

## PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING RECOGNITION OF INTERNATIONALISATION FOR OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S PROGRAMMES<sup>1</sup>

### 1. INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUALISATION AND REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

This first section will attempt to explain the reference framework of this procedure and of the Unibasq-Basque University System (SUV) Quality Labels.

Thus, and with regard to the regulation of the scope of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, it is worth referring, firstly, to Decree 274/2017, of 19 December, on the implementation and suppression of official university education leading to Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral programmes, which establishes that official university education in the Basque Country must be defined and organised in accordance with the principles and criteria that inspire and govern the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This framework responds to the fundamental objective of training highly qualified human capital that provides an adequate response to the socio-economic needs of the Basque Country; on the other hand, it is indicated that it must address the specific characteristics and strengths of the Basque education system, as well as those of Basque and European society in general. Article 4 of the Decree establishes that the offer of official university Bachelor's Master's and Doctorate programmes in the Basque Country will be categorised into basic, intermediate and advanced levels, considering the education vectors based on innovative methods and methodologies, internationalisation, and relations with companies, institutions and other entities, with the aim of improving the information to society on the characteristics of the SUV. The Decree also establishes that Unibasq will develop and make public the protocols and procedures for the categorisation of education according to the aforementioned vectors<sup>2</sup>.

Likewise, the Order of 27 July 2018, of the Basque Minister of Education, on the categorisation of official Bachelor's and Master's programmes, also aims to regulate the categorisation of official Bachelor's and Master's programmes offered by the SUV into basic, intermediate and advanced levels, in order to increase information to society on the characteristics of this System. Along the same lines, the 2019-2022 University System Plan and the draft University System Plan 2023-2026 - in the development and consensus phase at the date of approval of this document- defined by the Basque Government Department of Education include a specific line dedicated to the development of Internationalisation, in an attempt to make explicit the importance given to the international orientation of the SUV. It is proposed as a transversal development line that affects all the university's missions.

On the other hand, and with regard to the state regulatory framework, it should be noted that Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, which modifies Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities, establishes the structure of official university programmes. In this regard, article 26 of Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of official university education and the quality assurance procedure, states that the Council of Universities will issue a favourable or unfavourable decision on the proposal to implement a university programme, once the curriculum of the programme has been assessed by the corresponding assessment body.

At the level of quality assurance in the EHEA, reference should also be made to the framework established by the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA – known by the acronym ESG– developed by the E4 Group (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), European Students' Union (ESU),

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<sup>1</sup> This protocol was approved by the Unibasq Advisory Commission on 11 November 2022.

<sup>2</sup> It should be recalled at this point that Article 48 of Law 3/2004, of 25 February, on the SUV and Law 13/2012, of 28 June, on Unibasq - SUV Quality Agency, assign to Unibasq the responsibility for the assessment of the qualifications of the universities that have their registered offices in the Basque Autonomous Community.

European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), among others.

Likewise, and returning to the sphere of the Basque Country, reference should be made to the policy of promoting quality management in Basque organisations, driven by Euskalit, the Basque Foundation for Quality, through its different programmes. This is the case of the promotion of the Advanced Management Model (AMM) –a reference model for many public and private organisations in the Basque Country, both in the industrial and service sectors– and the Euskalit recognition scheme associated with this Model.

With all these references in mind and also taking into account the experience acquired in the different calls made by Unibasq for the recognition or Label of Internationalisation and the reflection that, in a perspective of continuous improvement and in accordance with its principles of action the Agency carries out with its stakeholders, the Advisory Board of the Agency, in its session of 11 November 2022, has decided to approve the present document, in order to establish the procedure and requirements for obtaining the Label of Quality for Internationalisation in the official Bachelor's and Master's programmes of the SUV.

## 2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The recognitions or Quality Labels awarded by Unibasq to SUV Bachelor's and Master's programmes are distinctions established within the framework of a voluntary evaluation procedure for these programmes. The purpose of these awards is to support SUV universities in their efforts to improve a series of specific aspects relevant to their programmes. The main objective of these distinctions is therefore to promote and stimulate the efforts of SUV universities in the improvement of their programmes, with the secondary objective of improving the visibility of these efforts in the eyes of society. The Unibasq Quality Labels focus, specifically, on those aspects of the SUV universities' programmes in which the Basque university policy establishes its focus of attention and improvement (see previous section).

The main objective of the Internationalisation Quality Label on which this document focuses is to promote and stimulate the effort to improve the international orientation of SUV Bachelor's and Master's programmes with the secondary objective of improving the visibility of this effort to society.

Recognition of internationalisation may be extended to an entire programme or to a pathway within it. In the first case, the requirements set out in this document must be met by the whole programme. In the second case, they must be met by the pathway, but not necessarily by the part of the programme not included in it.

This document also includes the conditions that students must fulfil for the Internationalisation Quality Label to be included in the European Diploma Supplement. If recognition is extended to the entire programme, it is possible that not all students will meet the requirements to include the recognition of internationalisation in their supplement. On the other hand, if it is extended to a pathway, all students graduating from that pathway must meet these requirements; otherwise, the pathway will lose recognition.

All official SUV Bachelor's and Master's programmes listed in the Register of Universities, Centres and Degrees (RUCT) are eligible for the Internationalisation Quality Label on a voluntary basis.

This document establishes the requirements for obtaining the Internationalisation Quality Label for official Bachelor's and Master's programmes listed in the RUCT of the universities within the scope of the Basque Country. In the case

of other universities, its application may be carried out within the framework of an agreement between the University and the Agency that contemplates and develops this evaluation.

Finally, it should be noted that due to Unibasq's vocation to provide services in an international perspective – as corroborated by its participation, for example, in various European consortia of quality assurance agencies, such as the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA)–, the Agency establishes the possibility of awarding its Quality Seal for Internationalisation by recognition of equivalence with other prestigious distinctions in the field of internationalisation, such as the Erasmus Mundus distinction, for example.

### **3. PROCEDURE FOR THE EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION OF THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES/PATHWAYS**

#### **3.1. Receipt of the application for participation in Unibasq**

Unibasq will hold an annual call for SUV universities to apply for recognition or the Internationalisation Quality Label. Universities shall submit an application in accordance with Annex I for each programme or pathway they wish to apply for recognition, following the evaluation criteria established in this document. Furthermore, in a separate document, the evidence supporting the fulfilment of these criteria must be presented.

Applications for recognition of programmes that propose modifications of any kind with respect to the last programme report verified or accredited by Unibasq or another competent assessment agency will not be accepted. The modifications, submitted through the channels established for this purpose, must have been approved prior to the application for assessment.

The projects should be deployed and therefore able to demonstrate achievements.

In the call Unibasq will specify the process for submitting the official application.

#### **3.2. Report preparation by Unibasq**

The issuing of the report for recognition will be carried out by the Unibasq Vectors Evaluation Committee, composed of academic staff of recognised prestige, a person with a professional profile and a student. The activity of the Evaluation Committee will be led by the indications established by Unibasq in its Code of Ethics and Guarantees, as well as in the internal procedural rules contained in this document. This Committee may be advised by professionals, students and academics.

#### **3.3. Outcome of the evaluation process**

The Unibasq Vectors Evaluation Committee will draw up a proposal for a reasoned report, according to whether or not the established assessment criteria have been met, pronouncing itself in terms of favourable or unfavourable to obtaining recognition. In the latter case, the aspects that must necessarily be modified within the period for allegations in order to obtain a favourable report may be indicated. This proposed report shall be sent to the university so that it may present allegations within a period of 10 calendar days. Once the deadline has expired and the allegations have been assessed, if applicable, the Unibasq Vectors Evaluation Committee will draw up a final assessment report, which may be favourable or unfavourable, and will send it to the applicant university and the Basque Government. When it is favourable, recommendations for improvement may be included, as well as the commitments to be acquired by the University in order to maintain the recognition, which will be processed in the

same way as the rest of the recommendations made during the verification (ex-ante accreditation), monitoring or renewal of the accreditation of the programme.

The report shall be drawn up within a maximum period of 6 months from the date of receipt of all the documentation necessary to carry out the assessment. Failure to issue an express resolution within the aforementioned period will mean that the application will be considered rejected.

When the programme or pathway obtains recognition or the Label of Quality for Internationalisation, the university will include it in the diploma supplement of the student who has fulfilled the requirements set out in this document. Likewise, it shall include in the public information and dissemination activities of the programme that it has been recognised for internationalisation or that it includes an internationalisation pathway. In the latter case, public information of the programme must expressly indicate the specific name of the pathway and the number of places on it.

In order to make it easier to identify the programme that have obtained the recognition or Quality Label of Internationalisation, Unibasq will make available to the University whose programme has obtained a recognition the digital and paper version of a certificate with a visual presentation similar to the one shown in the following image:



The certificate will include a registration number associated with the recognised programme or pathway. Together with the certificate, Unibasq will make available to the university the digital image files with different versions of the Unibasq Dual Quality Label Mark, together with a Manual of corporate use of the Unibasq Quality Label Marks.

The Quality Labels awarded may not be transferred to other programmes or institutions other than those that have passed the evaluation carried out by Unibasq, nor may they be extended or transferred to units or areas that are not covered by the scope of their evaluation.

Under no circumstances may the recognition or the Quality Label be used in the following cases:

- If the Label's initial evaluation process has not been passed.
- If the positive evaluation of the label has been withdrawn during the monitoring process.
- If there has been a substantial change in the programme affecting the nature of the Label and such change has not been approved by the Agency.

- If it is not used for the purpose for which it was created.

The Brand that refers to the recognition or Dual Quality Label is owned by Unibasq and will be registered at national and European level, and is therefore legally protected.

Universities and university centres whose programmes (either a complete programme or a pathway within that programme) are recognised or awarded the Unibasq Quality Label may use the images associated with the Unibasq Quality Labels –i.e. their brands– to differentiate such programmes or to promote them. To this end, they must comply at all times with the guidelines established in the aforementioned Manual of Use, as well as the usual corporate image guidelines for this type of case. References to Unibasq awards and Quality Labels must always be applied in a clear and honest manner, avoiding confusion.

Unibasq is obliged to ensure the proper use of its awards or Quality Labels. In the event that it becomes aware of any improper use, it will initiate an informative procedure that will be notified to the person responsible for the programme and/or institution concerned so that he/she can present allegations (in person or in writing). The outcome of the hearing process may result in a written warning requesting that the conditions of use of the Quality Label be respected. When warnings are not heeded, or are more serious, Unibasq will initiate the corresponding legal actions and, if appropriate, will bring the facts to the attention of other bodies or institutions, as well as the media.

### 3.4. Monitoring

The monitoring of the recognition or Quality Label whose award is defined in this document will be integrated in the monitoring and renewal of the Accreditation of the recognised programme or in the renewal of the Institutional Accreditation of the Centre responsible for the offer of the recognised programme.

The persons responsible for the recognised programmes must inform Unibasq of any incidents in their deployment with regard to this Quality Label; the Agency may, ex officio, request any additional information that its competent committee or management deems appropriate.

If, in the course of the monitoring or renewal of the accreditation of the recognised programme (or in the renewal of the institutional accreditation) or in this ex officio action, it is detected that the programme no longer meets any of the requirements necessary to obtain recognition or that the commitments included in the assessment report have not been met, the Agency may withdraw the recognition or Quality Label granted if the competent Committee deems it appropriate. The university may make the allegations it deems appropriate once it has received notification of non-compliance with the requirement(s) from the Agency. After considering such allegations, the Committee will issue a final decision on whether or not to withdraw the Quality Label. Withdrawal will automatically imply the impossibility of including the reference to the recognition, both in the diploma supplement and in any type of information or public dissemination of the programme or pathway concerned.

In duly justified exceptional cases - such as events of force majeure limiting international mobility, very severe economic crises and/or similar circumstances - a temporary failure by the Agency to comply with some of the requirements set out in this document, in particular those set out in points 1.2. and 1.3. of the following section of this document, will be accepted by the Agency. In any case, the University that finds itself in such an exceptional situation shall notify the Agency as soon as possible.

## 4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

### Presentation

Initially, a descriptive summary of the Internationalisation Project of the programme or pathway eligible for recognition must be made. It should be about projects that have been implemented and that can therefore demonstrate achievements.

### Description of the programme

1.1. This section should include the number of places offered in the programme or pathway related to the Quality Label.

In the case of pathways, the projects submitted must have a minimum number of relevant places with respect to the total number of new places on the programme. For both programme and pathway recognitions, the university must guarantee that it has the necessary means to accommodate the students and deploy the project presented in the conditions required.

The application sent by the University must show that:

- All students who have enrolled in the programme or pathway in internationalisation have the option of being able to carry out their TFG/TFM in non-official languages.
- It is possible to tutor in non-official languages of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country the TFG/TFM of all the students of the programme who wish to access the recognition of internationalisation and, in the case of the itinerary in internationalisation, of all the students of the itinerary.
- The number of places foreseen in the mobility agreements is equal to or higher than the number of students enrolled in the programme or pathway in the courses in which the mobility is envisaged. For this purpose, a list of agreements must be submitted with the places foreseen for each agreement to ensure the outgoing mobility of all students.

1.2. The university shall provide evidence that at least 10 % of the students enrolled in the programme or pathway have been received through international mobility programmes or are from abroad. Foreign students or students coming from international mobility programmes who enrol in subjects from different programmes shall be counted only in the programme in which they take more ECTS credits. This percentage will be calculated on the total number of students enrolled in the academic year prior to that of the application, i.e. on the total number of students enrolled in each and every one of the courses that make up the programme, in the case of applications for recognition of programme, or on the total number of students enrolled in the pathway in the case of recognition of pathways.

1.3. In order to obtain the recognition or Quality Label for Internationalisation in a programme, at least 20 % of the student body must participate in international mobility programmes (outgoing). In addition, as indicated above, the programme must ensure the necessary arrangements so that all students who so wish can have the option to participate in an international mobility programme. The percentage shall be calculated taking into account all students who have undertaken an outgoing mobility in any of the programme courses in the previous academic year, over the average number of students enrolled in that course.

In order to obtain the recognition or Quality Label of Internationalisation in a pathway, all students must participate in this type of programme. It must be demonstrated that the number of students who have undertaken outgoing mobility in the previous academic year is equal to or greater than the number of places on the pathway for which internationalisation recognition is requested.

## **2. Justification of the curriculum leading to a recognised qualification**

2.1. This section must justify the interest and relevance of internationalisation for the development of some of the competences or learning outcomes of the programme.

2.2. In order to obtain recognition, there must be an internationalisation strategy in place that clearly identifies its objectives. These must be included in the strategic or management plan of the institution or programme, as well as including measurement indicators with their target values.

2.3. For the purposes described above, the existence of an operational committee to address and coordinate the internationalisation strategy is required, which must include at least one academic person of recognised prestige from a foreign university. Evidence shall be provided regarding the activity of the operational committee that addresses and coordinates the internationalisation strategy and references to incidents detected, and monitoring of the student body or of the proposed indicators. During the monitoring and renewal of accreditation, the minutes of the meetings of this committee may be requested.

## **3. Learning outcomes**

3.1. In the organisation and development of the implementation of the programme there must be an integration of internationalisation actions for the development or achievement of the competences, as well as the learning outcomes established for the programme or pathway.

## **4. Access and admission of students**

4.1. The routes and requirements for access to the programme/itinerary must be indicated, including the recommended entry profile, which must be made public before the start of each academic year. Students who are going to study a programme that may be recognised with an Internationalisation Quality Label are required to have an appropriate linguistic level when entering the programme.

In the case of an application for recognition for a pathway, the admission criteria and their weighting for access to the pathway must also be established. The university must make this information public, at least on the website of the programme once recognition has been obtained.

4.2. Mention should be made of the specific actions planned for the programme/pathway aimed at supporting and guiding students once they have enrolled. The university must make this information public, at least on the website of the programme once recognition has been obtained.

## **5. Teaching planning**

5.1. The curricular organisation, teaching coordination and assessment must allow for the articulation of programmes

in collaboration with foreign universities in the context of the EHEA or other international contexts.

The following aspects will be assessed in this section:

- Explaining how the programme's competences support professional development in international environments.
- The existence of public information on the programme aimed at international stakeholders (in a foreign language and targeted to a specific audience).
- The possibility of internships in companies or organisations in other countries.
- The existence of training or other initiatives or actions involving an internationalised structure (joint programmes, shared courses, joint management bodies, etc.).
- The existence of international agreements for the mobility and exchange of teaching staff.
- The existence of actions aimed at mobility, such as a system of grants and agreements and protocols for student counselling and reception.

Separate information on each of the above aspects must be provided in the application.

5.2. The programme must offer teaching in non-official languages of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country in a minimum percentage equivalent to 20% of the total credits in the case of a Bachelor's programme or 30% of the total credits in the case of a Master's programme in order for the programme or pathway to be recognised.

In any case, in order for the student to be able to incorporate the recognition of internationalisation in his/her European Diploma Supplement, he/she must pass at least 25% of the ECTS credits of the Bachelor's programme and 50% of the Master's programme in a non-official language of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country including the TFG/TFM; in addition, he/she must have passed, in the same percentages, at least 30 ECTS credits in international mobility programmes. If recognition is requested for a pathway, all students on the pathway must pass these requirements.

## 6. Academic staff

The university must provide the CVs of the teaching staff of the programme or pathway.

It will be valued that the teaching staff of the programme have international academic experience and participate in international networks (whether teaching, research, knowledge transfer or management), so that they can effectively contribute to the achievement of the established internationalisation objectives.

At least 20 % of the teaching staff must have a C1 or equivalent accreditation for teaching in a non-official language.

In addition to the above, at least 20 % of the teaching staff must fulfil one of the following conditions (within a time horizon of ten years):

- Proof of education (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) at foreign universities.
- Have completed stays in foreign universities and research centres.



- Have participated in research projects awarded by an international organisation or in teams made up of members of foreign universities and research centres.
- Foreign teaching staff teaching on the programme.
- Be lecturers from foreign universities teaching on the programme.
- Participate in international networks for teaching, research, knowledge transfer or management cooperation.
- Document their participation in existing international mobility agreements.

The application must provide separate information on each of the above aspects, indicating, where applicable, the percentage of the teaching staff that complies with them.

## **7. Material resources and services**

It must be accredited that sufficient material and human resources are available to attend to international students. Describe the material resources and indicate the language profile of the administrative and service staff, which must be sufficient to cater for foreign students.

## **8. Quality Management System**

The procedures related to internationalisation, as well as those related to the design and planning of the programme, its monitoring and implementation, shall be presented. They should include the measurement of the satisfaction of students coming from mobility programmes and allow the identification of needs in order to propose improvement actions based on the previous results. They should also include mechanisms to ensure the level of language acquisition.

The average degree of satisfaction of the students received in mobility in the programme or pathway should be at least 7 on a scale of 10.