



Approved by:
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RULES ON THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

**OF THE ONLINE STUDY CENTRE
VENLO UNIVERSITY B.V.**

Venlo, 2018

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Definitions:

Online form of study is an organization of the study process where the student and the lecturer are at distance in terms of location but not necessary in terms of time, whereas such distance is overcome by technological means [1].

- a. The online form of study is **equal** to the regular form of study in terms of content of the curriculum, required number of credits for the respective specialty, diploma for completed education and qualification degree and professional qualification [1].

Online academic standard – standard for obtaining higher education of education and qualification degree “bachelor” and “master” and of education and scientific degree “doctor (PhD)”, as well as for improvement of the qualification of specialists with higher education according to which the online study is carried out.

- b. The online academic standard may be organized in mixed form or as fully online form of study.
- c. In case of mixed organization with attendance and remote periods, the academic load does not exceed 30% of the academic hours as set out in the curriculum for the regular form of study [1].

Technologically-based online study – teaching materials and resources for self-study (fourth level) are located in a web-based system for online study and ensure **not less than 75% of the study content** of each discipline [1].

The term **electronic study (e-study, technologically-based study)** means study prepared, supplied and/or operated through advanced technologies which can be provided locally or globally.

The term **e-study technologies** means new technologically-based means that allow every professional in the field of education to be more efficient in helping other to learn.

I. General Provisions

Article 1. (1) These Rules on the Structure and Operation of the Online Study Center (OSC), hereinafter referred to as “the Center” in the Venlo University, hereinafter referred to as “the University”, set out:

- The tasks of the Center in compliance with the mission and the vision of the University;
- The status, the managing and supervisory bodies of the Center, the academic and administrative structure of the Center;
- The scope of operation of the Center;
- The managing and supervisory bodies of the Center;
- The lecturers in the Center;
- The students;
- The rules for funding of the Center.

(2) These rules are aimed at setting out the frames of the online form of study in the University with view of ensuring its high quality.

(3) The rules are in compliance with the Higher Education Act, the Ordinance on governmental requirements to the organization of online form of study in higher education establishments, and the Rules on the Structure and Operation of the University.

(4) The rules are in compliance with the University Development Strategy and the quality assurance system and focuses on the elements of the study process that are typical for the online study (OS) – accessibility, customization, interactivity; special systems for assessment of knowledge and maintenance of online students; variety of methods and means for design and supply of OS; ensuring wide coverage of the study content through a specter of different web-based resources and activities for OS; use of appropriate OS technologies and high quality software.

(5) The rules comply with the European standards, criteria and instructions for establishment and control of OS and corresponds to the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, one of priorities of which is related to the improvement of the labor market conditions through ensuring high levels of employability and improvement of the systems for formal/ informal education/ learning.

Article 2. (1) The Online Study Center is an innovative center for research and provider of advance-guard education solutions with electronic forms for online study oriented to results for clients from the private and public sector.

(2) The main goal of the Center is to encourage the development for achievement of the University’s mission through knowledge management and education in global networks.

Article 3. The Center’s vision is to customize technologically-based online study in VU with the following priorities:

- Supporting the process for creation, transfer and sharing of knowledge in the University;
- Facilitating the deeper understanding of the study process through investigating the relations between human cognition and technologies;
- Improvement of study quality and efficiency for every individual;
- Electronic and internet course of study through adaptive customization of the study content and the study activities based on the preferences and achievements of the respective student and their own learning style.

Article 4. (1) The main tasks of the Center are:

1. establishment, development and maintenance of innovation organizational and technological infrastructure for efficient and customized study in networks, including electronic forms of online study in VU;
2. provision of global opportunities for knowledge and competence sharing for the formal and informal education;
3. assessment of knowledge, skills and competences;
4. creation of real time virtual environments where experts and students united in professional and academic communities work online or offline through control of study and knowledge, vide conference calls, whereas using the optimal combination of different types of study forms;
5. optimization of financial investments upon introduction of advanced education technologies.

(2) The Center encourages the application of electronic study in regular, mixed and online form of study process organization, self-planning and development of flexible academic paths compliant with the education needs of the student that may be used for:

- efficient involvement of the individuals studying in the University, including those who live outside the academic cities, in the study process;
- result-oriented formal and informal education based on the competence-based approach and new forms for documentation and assessment of acquired knowledge, skills and competences, for example, electronic portfolio, etc.;
- qualification, additional qualification and requalification of specialists in important sectors for the economy, where specialists are not sufficient;
- education for individuals with special education needs (people with disabilities).

(3) The Center operates on the basis of researches and works in the field of innovative methods, technologies and standards for technologically-based education.

II. Status, managing and supervising bodies

Article 5. The Center is opened/ closed by resolution of the Academic Council with majority of 2/3 of its members.

Article 6. The Center works under Rules on the Structure and Operation adopted by the University Academic Council.

Article 7. The overall control and management of the Center are exercised by the Academic Council, the Rector and the President of the University, and the operational management – by the Director of the Center supported by the Coordination Council.

(1) The Director of the Center is a habilitated lecturer with proven competence in the field of innovative methods and technologies for design and supply of technologically-based online study.

(2) The Director of the Center is proposed by the vice-rector in charge of academic affairs, and upon resolution of the Academic Council is approved/ appointed by the President.

(3) The Coordination Council is a collective body for operational management.

(4) The number and members of the Coordination Council are proposed by the vice-rector in charge of academic affairs, and upon resolution of the Academic Council, are approved/ appointed by the President/ Rector.

(5) The members of the Coordination Council are habilitated lecturers under permanent employment agreement and key experts with proven achievements, experience and publications in the field of electronic and online study.

(6) The director of the Center, the vice-rector in charge of academic affairs of the University, the heads of online academic standard, the head of the Information and Communication Technologies Department of the University, the consultation and maintenance team manager and other key experts are members of the Coordination Council.

(5) The Coordination Council is convened by the director of the Center with draft agenda:

1. at least twice every semester;
2. upon written request of at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the members of the council, within 14 days of the submission of such request.

(6) The meetings of the council are valid if attended by at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of its members. The resolutions are adopted if at least more than half of the attending members have voted in favour of such resolutions.

Article 8. The director of the Center has the following functions and powers:

1. to represent the Center before the managing bodies of the University;
2. to organize and control the implementation of the resolutions of the managing bodies in relation to the online study;
3. to coordinate the work of the Center on online study-related issues with other units;
4. to consult the departments and the Program Councils upon the development of academic documents and materials for their adaptation to the online study;
5. to coordinate the academic documents intended for online study before being submitted for review by the Program Councils and the Academic Council;
6. to control the organization (recording of academic classes for each semester, remote sessions, date for examinations, etc.) and the logistics for implementation of the online standards in compliance with the approved schedule of the study process in the University;
7. to propose personnel provision of the Center;
8. to organize and control the timely development, issue of electronic and printed teaching resources, teaching materials and advertising materials;

9. to sign or approve the documents issued by the Center;
10. to prepare the agreements entered into by the Center and to submit them to the rector for signature;
11. to dispose with the resources made available to him, according to the approved scheme for allocation of income and expenses of the unit, its financial and material resources within the frames of his delegated powers;
12. to sign the planning and reporting financial and accounting documents related to the work of the Center.

Article 9. The Coordination Council adopts resolutions in compliance with the University's policy and has the following responsibilities and powers:

1. to discuss proposals for development of online standards for existing or new specialties;
2. together with the Program Councils, to propose to the AC to open and close online academic standards;
3. together with the Program Councils, to propose to the AC to approve drafts of academic documents for online academic standards;
4. upon proposal of the Program Councils, to adopt and amend the academic documents of the online standards;
5. to update, according to the specificity of the technologically-based online study, and to propose to the AC to approve the University standards relevant to the design of academic standards. To exercise control for their implementation and improvement;
6. to approve, amend and propose for approval by the AC the methodology and criteria system for assessment of online standards, which is part of the system for education quality assessment and maintenance. To exercise control for its application and improvement;
7. to prepare and adopt instructions for the content and method for outlining the teaching materials, resources and examination materials intended for online study;
8. to discuss plans for issue of teaching literature and teaching materials in electronic and printed format;
9. to be responsible for the planning, logistics and delivery of online standards;
10. to be responsible for the creation and functioning of efficient technological infrastructure (hardware and software) for online study;
11. to adopt resolutions for professional improvement of the participants in online standards;
12. to be responsible for the planning, organization and carrying out training seminars with the teaching, administrative staff and students from the online standards related to the used teaching methodology and technology;
13. to encourage researches and technological works in the field of technologically-based education and introduction of innovative solutions;

14. to discuss and adopt the allocation of financial and material resources provided to the unit, according to the approved budget.

III. Academic and administrative structure

Article 10. (1) The Centre is organised with flexible functional structure (Figure 1).

- (2) The Centre does not have its own departments and pay-roll lecturers. The online form of study is organised, carried out and supported by a team comprising:
 1. Research and teaching staff of the respective Program Council;
 2. Specialized team of experts for methodological and technological consultations of lecturers comprising the following members: manager, expert designer of study, multimedia expert and system administrator who are employed under permanent employment agreement with proved competences in the field.
 3. Technical persons (IT experts) from Information and Communication Technologies Department of the University responsible for the support and the administration of the technical and program means and the provision of trouble-free communication between the participants in the online standards.
- (3) The Centre forms its own administrative list of employees approved by the Rector of the University;
- (4) The organisation and technical service of the online study is provided by organiser(s) Of OSC.
- (5) The organiser supports the director of OSC and the teaching teams in the provision of the administrative services, the interactive link student-lecturer and the procedures for conducting examinations;
- (6) The Centre does not have its own facilities. The technological provision of online study comprises:
 1. Dynamic computer centre with “isolated cloud” model located and maintained in special premises with the required security and air conditioning, as part of the common university infrastructure.
 2. Applied software integrated in the dynamic computer centre, respectively for management of online study; for joint work and communications; for authorship of teaching materials and resources of knowledge; digital depository for academic documents of online standards; teaching teams; research publications, projects, dissertations, diploma projects, course paper works and assignments.
 3. Studio for design and production of multimedia teaching materials: electronic books, presentations, audio- and video-resources, demonstrators, simulations, serious games, etc.

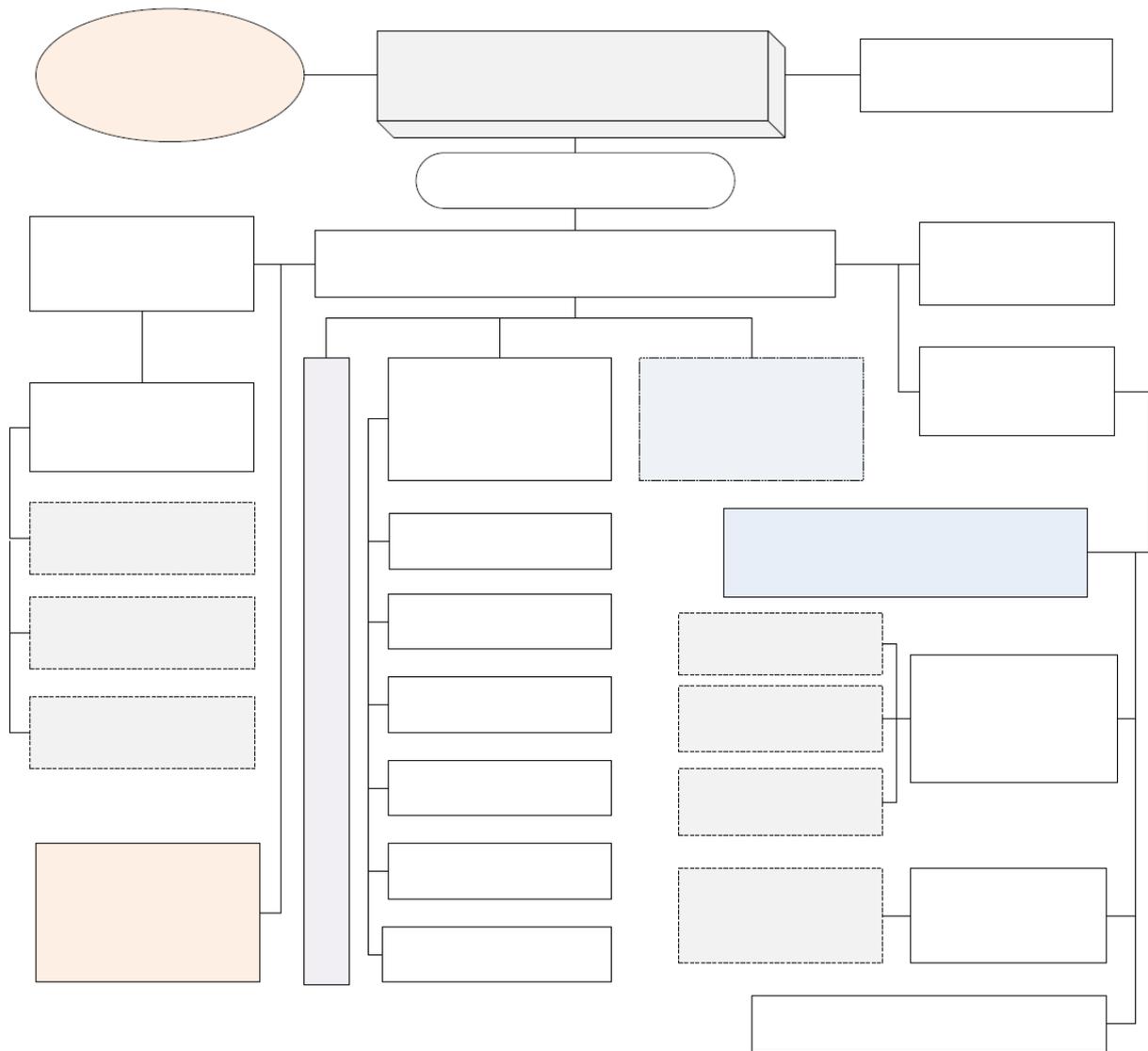


Figure 1

IV. Scope of operation

Article 11. (1) The scope of operation of the Centre comprises:

1. Development of strategy and business models for online study in harmony with the University's strategy and mission; planning, organization and carrying out online study;
2. Methodological and technological provision of online study;
3. Researches in the field of technologically-based education;

4. Support and organization of online form of study led by the departments of Dutch and foreign citizens for acquiring education and qualification degrees “bachelor” and “master” and the education and scientific degree “doctor” in professional trends with academic standard accreditation with the right to online study.

Article 12. The teaching methodological provision of the online form of study is ensured by the Program Council conducting the respective study.

Article 13. (1) The Centre establishes organization and standards for design of online academic standards (OAS):

(2) Updates, according to the specificity of the technologically-based online study and proposes for approval to the AC the university standards for preparation of academic documents taking in consideration the fact that the online form of study is equal to the regular one in terms of content of the curriculum, required number of credits for the respective specialty, diploma for completed education and qualification degree and professional qualification;

(3) Supports and controls the process for development of academic documents of OAS, which comprises the obligatory components (qualification description, curriculum, description of disciplines) as set out in the HEA, as well as a list of the team conducting and providing the online study;

(4) In case of combined organization of an online academic standard (with attendance and remote periods), it exercises control for the observance of the requirement for the academic load not to exceed 30% of the total number of academic hours for the regular form of study as set out in the curriculum.

(5) Updates, according to the specificity of the technologically-based online study, and proposes for approval to the AC the university standards for objective and transparent system for assessment of students’ knowledge;

(6) Supports and controls the procedure for approval of the package of academic documents for the OAS (adoption by the Academic Council upon joint proposal of the Program Council conducting the study and the Center pursuant to article 8 (1) of the Ordinance on OS);

(7) Exercises administrative control, analysis and update of the existing academic documents taking in consideration the opinion of students and users;

(8) Synchronizes the academic documents with the European Higher Education Area.

Article 14. The Centre ensures organization and standards for development of descriptions of disciplines and electronic resources:

(1) Updates, according to the specificity of the technologically-based online study, and proposes for approval to the AC the university standards for development and criteria for acceptance of the descriptions of disciplines, which, further to reflecting the modern status of the respective discipline through the models of study and activities set out therein, encourage the customized and active learning of students;

- (3) Prepares instructions, models and scenarios for design and realization of the descriptions of the disciplines with modular structure comprising academic objects that integrate instructions, activities, knowledge resources, test elements and web services for online study;
- (4) Creates standards for development and criteria for improvement of teaching multimedia materials and resources for self-preparation mainly at 4th technological level, which ensure not less than 75% of the study content of each discipline and correspond to the specificity of the OAS and the approved models for online study;
- (5) Develops procedures for integration of web-based academic objects/ modules with instructions, activities, audio- and video-resources of knowledge, electronic content, test elements and tests, social applications and web-services for communication in the online study system to the digital library;
- (6) Ensures easy and high speed access to teaching materials and resources that are located on the web-based online study system.

Article 15. Provides support in the process of learning and assessment:

- (1) Supports and controls the Program Councils in the overall implementation of the teaching and methodological management of the online study under the respective OAS;
- (2) Supports and controls the Program Councils in the organization of study during the attendance period of the OS within the structure of the University and/or in remote local centres established under the conditions of the HEA and the University's rules.
- (3) Ensures access to the teaching materials and resources corresponding to the competences of online students;
- (4) Ensures preliminary technological preparation of participants in the online form of study;
- (5) Ensures means for verification of online students' identity in the online study system;
- (6) Supports the application of the University approved objective and transparent system for assessment of students' knowledge;
- (7) Publishes official documents about academic ethics.

Article 16. Personal support for online students

- (1) Develops and provides information for candidate-students in terms of the nature and content of AOS and the preliminary requirements;
- (2) Establishes efficient system for support of online students by:
 - Issuing reference book for online study in the University where it provides information for available administrative services in support of students;
 - Preparing and updating manual for students how to use the online study system and for the organization of access to information resources;
 - Facilitating the consultations with lecturers;
 - Creating a system for maintenance and protection of confidentiality of student information (for example, personal data, marks, etc.);
 - Ensuring opportunities for consultations and briefing of students, according to their individual differences (in terms of origin, entry level of knowledge, prior achievements,

employment, etc.) for the purposes of providing support for achieving the education goals of the OAS.

- (3) Ensures opportunities for self-planning, development of flexible study paths compliant with the education needs of the student and the creation of electronic portfolio as a tool for professional identity.
- (4) Develops policy and creates tools for access to OS for individuals with special education needs and for disadvantaged individuals and ensures especially developed OS resources.

Article 17. Ensuring a team competent to carry out online study

(1) Identifies and describes roles, competences and responsibilities of the members of the OSA team, including:

- Research and teaching staff proposed by the Program Council providing OSA;
- Administrators responsible for the technological and logistical provision of OSA;
- Administrators responsible for the procedures for carrying out the examinations in OSA;
- IT experts responsible for the technical means support and for ensuring trouble-free student-lecturer, student-student communication, etc.

(2) Develops and implements the program for development of teaching staff and improvement of administrative and technical staff qualification in the field of technologically-based online study as a key element of the OS quality enhancement system.

(3) Creates and updates the lecturer manual with innovative and conceptual models and scenarios for study design (social constructivism, IMS Learning Design, competence-based approach, e-portfolio, etc.).

(4) Creates and updates lecturer manual with main principles and models for online study;

(5) Creates and updates lecturer manual for work with author's tools for knowledge resources and e-learning systems.

(6) Identifies measures to encourage lecturers to take part in forms of OS and development of electronic resources.

Article 18. Organisation and infrastructure for carrying out OAS

(1) Improves the Rules of the Structure and Operation of the Online Study Centre (under article 5 and article 6 (1) of the Ordinance on OS)

(2) Creates a system and rules for continuous analysis and control of carried out OS.

(3) Encourages the update and improvement of the quality of teaching resources;

(4) Controls the implementation of the updated institutional system for examination and assessment comprising means for control and transparency of examination procedures;

(5) Controls the implementation of the updated institutional system for education quality assessment and maintenance, according to the specificities of OS;

(6) Controls and updates the list of technical and communication means for online study; the system for analysis of the intensity of their use in the process of OS by students, consultants and lecturers;

(7) Updates and maintains efficient online study infrastructure;

(8) Updates the integrated web-based environment with functions for authorship of teaching objects and knowledge resources, for organization, support and conducting electronic study; digital libraries with the personal profiles of the members of the OAS teams, the academic documents of online academic standards and electronic teaching materials, assignments and tests.

(9) Plans measures for recovery of infrastructure in case of failure or disruption.

Article 19. Analyses the achievements and the level of satisfaction of students and team.

(1) Uses the Alliance of EPU Graduates Alumni as a system for analysis of the realization of the University's OAS graduates.

(2) Creates a system for analysis and comparison of results achieved by online students with the results of students participating in traditional forms of study in the respective disciplines;

(3) Establishes cooperation and interaction with employers for assessment of OAS graduate students' preparation.

(4) Creates a system for information and analysis for the level of satisfaction of the team conducting OAS.

Article 20. Researches in the field of online study

(1) Encourages research and education projects in the field of technologically-based online study and introduction of innovations in teaching and learning in OAS (mobility, smart technologies, accessibility)

(2) Encourages the participation of the lecturer staff in seminars and conferences for discussion of issues related with...

(3) Disseminates good practices in support of technologically-based online study (databases, links to good practices, etc.)

(4) Separately or together with the Program Councils, establishes international relations in the field of online study.

V. Lecturers

Article 21. (1) A team of lecturers that is subject to approval by the Academic Council together with the academic documents regulated in VU's rules is established for each academic standard for online study.

(2) The teams of lecturers comprise lecturers under main employment agreement in VU, lecturers from other higher education establishments, as well as specialists from other organisations fulfilling the requirements of the Higher Education Act for teaching activity.

(3) The team of lecturers is led by a leader nominated by the Program Council being in charge for the study and approved by the OSC Coordination Council.

(4) The team of lecturers:

- Develops drafts of academic documents;
- Prepares the required teaching materials, materials for ongoing control and for examination procedures;

- Makes proposals for assignment of classes to non-habilitated lecturers that are submitted by the OAS leader to the Program Council for election;
- Maintains updated information and teaching resources intended for students in the electronic study system according to the approved standards;
- Carries out the study in compliance with the academic documents and the study process schedule;
- Makes proposals for issue of teaching literature.

VI. Students

Article 22. The admission of students for the online form of study is organised according to the rules for admission of students in regular form of study in compliance with predefined schedule and/or upon order.

Article 23. (1) After the subscription for the semester in the respective office, the online student registers in the OSC.

(2) In OSC registered students are given teaching materials, email addresses for correspondence. To use the web-based electronic study system, the student is assigned a user name and password for access.

VII. Rules for funding

Article 24. (1) OSC is self-supported unit.

(2) The self-support is ensured with revenue from:

1. tuition fees and agreements;
2. Targeted funding from international, governmental and local projects;
3. Donations.

Article 25. Upon proposal of the President, the AC adopts a scheme for allocation of revenue and expenses of the Center.

Article 26. (1) On annual basis, the director of OSC submits to VU Rector an annual balance and report for the results from the operation of OSC, analysis and guidelines for their further development, which are reported and discussed at a meeting of the AC.

(2) OSC charges and pays taxes, charges, duties and social security contributions, including within the frames of different agreements.

(3) An annual balance sheet is prepared for OSC.

Article 27. (1) Agreements for graduate student tuition are entered into by the director of OSC together with the respective Program Council leader.

(2) The director of OSC and the responsible accountant make a chart of accounts comprising deductions for VU and OSC, for fees of lecturers and OAS leaders, fees for extra-time work of the administrative staff, purchase of consumables, technical means, business trips, etc.

Article 28. On quarterly basis, the director of OSC and the responsible accountant make statements for the financial position of OSC. Statements are adopted by the Center's Coordination Council.

Article 29. Preventive, ongoing and subsequent control on the financial activity of OSC is exercised by the Finance Directorate of VU.

Article 30. The salary of OSC administration is defined according to the generally accepted internal rules of VU.

Article 31. (1) Part-time activities in OSC are agreed upon with service agreements.

VIII. Final and transitional provisions

- § 1. These Rules are in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the Rules for the structure and Operation of VU.
- § 2. These Rules are adopted by the Academic Council of VU on 01.05.2018 and enter into force at the time of their approval.

The Rules are modified and supplemented by the decision of the Academic Council of VU on the 03.05.2018.