

8 Information on the Hungarian Higher Education System

Within the framework of the Bologna Process the gradual transition from a pre-Bologna higher education system resulting in *Egyetemi oklevél* (university-level degree) or *Főiskolai oklevél* (college-level degree) to a higher education system based on three consecutive cycles started in 2004 in Hungary. At the time of drafting this Diploma Supplement pre-Bologna and Bologna-type programmes run parallel.

This description presents the Bologna-type training, and was prepared in 2008 for diplomas awarded within the Bologna-type system.

8.1 Types of Institutions and Institutional Control

The establishment and operation of higher education institutions are regulated by the 2005 Higher Education Act. Operating within the legal framework of the Higher Education Act, Hungarian higher education institutions are autonomous, state-recognised, state or non-state (church or private) institutions. The state-recognised institutions are listed in the Annex of the Higher Education Act. There are two types of higher education institutions, *egyetem* (university) and *főiskola* (college). Both universities and colleges may offer courses in all three cycles. A university is a higher education institution that is eligible to provide Master courses in at least two fields of study, and to offer Doctorate course as well as to confer Doctoral degrees. The rules applying to universities offering courses in the field of art or religious education are different from the aforementioned.

8.2 Types of Programmes and Degrees Awarded

The consecutive training cycles of the higher education leading to a higher education degree are *alapképzés* (Bachelor course), *mesterképzés* (Master course) and *doktori képzés* (Doctorate course). Bachelor and Master courses are taught in consecutive cycles, in the form of divided training, or in cases specified by law in the form of undivided, one-tier training.

In addition to the aforementioned, higher education institutions may conduct higher-level vocational training and postgraduate specialist training, as well as can offer adult education within the framework of lifelong learning.

Higher education institutions apply a credit system based on the European Credit Transfer System. Accordingly, one credit stands for 30 hours of student workload.

8.3 Approval/Accreditation of Programmes and Degrees

A higher education institution may launch Bachelor and Master courses after having obtained the consent thereto in the expert opinion of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education, and following the central registration of the given course. In the case of each Bachelor and Master course, the law determines the programme and graduation requirements, thus, all the knowledge and competencies whose acquisition is the precondition for the diploma to be awarded in respect to the given programme.

The launching of Doctorate courses is within the powers of the universities, having obtained the consent thereto in the expert opinion of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education and having fulfilled other conditions prescribed by law.

It is the task of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education to authorize and assess the quality of education and scientific activities of the higher education institutions. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education once in every eight years examines in which field of study, discipline of science and at what level of training does an institution fulfil accreditation requirements in respect of lecturers and infrastructure. The assessment also extends to examine the adequacy of the institutional quality development scheme. Within the framework of programme accreditation the Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education examines the institutional programme curricula, the fulfilment of programme and graduation requirements, as well as the adequacy of the lecturers' qualifications and the quality of the infrastructure in respect to the given programme.

8.4 Organisation of Studies

Students studying in Bachelor and Master courses complete their studies by passing a final examination. The final examination may consist of the defence of the degree thesis, and additional oral, written or practical examinations.

8.4.1 Integrated “Long” (One-tier) Programmes

An undivided one-tier programme resulting in *mesterfokozat* (Master degree) is a training with the length of 10-12 semesters, requiring the completion of 300-360 credits. Besides religious education and some programmes of arts, the following programmes are conducted within one-tier Master courses: veterinary medicine, architecture, dentistry, pharmaceuticals, law and medicine.

8.4.2 First/Second Degree Programmes (Two-tier)

The first higher education degree is the *alapfokozat* (Bachelor degree) along with a professional qualification. A Bachelor course requires gaining 180-240 credits. The length of the programme is 6-8 semesters.

The second higher education degree is the *mesterfokozat* (Master degree) along with a professional qualification. Built on a Bachelor course Master courses require gaining 60-120 credits. The length of the programme is 2-4 semesters.

8.5 Specialised Graduate Studies

Higher education institutions may also offer *szakirányú továbbképzés* (postgraduate specialist training) for Bachelor and Master degree holders. Through the completion of 60-120 credits a specialised qualification can be obtained. Students complete their studies by passing a final examination. The length of the programme is 2-4 semesters.

8.6 Doctorate

Built on a Master course and a Master degree the *doktori képzés* (Doctorate course) requires gaining at least 180 credits. The length of the programme is 6 semesters. Following a Doctorate course, in a separate degree awarding procedure, the scientific degree “Doctor of Philosophy” (abbreviation: PhD), or in art education “Doctor of Liberal Arts” (abbreviation: DLA) may be awarded.

8.7 Grading Scheme

The assessment of knowledge is generally carried out according to a five-grade scale: excellent (5), good (4), satisfactory (3), pass (2), and fail (1) or a three-grade scale: excellent (5), satisfactory (3), fail (1). Nevertheless, higher education institutions may also use other systems for assessing if they are comparable to those mentioned above.

8.8 Access to Higher Education

The number of students admitted to higher education is limited. Applicants’ ranking is based on their secondary school grades and their *érettségi vizsga* (secondary school leaving examination) results or based solely on the latter, considering the interest of the applicant. The requirement for admission to Bachelor and undivided one-tier Master courses is the secondary school leaving examination taken – as a rule – after the completion of the 12th grade of a secondary school, certified by *Érettségi bizonyítvány* (secondary school leaving certificate). The admission to certain programmes is based on an additional aptitude test or a practical examination. To Master courses students can be admitted if they possess *Főiskolai oklevél* (college-level degree) or *Egyetemi oklevél* (university-level degree) or a Bachelor degree. To postgraduate specialist training students can be admitted if they possess college- or university-level degree, or a Bachelor or a Master degree. Only applicants with university-level degree or Master degree may be admitted to Doctorate courses. Higher education institutions may set additional requirements for admission to Master, postgraduate specialist and Doctorate courses.

8.9 National Sources of Information

Ministry of Education and Culture¹, Hungarian ENIC/NARIC², Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education³, Educational Authority⁴, National Higher Education Information Centre⁵

¹ Web site: www.okm.gov.hu

² Web site: www.naric.hu

³ Web site: www.mab.hu

⁴ Web site: www.oh.gov.hu

⁵ Web site: www.felvi.hu