

**Unofficial translation**



**Lao People's Democratic Republic  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity**

**Ministry of Education and Sports**

**No.: 4128 /ED.HE/2011**

**Vientiane Capital, dated: 03 November 2011**

**Decision  
on the National Curriculum Standards for Master's Degrees**

- Pursuant to: Law 04/NA, dated 3 July (07) 2007, on Education of the Lao People's Democratic Republic;  
Pursuant to: Decree 282/PM, dated 7 September 2011, on the Organization and Operations of the Ministry of Education and Sports; and  
Pursuant to: The request of the Department of Higher Education;

**The Minister of Education hereby issues a Decision:**

**Chapter I  
General Provisions**

**Article 1 Objectives**

This Decision defines the regulations, principles, and measures for the management of curricular and reference documentation for higher education institutes in their creation and development of curricula for master's degrees so as to achieve nationwide uniformity.

**Article 2 Name of Curriculum Standards**

These standards shall be referred to as the "National Curriculum Standards for Master's Degrees".

**Article 3 Scope of Application**

The National Curriculum Standards for Master's Degrees shall be used in the research and creation of National Curricula at higher education institutes wishing to open courses at this level.

**Article 4 Organizing Learning and Teaching Using the Credit-Based System**

- 4.1 Programs for master's degrees at higher education institutes must be taught according to a credit-based system.  
4.2 In the event that learning and teaching is established according to a system of hours and modules, the learning results shall be calculated according to a credit-based system.

### **Article 5      Educational Qualifications**

Persons completing a curriculum at master's degree level in a given branch shall receive a master's degree certificate of ... in the branch of ... stating "Master's Degree of ... in of ...".

### **Article 6      Permission to Teach Curricula**

Higher level institutes wishing to open a master's degree program must receive permission from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and if wishing to close the learning and teaching of an existing program, they must also receive permission from the MoES.

### **Article 7      Issuance of Certificates**

Higher education institutes shall have the right to issue Certificates for Master's Degrees for a program for which they have received permission from the MoES in accordance with all conditions and stages specified in the curriculum.

## **Chapter II Creation of Curricula and Conditions for Teaching**

### **Article 8      Creation of Curricula**

The creation of curricula for master's degrees by a State and private higher education institutes must be structured as follows:

1. Name of curriculum: (Lao and English);
2. Name of certificate: (Lao and English);
3. Responsible unit;
4. Philosophy and aims of the curriculum;

#### **4.1 Philosophy**

Specification of background and reasoning for creating the curriculum, importance and vision of the curriculum, demand from society and the labor market, and the skills of its students after having completed it; and

#### **4.2 Aims**

Specification of methods and student training in accordance with the three characteristics and five pillars of education and the skills of its students after having completed it;

5. Specification of the time teaching commences;
6. Expectations of plan for what students are to receive;
7. Criteria for enrollees;
8. Student selection methods;
9. Organization of learning and teaching;
10. Duration of curriculum;
11. Content and structure of curriculum:
  - Specification of credits used in the curriculum;
  - Classification of subjects into each subject area (fundamental scientific subject areas, specialized fundamental subject areas, specialized subject areas, and optional subjects);
  - Learning and teaching plans for each area of study and for each year; and

- Brief content of subject(s);
- 12. Enrolment;
- 13. Criteria for assessment and evaluation of study results and graduation;
- 14. Teachers: (full-time and guest teachers);
- 15. The location of the building(s), library/ies, laboratory/ies, and learning and teaching equipment and materials; and
- 16. Budget.

#### **Article 9      Conditions for Opening a Curriculum**

The opening of a continuing bachelor's degree curriculum by a higher level institute must take place as follows:

- 9.1 It must be consistent with the policies of the Party and government, the three characteristics and five pillars of education, national socio-economic development, and the scientific, technological, and environmental growth trends of the region and the world.
- 9.2 It must be aimed at catering to the needs of human resource development in various sectors, the socio-economic structure, and the labor market.
- 9.3 The buildings and locations, learning and teaching materials and equipment, library/ies, laboratory/ies, personnel, teachers, and budget must all be ready beforehand.
- 9.4 The institute must have taught a bachelor's degree in a related field with two generations of students having graduated.
- 9.5 In order to ensure the quality of the learning and teaching, the higher education institute may invite external guest teachers to teach but these must not comprise more than a third (33%) of all the teachers teaching a given curriculum.

#### **Article 10      Stages in Obtaining Permission to Use a Curriculum**

Requesting permission to open a master's degree curriculum by a higher education institute shall take place as follows:

- 10.1 The request for the opening of the curriculum must involve the submission of various documents in accordance with Articles 8 and 9 and there must be a feasibility study.
- 10.2 For the creation of a curriculum in a certain branch which overlaps with some other curriculum or course at the same institute, there must be a feasibility study and an explanation in order to request permission from the MoES.
- 10.3 Institutes which have already received permission to open the teaching of several curricula must request permission for the opening of a new curriculum or the alteration of an existing one, submitting a feasibility study and the criteria to be used for student assessment and evaluation.

### **Article 11      Setting up a Curriculum**

- 11.1 A higher education institute shall not have the right to set up the learning and teaching of a master's degree curriculum before receiving permission for its use from the MoES.
- 11.2 In the event that Institute B wishes to teach a curriculum for which permission has been received for its use by Institute A and issue its own certificates, it must request permission from Institute A and the MoES.
- 11.3 In the event that a curriculum is the property of a given institute and permission has already been granted for its use and the institute wishes for it to be taught at another institute and certificates issued by itself, permission must be granted from the MoES.

### **Article 12      Curricular Evaluation**

Curricula for which permission has been granted by the MoES, after having been run and studied for 1-2 generations of students, it must be evaluated and revised in accordance with the Regulations on Evaluations of the meeting of the MoES National Curriculum Standards.

## **Chapter III Organization of Learning and Teaching**

### **Article 13      Duration of Study**

The organization of the learning and teaching of continuing bachelor's degrees at higher education institutes is set at 2 years or 2 academic years or more according to the branch of study. One academic year shall be divided into two semesters, each lasting five months (twenty weeks) and shall entail sixteen weeks of study.

### **Article 14      Formats for the Organization of Learning and Teaching**

1. Format 1: shall comprise education emphasizing scientific research, the writing of a thesis, and the performance of various activities related to the topic of research.
2. Format 2: shall comprise theoretical education, include mandatory and optional subject areas, and involve the writing of a thesis.
3. Format 3: shall comprise theoretical education, involve mandatory and optional subject areas, and the writing of the student's thesis by themselves.

## **Chapter IV Specification of Credits and Enrolment**

### **Article 15      Principles for the Calculation of Credits**

- 15.1 Theoretical subjects which take up one hour of presentations and lectures weekly, adding up to no less than sixteen hours per semester, shall be attributed one credit.
- 15.2 Practical subjects which take up two to three hours weekly, adding up to thirty-two to forty-eight hours per semester, shall be attributed one credit.

- 15.3 Work experience and internships which take up three to six hours weekly, adding up to no less than thirty-two to forty-eight hours per semester, shall be attributed one credit.

## **Article 16 Credit Specification**

Master's degrees have three formats for learning and teaching and comprise the following subject types and number of credits:

### **16.1 2-year curricula**

**1. Format 1:** Students must earn between 36 and 52 credits.

- The thesis shall be worth 36 credits or more.
- The study of necessary subjects and the participation in other activities shall not earn credits within the curriculum.

**2. Format 2:** Students must earn between 36 and 52 credits.

- The thesis shall be worth 12-18 credits.
- Mandatory subject areas shall be worth 20-30 credits.
- Optional subjects shall be worth 4 credits.

**3. Format 3:** Students must accumulate 40-52 credits overall.

- The writing of their own thesis by themselves shall be worth 10-14 credits.
- Mandatory subjects shall be worth 26-34 credits.
- Optional subjects shall be worth 4 credits.

### **16.2 3-year curricula:**

**1. Format 1:** Students must accumulate between 54 and 78 credits.

- The thesis shall be worth 54 credits or more.
- The study of additional necessary subjects and the participation in other specialized activities shall not earn credits within the curriculum.

**2. Format 2:** Students must earn between 54 and 78 credits.

- The thesis shall be worth 14-20 credits.
- Mandatory subject areas shall be worth 36-54 credits.
- Optional subjects shall be worth 4 credits.

**3. Format 3:** Students must accumulate 60-78 credits overall.

- The writing of their own thesis by themselves shall be worth 14-20 credits.
- Mandatory subjects shall be worth 40-52 credits.
- Optional subjects shall be worth 6 credits.

## **Article 17 Enrolment**

Applicants shall be examined and/or selected according to study topics and the enrolment of researchers shall be as specified by the institute.

## **Chapter V**

### **Criteria for Teachers and Enrollees**

#### **Article 18      Criteria for Teachers**

- 18.1 **Teachers:** shall have a specialized area of study related to the subject they are to teach and possess a doctoral level qualification of with two or more years' experience.
- 18.2 **Consulting teachers:** shall have a specialized area of study related to the research paper, possess a doctoral level qualification with three years' experience or more or hold a master's degree with honors and hold the position of associate professor or higher and there must be at least two of these.
- 18.3 **Thesis inspectors:** shall have a specialized area of study related to the research paper, possess a doctoral level qualification with two years' experience or more or hold a master's degree with honors and hold the position of associate professor or higher and there must be two or more of these.
- 18.4 **Thesis committee members:** shall have a specialized area of study related to the research paper, possess a doctoral level qualification with two years' experience or more or hold a master's degree with honors and hold the position of associate professor or higher and the thesis committee must consist of three to five members.
- 18.5 Other criteria specified by the institute itself shall also be met.

#### **Article 19      Criteria for Enrollees**

Enrollees to a master's degree curriculum in a given branch of study must meet the following conditions:

- 19.1 Format 1: Students must have graduated with a bachelor's degree in the same field of study, have achieved good results, possess the fundamental skills or knowledge, and be ready to write a thesis.
- 19.2 Formats 2 & 3: Students must have graduated with a bachelor's degree in the same field of study in which they intend to further their studies, have achieved good results at bachelor's degree level or have achieved two or more year's experience.
- 19.3 Those who have graduated with a bachelor's degree in a similar field of study and wish to enroll in Format 2 or 3 must study the fundamental subjects necessary for the branch of study in which they intend to enroll and the credits earned from this shall not count towards their curriculum.
- 19.4 Students shall also comply with any other specifications issued by the institute.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Student Assessment and Graduation**

#### **Article 20      Principles for Student Assessment**

The student assessment for each subject shall be conducted according to the following scoring system:

Grade		Meaning		Grade-point equivalent
Lao symbol	English symbol	Lao	English	
ກ	A	ດີເລີດ	Excellent	4.0
ຂ+	B+	ດີຫລາຍ	Very Good	3.5
ຂ	B	ດີ	Good	3.0
ຄ+	C+	ດີພໍໃຊ້	Fairly Good	2.5
ຄ	C	ພໍໃຊ້ໄດ້	Fair	2.0
ງ+	D+	ອ່ອນ	Poor	1.5
ງ	D	ອ່ອນ ຫລາຍ	Very Poor	1.0
ຕ	F	ຕົກ	Fail	0

## **Article 21 Graduation**

Those graduating from a two-year master's degree must have accumulated the number of credits specified in the curriculum, have achieved a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or more, and be of good character.

## **Chapter VII Final Provisions**

## **Article 22 Responsibilities**

### **22.1 Macro-Level**

For the Department of Higher Education to study and issue additional specifications concerning the implementation of the curricula in practice in order to ensure quality and correctness; and

### **22.2 Micro-level**

For the higher education institute to improve, adjust, and create their own curricula along with evaluation and assessment specifications so that they are correct and consistent with this Decision.

## **Article 23 Implementation**

The relevant offices and departments of the MoES and institutes shall acknowledge and implement this Decision in accordance with their respective duties and responsibilities.

## **Article 24 Effectiveness**

This Decision is effective from the date of signature. Any decisions that conflict with this Decision shall be canceled.

**Minister of Education and Sports**

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- |                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Government's Office            | 1 copy      |
| 2. Ministries                     | 1 copy each |
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## Annexes

### National Curricula for Master's Degrees

#### Definitions:

- **Curricular standards:** shall refer to the quality standards specified for a curriculum in order that it may achieve its learning and teaching objectives and aims.
- A **master's degree curriculum:** shall refer to teaching and learning of a student in a specialized subject which leads on from bachelor's degree level.
- A **credit:** shall refer to a volumetric unit of learning and teaching for each subject [in a curriculum].
- **Specialized subjects:** shall refer to the main group of subjects of a given area of specialization.
- **Optional subjects:** shall refer to subjects which enhance knowledge and skills in a specialized subject.
- A **senior teacher:** shall refer to a person who is responsible for work experience and leading [students] through the writing of their thesis.
- A **consulting teacher:** shall refer to a person who instructs and leads in the writing of thesis to graduate.
- A **thesis inspector:** shall refer to a person who checks the accuracy and quality of a thesis to graduate.
- A **full-time or internal teacher:** shall refer to a teacher who teaches under the authority of their institute.
- A **guest or external teacher:** shall refer to a teacher who has been invited [to teach] by another institute.

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