

Unofficial translation



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

Ministry of Education and Sports

**No.: 4124/ED.ME.HE/11
Vientiane Capital, dated: 03 November 2011**

**Decision
on the National Continuous Curriculum Standards for Associate 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 Continuous curricula for associated degrees so as to achieve nationwide uniformity.

Article 2 Name of Curriculum Standards

These standards shall be referred to as the "National Continuous Curriculum Standards for Associate Degrees".

Article 3 Scope of Application

The National Curriculum Standards for Associate Degrees shall be used in the research and creation of National Continuous 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 Continuous programs for associate 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 Continuous curriculum at associate degree level in a given branch shall receive a certificate stating “Associate Degree for...” but the term “Continuous Program” shall be listed on their grade point transcript (Continuous Program).

Article 6 Permission to Teach Curricula

Higher level institutes wishing to open an associate degree Continuous 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

State and private higher education institutes shall have the right to issue Certificates for Associate Degrees (Continuous) 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 Continuous curricula for associate degrees by a higher education institute 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 Continuous associate 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 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 Procedure Obtaining Permission to Use a Curriculum

Requesting permission to open a Continuous associate 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 Continuous associate 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 Continuous associate degrees at higher education institutes is set at 1.5 years or 1.5 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 Organization of Learning and Teaching

14.1 2-3-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 1.5 years (45-54 credits)

- Full-time study should last 1.5 years (3 semesters) or no more than 2 years (4 semesters).
- Non-full-time study should last 2 years (4 semesters) or no more than 3 years (6 semesters).
- In the event that the student has been able to enroll for more than the number of credits specified in order to graduate early, their study should last for at least 1 year (2 ordinary semesters in addition to each year's summer semester) but this does not mean that the curriculum shall turn into a one-year curriculum.

14.2 4-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 2 years: (60-80 credits)

- Full-time study should last for 2 years (4 semesters) or no more than 2.5 years (5 semesters).
- Non-full-time study should last for 3 years (6 semesters) or no more than 4 years (8 semesters).
- In the event that the student has been able to enroll for more than the number of credits specified in order to graduate early, their study should last for at least 1.5

years (3 ordinary semesters in addition to each year's summer semester) but this does not mean that the curriculum shall turn into a one-and-a-half-year curriculum.

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

Continuous associate degree curricula shall be made up of various subject types and the number of credits shall be according to the following ratios specified:

16.1 2-3-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 1.5 years (45-54 credits)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. General subjects | 3-6 credits |
| 2. Fundamental subjects for specialized subjects | 12-14 credits |
| 3. Specialized subjects | 28-32 credits |
| - Study | 26-32 credits |
| - Writing and defense of dissertation | 2-4 credits |
| 4. Optional subjects | 2 credits |

16.2 4-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 2 years: (60-72 credits)

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. General subjects | 6-8 credits |
| 2. Fundamental subjects for specialized subjects | 18-22 credits |
| 3. Specialized subjects | 34-40 credits |
| - Study | 30-36 credits |
| - Writing and defense of dissertation | 4 credits |
| 4. Optional subjects | 2 credits |

Article 17 Enrolment

The enrolment of students for each semester shall take place as follows:

17.1 2-3-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 1.5 years (45-54 credits)

1. For full-time study over 3-4 semesters (1.5-2 years), students shall enroll for no less than 15 and no more than 18 credits.

2. For non-full-time study over 4-6 semesters (2-3 years), students shall enroll for no less than 8 credits and no more than 9.
3. In the event that a student is enrolling for more than the specified number of credits in order to graduate earlier, they may enroll for no more than 22 credits per semester.

17.2 4-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 2 years: (60-72 credits)

1. For full-time study over 4-6 semesters (2-3 years), students shall enroll for no less than 15 and no more than 18 credits.
2. For non-full-time study over 6-8 semesters (3-4 years), students shall enroll for no less than 8 credits and no more than 10.
3. In the event that a student is enrolling for more than the specified number of credits in order to graduate earlier, they may enroll for no more than 22 credits per semester.

Chapter V Criteria for Teachers and Enrollees

Article 18 Criteria for Teachers

- 18.1 **Teachers:** for Continuous associate degree curricula shall be specialists in a subject area relevant to the branch of study being taught and possess a bachelor's degree or higher. If necessary, guest teachers with associate degrees may be invited to teach certain subjects but these must not account for more than one fifth of the number of teachers teaching the curriculum.
- 18.2 **Senior teachers:** shall be specialists in a subject area relevant to the branch of study being taught and possess a bachelor's degree or higher and there must be one or more of these.
- 18.3 **Dissertation committee members:** shall be specialists in an area relevant to the dissertation being taught, possess a 3-year bachelor's degree or higher, and have three or more years' experience and there must be three to five of these.
- 18.4 Other criteria specified by the institute itself shall also be met.

Article 19 Criteria for Enrollees

Enrollees to Continuous associate degree curricula in a given branch of study shall have completed a diploma or equivalent in the same specialized subject and meet any other criteria specified 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

The institute of the student shall refer to the number of credits accumulated and general point average (GPA) as follows:

21.1 2-3-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 1.5 years

1. First year students

- Students who have accumulated less than 97% of the number of credits specified for Year 1 and/or have a GPA of less than 1.95 shall be considered to be equivalent to first year students.
- Students who have accumulated 97% of the number of credits specified for Year 1 and have a GPA of 1.95 or above shall be considered to be equivalent to second year students.

2. Second year students

- Students who have accumulated less than the number of credits specified for the curriculum and/or have a GPA of less than 2.00 shall be considered to be equivalent to second year students.
- Students graduating from a 2-3-year Continuous associated degree curriculum lasting 1.5 years shall have accumulated the number of credits equal to that specified for Year 1, have a GPA of 2.00, and be of good character.

21.2 4-year Continuous associate degrees lasting 2 years

1. First year students

- Students who have accumulated less than 97% of the number of credits specified for Year 1 and/or have a GPA of less than 1.95 shall be considered to be equivalent to first year students.

- Students who have accumulated 97% of the number of credits specified for Year 1 and have a GPA of 1.95 or above shall be considered to be equivalent to second year students.

2. Second year students

- Students who have accumulated less than the number of credits specified for the curriculum and/or have a GPA of less than 2.00 shall be considered to be equivalent to second year students.
- Students graduating from a 2-3-year Continuous associated degree curriculum lasting 1.5 years shall have accumulated the number of credits equal to that specified for Year 1, have a GPA of 2.00, and be of good character.

Chapter VII Final Provisions

Article 22 Responsibilities

22 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

23 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

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

23.2 Measures for national ongoing curricula for associate degrees in technical and vocational educational education and higher level shall be specified separately.

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

To be delivered to:

1. Government's Office
2. Ministries

- 1 copy
- 1 copy each

3. Department of Higher Education	3 copies
4. Departments under the MoES	1 copy each
5. Universities	1 copy each
6. State and private sector higher education institutes	1 copy each
7. PESSs	1 copy each
8. To be kept	3 copies

Annexes

National Curricula for Continuous Associate 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 Continuous associate degree curriculum:** shall refer to the teaching of a student who holds a diploma or equivalent in the same specialized branch of study.
- **A credit:** shall refer to a volumetric unit of learning and teaching for each subject [in a curriculum].
- **General subjects:** shall refer to fundamental scientific subjects to use in specialized learning.
- **Fundamental specialized subjects:** shall refer to a group of subjects fundamental to the learning of a given specialized subject.
- **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.
- **Full-time learning and teaching:** shall refer to 5-7 hours of study per day or 25-35 hours of study per week.
- **Non-full-time learning and teaching:** shall refer to 4 hours of study per day or 20 hours of study per week.
- **A dissertation:** shall refer to a summary of theoretical and practical knowledge on a given specialized topic.
- **A senior teacher:** shall refer to a person who is responsible for work experience and leading [students] through the writing of their dissertation.
- **A consulting teacher:** shall refer to a person who instructs and leads in the writing of dissertations.
- **A dissertation inspector:** shall refer to a person who checks the accuracy and quality of a dissertation.
- **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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