup>st</sup>	--	No
Semester (no curricular year)	30	No
Trimester	15	Yes
Trimester 1 <sup>st</sup>	15	Yes
Trimester 2 <sup>nd</sup>	15	Yes
Trimester 3 <sup>rd</sup>	15	Yes
Trimester 4 <sup>th</sup>	15	Yes
Trimester (no curricular year)	15	No
Module	60	Yes
Other	--	No

- Plurianual – the curricular unit runs for more than one curricular year; all the years in which it takes place must be placed in the field of the (curricular) year (example: “1,2,3,4”)
- Annual – the curricular unit runs for an entire curricular year (36 to 40 weeks)
- Annual (no curricular year) – the curricular unit runs for an entire indeterminate curricular year
- Semester – the curricular unit takes place in an indeterminate semester (18 to 20 weeks), but within a determined curricular year
- Semester 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> – the course unit takes place in the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> semester of a given curricular year

- 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Year - Semester 1<sup>st</sup> – The course unit takes place in the 1st semester of a given curricular year, and the study programme ends in this 1<sup>st</sup> semester.
- Semester (no curricular year) – the curricular unit takes place in an indeterminate semester and curricular year
- Trimester - the course unit takes place in an undetermined quarter (9 to 10 weeks), but within a determined curricular year
- Trimester (no curricular year) – the curricular unit takes place in an indeterminate quarter and curricular year
- Trimester 1st T/2nd T/3rd T/4th T – the curricular unit takes place in the 1st/2nd/3rd/4th quarter of a given curricular year
- Modular – the curricular unit corresponds to one module
- Other – to be used only when none of the above types are suitable

Note: for the same year, curricular units with year validation and without year validation (60 credits) should not be inserted.

Duration types with indeterminate semesters or years should be avoided (except in clearly justified cases), as the sequence of curricular units is extremely important for assessing study plans.

The number of credits in each period (year, semester, quarter or other) and each curricular unit are unique, and credit ranges are not accepted. The CUs can be associated with more than one scientific area if they comply with the ECTS indicated in the curricular structure. This means that it is not necessary to create sets of scientific areas, such as "Area A/Area B/Area C...", directly in the curricular structure. This should indeed be avoided.

The observations introduced in the section "path characterisation" (see Figure 8.) are published *online* on the DGES website, so they should not contain personal or confidential data.