

Unofficial translation



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

Ministry of Education and Sports

**No.: 4129 /ED.HE/11
Vientiane Capital, dated 3 November 2011**

**Decision
on the National Curriculum Standards for Specialization Level I**

- 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 standards for the management of higher education and acts as a reference for higher education institutes in their creation and development of Specialization Level I curricula so as to achieve nationwide uniformity.

Article 2 Name of Curriculum Standards

These standards shall be referred to as the "National Curriculum Standards for Specialization Level I".

Article 3 Scope of Application

The National Curriculum Standards for Specialization Level I shall be used in the research and creation of Specialization Level I 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 Specialized curricula 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 Specialization Level I curriculum in a given branch shall receive a certificate stating “Graduate Diploma of Specialization Level I in ...”.

Article 6 Permission to Teach Curricula

Higher level institutes wishing to open a Specialization Level I curriculum must receive permission from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and if wishing to close the learning and teaching of an existing curriculum, they must also receive permission from the MoES.

Article 7 Issuance of Certificates

Higher education institutes have the right to issue Graduate Diplomas of Specialization Level I for a curriculum 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 Specialization Level I curricula 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;
 - 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;
 - Number of credits in each area (theory, practice / work experience, and dissertation) for Specialization Level I as specified (30:60:10);
 - Learning and teaching plan 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 success in the curriculum;
 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 Specialization Level I 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 It must have taught bachelor's degrees or specialized courses in a related field for at least two generations of students.
- 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 Specialization Level I 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 Specialization Level I 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 Curriculum Standards.

Chapter III

Organization of Learning and Teaching

Article 13 Duration of Study

The organization of learning and teaching bachelor's degrees at higher education institutes is set at 2-3 years of 2-3 academic years 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

The organization of learning and teaching of Specialization Level I shall be a form of education which places a greater emphasis on practical aspects and expertise than it does on theory and the dissertations in order to improve professionalism and technical advancement in their field of specialty.

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

Specialization Level I curricula shall be made up of various subject types and the number of credits shall be according to the following ratios specified:

2-3 year curricula shall comprise 36-64 credits

No.	Name of subject type	No. of credits	Percent
1	Theoretical	10-19 credits	30%
2	Practical / work experience	22-38 credits	60%
3	Writing of technical dissertation	04-07 credits	10%

Article 17 Enrolment

Applicants must have completed an entrance examination or have been selected and be registered as a students according to the specifications of the institute as specified.

Chapter V Criteria for Teachers and Enrollees

Article 18 Criteria for Teachers

- 18.1 **Teachers:** must be specialists in a subject area relevant to the subject being taught and possess a Graduate Diploma of Specialization Level II, a master's degree in addition to at least five years' experience, or a doctoral degree in addition to at least three years' experience.
- 18.2 **Senior teachers:** must be specialists in a subject area relevant to the subject being taught, possess a Graduate Diploma of Specialization Level II, a master's degree in addition to at least five years' experience, or a doctoral degree in addition to at least 3 years' experience and there must be two or more of these.
- 18.3 **Examination committee members:** must be specialists in a subject area relevant to the topic of the examination and possess a Graduate Diploma of Specialization Level II or a doctoral degree in addition to at least three years' experience and there must be five or more of these.
- 18.4 **Dissertation committee members:** must be specialists in a subject area relevant to the topic of the dissertation and possess a Graduate Diploma of Specialization Level II or a doctoral degree in addition to at least three years' experience and there must be five or more of these.
- 18.5 Other criteria specified by the institute itself shall also be met.

Article 19 Criteria for Enrollees

Enrollees to Specialization Level I curricula shall meet the following criteria:

- 19.1 Be employees who possess a master's degree and two or more years' experience, have passed a selection procedure, and be of good character;
- 19.2 Be persons who have completed a bachelor's degree (ongoing students), have passed a selection procedure, possess two years' work experience in the same branch of study, and be of good character;
- 19.3 Be persons who have graduated in the same specialized area as that they are to study, possess at least two years' work experience, and be of good character; and
- 19.4 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

Those graduating from 2-3 year Specialization Level I curricula must have accumulated the number of credits specified in their curriculum, have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 or more, have completed a specialized dissertation, 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 additional specifications concerning the implementation of the curricula in practice in order to ensure quality and correctness; and

22.2 Micro-level

For both State and private sector institutes 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 Entry into Force

This Decision is effective from the date of signature.

Minister of Education and Sports

To be delivered to:

1. Government's Office	1 copy
2. Ministries	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 Specialization Level I

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.
- **Specialization Level I Curricula:** shall refer to the implementation of learning and teaching which delve into a post-graduate specialized subject.
- A **credit:** shall refer to a volumetric unit of learning and teaching for each subject [in a curriculum].
- 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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