

**MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING**

-----

No. 39/2020/TT-BGDĐT

**SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**  
**Independence – Freedom – Happiness**

-----

*Hanoi, September 10, 2020*

**CIRCULAR**

**ON CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING QUALITY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR  
HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL**

*Pursuant to Law on Higher Education dated June 18, 2012; Law on amendments to Law on Higher Education dated November 19, 2018;*

*Pursuant to Decree No. 99/2019/ND-CP dated December 30, 2019 of the Government on elaborating to Law on amendments to Law on Higher Education;*

*Pursuant to Decree 69/2017/ND-CP dated May 25, 2017 of the Government on functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Training;*

*At the request of the Director General of Quality Assurance Department;*

*Minister of Education and Training promulgates Circular on criteria for assessing quality of distance education program for higher education level.*

**Chapter I**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 1. Scope and regulated entities**

1. This Circular prescribes criteria for assessing quality of distance education programs for higher education level.
2. This Circular applies to universities, academies and higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as “higher education institutions”) providing distance education programs for higher education level (hereinafter referred to as “training program”) operating in Vietnam territory and relevant organizations and individuals.

**Article 2. Term interpretation**

In this Circular, terms below are construed as follows:

1. “*teaching program*” of a training program consists of: general objectives, specific objectives, expected outcome of training programs and expected outcome of each subject; contents and duration of each subject; teaching method and assessment method.

2. “*quality of training program*” refers to satisfaction of general objectives, specific objectives, expected outcome of training programs and requirements of Law on Higher Education, Law on amendments to Law on Higher Education, national education framework and personnel demand of society.

3. “*assessment standard*” of a training program refer to a requirement in terms of contents and conditions that must be satisfied by the training program in order to be accredited for education quality. Name of each specific standard dictates one or several important assessment standard for the training program.

4. “*assessment criteria*” of a training program refer to basic requirements and conditions to be achieved of an aspect of each standard.

5. “*comparison*” includes reference and comparison between a training program and criteria for assessing training program or another training program.

6. “*quality assessment of training program*” refers to collection, processing of information and provision of statements based on assessment standards for all activities related to training programs in higher education institutions, including: Objectives and expected outcome of the training program; description, structure and contents of the training program; teaching and learning activities; examination and assessment of learning results of learners; teaching, research and teaching assistance staff; employees; learners and assistance for learners; technology, equipment and material infrastructure; management for implementation of training program; assurance and enhancement of training program and expected outcome.

### **Article 3. Goals of issuing assessment standards for quality of training program**

1. Higher education institutions shall adopt standards to assess all activities related to the training programs to continuously improve quality of distance education and hold accountability to authorities and social agencies for quality of training program.

2. Accreditation organizations for education quality shall adopt standards to assess or accredit or discredit education quality of training programs.

3. Enable other organizations and individuals to acknowledge, assess and criticize publicly for training programs of higher education institutions of their concern.

### **Article 4. Assessment categories**

1. Criteria for assessing quality of training program shall be classified by 7 categories, in which:

a) Category 1: Complete failure to meet the criteria, immediate remedial measures required

- b) Category 2: Failure to meet the criteria, remedial measures required;
  - c) Category 3: Failure to fully meet the criteria, small adjustments required;
  - d) Category 4: Satisfactory to the criteria;
  - dd) Category 5: Exceeding the criteria's demand;
  - e) Category 6: Excellently satisfying the criteria;
  - g) Category 7: Exceptionally satisfying the criteria.
2. Criteria marked from categories 1 to 3 mean unqualified and categories 4 to 7 mean qualified.

## **Chapter II**

### **ASSESSMENT STANDARDS FOR QUALITY OF TRAINING PROGRAM**

#### **Article 5. Standard 1: Objective and expected outcome of training program**

1. Objectives of training program are clearly defined; conforming to missions, vision of higher education institutions, and objectives of higher education institutions according to Law on Higher Education and Law on amendments to Law on Higher Education.
2. Expected outcome of training programs are clearly defined according to National education framework, covering both general requirements and specialized requirements, reflecting requirements of relevant parties; similar to expected outcome of formal training program in the same discipline; periodically reviewed, revised and publicized.

#### **Article 6. Standard 2: Description, structure and contents of training programs**

1. Description of training programs contains adequate information, is updated, and clarified in terms of form of distance education, public and easy to access.
2. Detailed outline of subject is fully informative, updated, publicized and accessed with ease by relevant parties.
3. Contents of training programs are designed based on expected outcome and formal training programs, updated, flexible in structure, logical in procedures and connected in terms of different subjects in order to achieve expected outcome.

#### **Article 7. Standard 3: Teaching and learning activities**

1. Teaching and learning activities are designed and implemented to suit distance education model.

2. Teaching and learning activities are designed accordingly and implemented to achieve expected outcome.
3. Teaching and learning activities are designed and implemented to ensure interaction between teachers and learners and among learners.
4. Teaching and learning activities promote enhancement of specialized skills and soft skills including self-learning, self-research and life-long learning skills of learners.

**Article 8. Standard 4: Examination and assessment of learning results of learners**

1. Examination and assessment of learning results of learners (including graduation ranking, graduation consideration and admission, certificate issuance) are designed and implemented to suit distance education model and comply with applicable regulations and law.
2. Examination and assessment of learning results of learners are designed accordingly to achieve expected outcome.
3. Regulations on examination and assessment of learning results of learners (including period, method, criteria, weighing factors, response mechanism and relevant contents) are clear and publicized for learners.
4. Method of examining and assessing learning results are diversified (in person, online) to ensure value, credibility; accuracy, objectivity and equality of assessment.
5. Examination and assessment results must be promptly provided to enable learners to improve their learning.
6. Issue and publicize procedures for dealing with complaints about examination and assessment results to allow learners to access with ease.
7. Adopt suitable monitoring system for development in learning activities, learning results and workload of learners from afar.

**Article 9. Standard 5: Teaching, research and teaching assistance staff**

1. Adopt plans for developing teaching, research and teaching assistance staff; recruitment and assignment of teaching, research and teaching assistance staff meet requirements of distance education programs in terms of training activities, scientific research and community usefulness.
2. Requirements for capacity of teaching, research and teaching assistance staff participating in distance education program are identified and publicized. Recruitment and assignment for teaching, research and teaching assistance staff satisfy requirements of distance education program and applicable regulations and law.

3. Teachers, researchers and teaching assistants are trained and periodically enhanced in terms of methods and techniques for working, teaching, researching and applying information technology during implementation of distance education program.
4. Teaching, research and teaching assistance staff are assigned with tasks within their train specialties to ensure effectiveness.
5. Adopt mechanisms for monitoring and assessing capacity and workload of teaching, research and teaching assistance staff to improve training activities, scientific research and community usefulness.
6. Requirements for specialized training, enhancement and development of teaching, research and teaching assistance staff are identified and satisfied.
7. Administration based on working results of teachers, researchers and teaching assistants (including commendation and acknowledgement) is implemented to motivate and support training activities, scientific research and community usefulness.

#### **Article 10. Standard 6: Employees**

1. Adopt plans for developing employees (working in library, information technology system, developing studying materials and other auxiliary services) and meet requirements for distance education, scientific research and social usefulness.
2. Requirements for recruitment, assignment, transfer and use of employees are suitable for distance education format and be identified, publicized.
3. Requirements for capacity and workload of employees are identified; adopt mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and motivating employees.
4. Requirements for specialized training, enhancement and development of employees are identified and satisfied.
5. Administration based on working results of employees (including commendation and acknowledgement) is implemented to motivate and support training activities, scientific research and community usefulness.

#### **Article 11. Standard 7: Learners and support for learners**

1. Enrolment policies are clearly identified, compared with formal education program of the same discipline, publicized and updated on a regular basis.
2. Learners are equipped with effective distance education methods and skills.

3. Learners are provided with advice in terms of distance education methods, skills, vocational skills and attitude towards occupations; auxiliary services during learning processes and extracurricular activities suitable for distance education model.

4. Learners access consulting services and auxiliary services with ease.

5. Information systems for consulting and assisting learners are fully provided on website for distance education of education institutions; teams of assistants to ensure interaction and response on a regular and timely basis for learners.

6. Systems for preparing plans, implementing, assessing and improving environment, health, safety and accessibility of learners with special needs are established and operational.

#### **Article 12. Standard 8. Technological, equipment and learning material infrastructure**

1. Information technology infrastructure and systems of software satisfactory to distance education and management requirements according to Regulations on distance education for higher education issued by Minister of Education and Training.

2. Information technology systems serving distance education are invested, developed and upgraded on a regular basis.

3. Recording rooms, equipment and software satisfy studying material development as well as teaching and learning activities.

4. Libraries, including e-libraries have adequate document sources satisfying specialized requirements of training programs and other resources, are updated, compliant with copyright protection, easy to access and satisfactory to requirements under Regulations on distance education for higher education issued by Minister of Education and Training.

5. Learning materials, especially e-learning materials, serving distance education are developed to suit expected outcome and objectives of training programs and meet requirements under Regulations on distance education for higher education issued by Minister of Education and Training.

6. Learning materials, including e-learning materials, are fully issued for subjects in training programs and provided for learners.

7. Learning materials, including e-learning materials, are fully and scientifically stored; revised and updated on a regular basis to improve quality of distance education.

8. Laboratories and functional rooms are furnished with appropriate equipment and updated to assist training activities and research.

#### **Article 13. Standard 9: Management of training program execution**

1. Plans for implementing annual distance education training programs conform to development strategies of education institutions.
2. Education institutions issue regulations on organizations and management of execution of distance education training programs and publicize for relevant parties.
3. Planning, assignment and enhancement of management officials satisfy management requirements for executing distance education training programs.
4. Environment, health and safety standards are defined and implemented with special attention towards specific needs of persons with disabilities and suitable for distance education model.
5. Ensure financial resources and develop plans for investing and developing distance education training programs.

**Article 14. Standard 10: Guarantee and enhancement of training program quality**

1. Response and demands of relevant parties related to distance education programs are used as the basis for developing, assessing and developing teaching programs.
2. Design and development of teaching programs are established, deployed, assessed and renovated.
3. Adopt specific procedures for periodically reviewing and assessing teaching and studying processes, analysis and assessment procedures based on examination and assessment results to guarantee expected outcomes of learners and quality enhancement. Monitor and store information on attendance and development in learning activities, learning results and workload of learners from afar.
4. International scientific research and experience learning results are adopted to assess and enhance distance learning and teaching.
5. Quality of auxiliary services and benefits for distance education are assessed and renovated.

**Article 15. Standard 11: expected outcome**

1. Rate of dismissal and graduation are established, monitored and compared to improve quality.
2. Average graduation period is established, monitored and compared to improve quality.
3. Satisfaction level of relevant parties are established, monitored and compared to improve quality.

**Chapter III**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

## **Article 16. Department of Quality Control**

Department of Quality Control shall provide specific guidelines for using standards for assessing, instructing self-assessment and external assessment to enable higher education institutions and education accreditation organizations to implement.

## **Article 17. Direct supervisory authorities of higher education institutions**

Direct supervisory authorities of higher education institutions shall encourage and enable higher education institutions executing training programs to strive to achieve education quality phase by phase.

## **Article 18. Higher education institutions providing training programs**

1. Based on specific conditions, actively prepare plans for developing training programs satisfactory to education quality for each phase and adopt measures to successfully implement proposed plans. Implement self-assessment, external assessment and contents related to accreditation of training programs according to applicable regulations of Minister of Education and Training on procedures and frequency for accreditation of training programs.

2. For each specific training program, may choose to assess based on standards issued under this Circular or assessment standards for distance education programs of foreign accredited education accreditation and assessment organizations recognized by Ministry of Education and Training.

## **Article 19. Education accreditation organizations**

Education accreditation organizations shall rely on this Circular to assess and accredit training programs of higher education institutions accredited for education quality according to applicable regulations of Minister of Education and Training on procedures and frequency for accreditation of training programs.

## **Article 20. Entry into force**

This Circular comes into force from November 25, 2020.

## **Article 21. Responsibilities for implementation**

Chief of Office, Director General of Department of Quality Control, heads of relevant entities affiliated to Ministry of Education and Training, Chairpersons of People's Committees of provinces and central-affiliated cities, heads of direct supervisory authorities of higher education institutions, heads of higher education institutions providing distance education for higher education level and directors of education accreditation organizations are responsible for implementing this Circular./.



**PP. MINISTER  
DEPUTY MINISTER**

**Nguyen Van Phuc**

---

*This translation is made by **THƯ VIỆN PHÁP LUẬT**, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and for reference purposes only. Its copyright is owned by **THƯ VIỆN PHÁP LUẬT** and protected under Clause 2, Article 14 of the Law on Intellectual Property. Your comments are always welcomed*