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Ha Noi, 06 October 2020

CIRCULAR

Providing regulations on online and blended joint training programs with foreign higher education institutions for bachelor, master and doctorate degrees

Pursuant to the Law on Higher Education dated 18 June 2012; the Law on the amendments and additions to a number of articles of the Law on higher education dated 19 November 2018;

Pursuant to Decree No. 99/2019/ND-CP dated 30 December 2019 of the Government providing details and guidance on the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on the amendments and additions to a number of articles of the Law on Higher Education;

Pursuant to Decree No. 69/2017/ND-CP dated 25 May 2017 of the Government defining the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Ministry of Education and Training;

Pursuant to Decree No. 86/2018/ND-CP dated 6 June 2018 of the Government providing regulations on foreign cooperation and investment in education;

At the proposal of the Director General of the Higher Education Department;

The Minister of Education and Training promulgates the Circular on Regulations on online and blended joint training programs with foreign higher education institutions for bachelor, master and doctorate degrees.

Article 1. Scope of regulation and object of application

1. This Circular specifies regulations on online and blended joint training programs with foreign higher education institutions for bachelor, master and doctorate degrees.
2. This Circular applies to higher education institutions that are established and operate legally in Vietnam, and academies and institutes established under Decisions by the Prime Minister in compliance with the Law on Science and Technology that are permitted to deliver training at doctoral level (hereinafter referred to as Vietnamese training institutions), foreign higher education institutions, relevant organizations and individuals.

Article 2. Interpretation of terms

In this circular, terms and phrases hereinafter are construed as follows:

1. *Online joint training* is the collaboration between foreign higher education institutions and Vietnamese training institutions to deliver training programs via the internet and the use of information technology and multimedia communication in order to award higher education qualifications to learners.
2. *Online joint training mode* is a training delivery mode, of which the online training component accounts for more than 50% of the total training duration.
3. *Blended joint training mode* is a training delivery mode, of which the online training component accounts for less than 50% of the total training duration.

Article 3. Implementation of online and blended joint training programs

1. Vietnamese training institutions and foreign higher education institutions implementing online and blended joint training programs are subject to provisions of Articles 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 27 of Decree 86/2018/ND-CP dated 6 June 2019 of the Government providing regulations on foreign investment and cooperation in education and the provisions of this Circular.
2. Vietnamese training institutions and foreign higher education institutions delivering blended joint training programs must ensure that the online training component accounts for no more than 30% of the total training duration.
3. The implementation of joint training programs at subsidiaries of education institutions must comply with similar regulations on procedures, approval authority and other conditions applicable to joint training programs delivered at their main campus as provided herein.
4. The authority to approve proposals of joint training programs is subject to the Law on the amendments of and additions to a number of articles of the Law on Higher Education dated 19 November 2018 and Decree 99/2019/ND-CP dated 30 December 2019 providing detailed guidance on the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on the amendments of and additions to a number of articles of the Law on Higher Education, and other relevant regulations.

Article 4. Training programs

1. Training programs of foreign higher education institutions that are being delivered at their main campus, quality accredited and their qualifications recognised by competent educational authorities of their countries.
2. For joint training programs at bachelors level: training programs of foreign higher education institutions that are being delivered at their main

campus and those of Vietnamese training institutions are being delivered online in the same or similar majors of the proposed joint training programs and all programs have produced graduates.

3. For joint training programs at masters or doctorate level: training programs of foreign higher education institutions that are being delivered at their main campus and those of Vietnamese training institutions are being delivered in blended mode with the online component of no less than 20% of the total training duration of the same or similar major at the same training level of the proposed joint training programs and all programs have produced graduates.
4. Joint training programs at master and doctorate level should have the online component of no more than 30% of the total duration of the joint training programs.
5. Training programs jointly developed by both parties are implemented either:
 - a) If qualifications are granted by foreign higher education institutions, the training programs must comply with the regulations on developing, evaluating and promulgating training programs of the foreign countries and must keep core contents of the training programs of the foreign higher education institutions;
 - b) If qualifications are granted by both foreign higher education institutions and Vietnamese training institutions, the training programs must comply with the regulations on developing, evaluating and promulgating training programs of both the foreign countries and Vietnam and must keep core contents of the training programs of the foreign higher education institutions.

Article 5. Training scope

1. The training scope of a joint training program is defined based on quality assurance conditions in terms of facilities, equipment, labs, libraries, lecturers, and management staff involved in the joint programs. Such conditions must not be counted for in calculating the total admission quota of the Vietnamese training institutions. In the event that quality assurance conditions are shared, the training scope of joint training programs must be included in the total annual admission scope of the Vietnamese training institutions.
2. Vietnamese training institutions and foreign higher education institutions are to propose the annual admission scope in their proposals for approval of the joint training programs. The maximum recruitment number is to be defined in the decision of approval by competent authority or autonomously-made decision of the joint training program.

Article 6. Facilities, equipment and location of joint training programs

1. Facilities, equipment, web portals, server systems and internet infrastructures, learning management systems (LMS), learning content management systems (LCMS), and electronic learning materials for joint training programs must meet all requirements regulated in Circular 12/2016/TT-BGDDT dated 22 April 2016 of the Minister for Education and Training on application of IT in management and delivery of internet based teaching and learning; availability of audio-visual equipment such as computers, screens and projectors with suitable size to classes; stable and uninterrupted internet connection; online learning materials are appropriate to the majors and continuously accessible at high speed; and audio and video recording equipment to record training processes for purpose of management, monitoring and inspection.
2. Textbooks, learning materials, online libraries, learning software and instructions to access the online learning management system, user accounts and passwords, initial instructions on training courses as well as the evaluation and examination for the whole training course must be adequately provided. Additionally, rules on the information storage and confidentiality of joint training programs are promulgated.
3. Availability of systems and mechanisms for checking, validating, supervising and evaluating the participation of learners and strict training management systems that enable fast processing of information with high accuracy.
4. The locations for face to face training delivered at the main campuses or branches of Vietnamese training institutions are to be specified in the proposals for approval of the joint training programs.

Article 7. Lecturers, technical assistants

1. For online teaching component, in addition to lecturers who are mainly responsible for teaching, there must also be other lecturers in charge of professional support and assistants in charge of technical support. Vietnamese training institutions and foreign higher education institutions must develop specific regulations on functions and duties of each position mentioned above.
2. Lecturers and assistants in charge of the online component of joint training programs must meet the requirements specified in Circular 12/2016/TT-BGDDT dated 22 April 2016 of the Minister for Education and Training on application of IT in management and delivery of internet-based teaching and requirements of foreign higher education institutions.

Article 8. Requirements for online or blended joint training programs

1. Applications for online or blended joint training programs are subject to provisions of Clause 1, Article 21 of Decree No 86/2018/ND-CP dated 6

June 2018 providing regulations on foreign investment and cooperation in education and other relevant regulations.

2. The quality assurance part in the proposals for joint training programs must clearly specify: facilities, equipment, web portals, server systems, and internet infrastructures, learning management systems (LMS), learning content management systems (LCMS), and electronic learning materials used for organization and management of online joint training; full satisfaction of regulations for lecturers participating in the online joint training programs; and regulations on quality assurance so that degrees awarded to graduates from the joint training programs in Vietnam by the foreign higher education institutions are comparable to degrees awarded to those graduating from the main campus of the foreign higher education institutions.
3. The rights of learners and employees must be clearly defined in terms of risk measure management in the joint training proposals and agreements or cooperation contracts between the partners when implementing joint training programs, especially when joint training programs are interrupted or terminated earlier.

Article 9. Responsibilities of partners in implementing joint training programs

1. Develop and issue specific provisions of joint training programs in accordance with this Circular and other relevant regulations on: recruitment, training organization and management, number of students per class to ensure connectivity and efficiency of learners, exams, tests, process and final semester assessment, defence of thesis, dissertation, and storage and confidentiality of information.
2. Provide fully and clearly information relating to the joint training programs on websites of partnering institutions and responsible for the accuracy of the information provided.
3. Conduct quality assurance activities for the joint training programs and undertake program accreditation in compliance with current regulations.
4. Conduct professional development training on necessary methods and skills for online training, e-resource design for lecturers, study advisors and technical assistants involved in the joint training programs.
5. Retain test papers and study assessment reports of learners in the LMS for at least five years after graduation, which can be extracted for inspection when needed.
6. Implement joint training programs in strict compliance with approved contents and relevant legal regulations; refund tuition fees to learners if the training institution is in any breach that results in non-award of

qualifications to the learners or the awarded qualifications are not recognised in the countries where the foreign higher education institutions are headquartered.

7. Archive permanently documents related to the joint training programs and information of learners at both Vietnamese training institutions and foreign higher education institutions.
8. Conduct the reporting regime subject to current regulations. Any Vietnamese training institution or foreign higher education institution that fails to comply with the reporting regime or make inaccurate reports shall be handled in accordance with the laws.
9. Perform other obligations as stipulated by the laws.

Article 10. Enforcement

1. This Circular takes effect from 20 November 2020.
2. Should the legislative documents referred to in this Circular are amended, added or replaced, the amended, added or replaced ones shall be applied.

Article 12. Implementation

Chief of Office, Director General of Higher Education Department, Heads of relevant units under Ministry of Education and Training, Presidents and Rectors of universities, institutes and academies, presidents of institutes established under PM's decisions following the Law on Science and Technology, relevant organisations and individuals shall implement this Circular.

Recipients:

- Government Office;
- National Assembly's Committee for Culture, Education, Youth, Adolescent, and Children;
- Ministries, ministerial-level agencies;
- National Council on Education and HRD;
- Department of Checking Legal Documents (Ministry of Justice);
- State Audit;
- Official Gazette;
- Minister (reporting);
- Higher Education Institutions (implementing);
- Web portal of Government;
- Web portal of Ministry of Education and Training;
- Archive: Administrative files, Legal Affairs Department, Department of Higher Education.

**P.P. MINISTER
VICE MINISTER**

Signed and stamped

Nguyen Van Phuc