
Criteria for merging academic units

Methodological framework

The possible merger proposal between academic units of the same or different Institutions, may derive from the evaluation of factors regarding either the strategy for creating academic added value, or the strategy for rationalizing the map of Higher Education. In many cases, a mixed strategy can be applied by simultaneously pursuing rationalization goals and creating advantages through the merger. More specifically, issues that concern these strategies are:

1. Creating added value

The improvement of academic quality that may result from the accumulation of academic talents, utilization of infrastructure and services, prospect of increased funding and opportunities for interdisciplinary research within a wider range of academic scientific fields.

The acquisition of critical mass for academic integration through increased size and the development of new or related disciplines with the prospect of more intensive collaboration in complementary scientific fields.

Internationalization is considered an effective way to obtain a distinct profile of the Institution internationally, in order to create additional opportunities for international cooperation.

2. Rationalization of academic structures and programmes

The closing of low-quality programmes is an objective, especially in the context of reconstruction processes of the Higher Education's Map so as to implement a nation-wide plan.

The rationalization of structures inherited from previous years by removing repetition in scientific fields, eliminating programmes of inadequate quality, dealing with fragmentation or geographical isolation to achieve critical mass and a reasonable cost-effectiveness, by reducing operation cost and especially saving of human resources.

More specifically, the criteria for the evaluation or the selection of merger proposals of academic units are the following:

Criteria for the evaluation or selection of merger proposals of academic units

1. Unity and scope of Department's scientific field

1.1 The scientific field's unity

The Department's scientific field should be included in an internationally defined scientific field (ISCED F UNESCO).

Deviations from this criterion are cases in which the scientific field concerns joined disciplines belonging to different scientific areas.

1.2 The scientific field's scope

The study programme should be structured with courses that adequately cover the scientific field's scope.

Deviations from this criterion are cases in which there are overlaps, excessive focus or gaps on disciplines of the scientific field that result in the inability to meet the needs of the expected learning outcomes. Often the study programme is developed in one of the specialties of the scientific field and does not provide the necessary knowledge of the background and the scientific field's scope.

Deviations from this criterion have a direct impact on the degrees that are awarded, the graduates' academic and professional qualifications.

2. Teaching staff's sufficiency and quality

2.1 Teaching staff that is numerically sufficient, satisfactory student / teaching staff ratio

2.2 Appropriateness, relevance among teaching staffs' disciplines and courses

3. Research identity and performance

3.1 Satisfactory level of research activity of the academic unit in relevant research areas

3.2 Satisfactory level of teaching staffs' research performance

4. Educational and support infrastructures

4.1 Sufficient number of classrooms, laboratories, and equipment

4.2 Disposal of support infrastructure and services

5. Attracting candidates

5.1 Satisfactory level of preference of candidates with good performance

6. Employment of graduates (in relation to the supply and demand of the scientific field's graduates)

6.1 Evaluation of employment and unemployment rates of the scientific field's graduates

6.2 Evaluation of the trends of professions of relevant economic sectors and of the demand in labor market

6.3 Evaluation of offer of graduates of related academic units

7. Quality evaluation (Department / Undergraduate Study Programmes)

7.1 Accreditation of Study Programmes and degree of compliance

7.2 Possible weaknesses and recommendations by the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP)

7.3 Comparative evaluation with Departments of related scientific field

8. Geographical dispersion / unity

- 8.1 The geographical proximity / isolation from main academic structures is evaluated
- 8.2 The possible fragmentation of the academic units of the Institution is evaluated

9. Academic foundation of Institution(s)

The degree of the academic unit's contribution to the educational and research activities of the Institution and the possibility of creating an advantage is evaluated, in terms of:

- 9.1 The complementarity of scientific fields without overlaps
- 9.2 The strengthening of distinct elements of identity and nature
- 9.3 The degree of internationalization and interdisciplinarity
- 9.4 The existence / absence of critical mass

10. Academic map of Higher Education

The degree of the academic unit's contribution is evaluated in terms of:

- 10.1 Completing or covering new scientific fields and specialties
- 10.2 Filling the gap in the demand for knowledge and skills in the labor market
- 10.3 Meeting the development goals of national or regional economy