



**SEGRETERIA DI STATO  
PER L'ISTRUZIONE E LA CULTURA, L'UNIVERSITA' E LA RICERCA SCIENTIFICA,  
LE POLITICHE GIOVANILI**

## **National Report on the Higher Education of San Marino**

The education system in the Republic of San Marino is organised according to the principles of subsidiarity and autonomy of schools. The State has exclusive legislative competence on general issues on education, on minimum standards to be guaranteed, and on the fundamental principles. Schools have autonomy in terms of didactic, organisation and research, and development of didactical activities.

**Early childhood educational** development programmes for children under the age of three is offered by *Nido d'Infanzia* and is not compulsory. Pre-primary education programmes for children aged three to six is offered by *Scuola d'Infanzia*, it is not compulsory but almost all the children attend it.

**Compulsory education** lasts ten years (from six to sixteen years old). It covers five years of primary school (*Scuola Elementare*), three years of lower secondary school (*Scuola Media Inferiore*) and the first two years of upper secondary school or vocational courses.

The **upper secondary school** has a duration of five years (from fourteen to nineteen years old) and it is offered in the five pathways of *Scuola Secondaria Superiore* (*liceo classico, liceo linguistico, liceo scientifico, liceo economico-aziendale* and the first two years of the technical pathway –*biennio ITI*). All these pathways give access to the Higher Education programmes. The vocational training system of the *Centro di Formazione Professionale* offers three years courses in several pathways.

**Higher education** is offered by the *Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino*. In San Marino there isn't any private higher education institution, and there is only one public University.



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The *Istituto Musicale Sammarinese (IMS)* is a musical institute which has mostly non-academic courses for under 18 years old.

Since 2017, thanks to an agreement with the *Conservatorio Statale Di Musica "Bruno Maderna" Cesena (Italy)* students, who are enrolled in Cesena, can have instrument classes and their exams in IMS , regularly recognized by the Cesena institute.

The number of students involved is very small. In 2019/2020 enrolled students are 3 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 8 the number of professors involved-

A plan for a “Diploma Accademico di Primo Livello” double degree course to be entirely run in San Marino has already been designed, but not activated yet.

## **The University of San Marino**

Since 2014, thanks to the awareness that the Sammarinese higher education law could not fulfil the University needs any longer, the Republic of San Marino has adopted a new framework law concerning the university system. The wording of the new framework law has been inspired by the principles established by the Bologna process - EHEA, first of all those stated on the *Magna Charta Universitatum*.

Then, the new law has been developed based on the goals required to join EHEA, those are:

- implementation of the three cycle system –undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies;
- introduction of policies for internal and external quality assurances;
- students’ involvement in the University management;
- full adoption of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System);
- promotion of student and teaching staff mobility.



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At the time the new Law was introduced, the three-cycle system and ECTS were already operating in our University, also because all Degree Programmes are jointly held with Italian Universities.

The new University Reform Law, however, introduced many changes especially regarding university governance and the constitution of services and offices that had not previously been in place. By way of example, it regulated composition and functions of the Academic Senate, as well as the election of the Rector. It defined the position of the Director General, a role that according to the previous law had been carried out by a person directly appointed by the San Marino government and had remained in office for the duration of the legislature.

The previous University Law had established that the Board of Directors of the University was only composed of non-academic members appointed by the government. As far as services and offices, there was no Student Office, nor were there any university, student, third party, and electoral regulations. The International Relations Office did not exist. There was no explicit internal or external quality assurance activity.

The new legislative structure of the University has defined a hierarchy of normative principles constituted by the main law, called "*Legge Quadro*", accompanied by a series of lower-ranking normative acts.

The *Legge Quadro* defines the general principles, obligations and boundaries within which the University's autonomous action is conducted.

The University's governing bodies autonomously formulate the regulatory acts, which are called Statute, Code of Ethics and Operating Regulations.

This framework satisfies two requirements: the first is to affirm the principle of autonomy of the University; the second is to be able to better adapt the regulations to the plans that the University will need to implement over time.

Recommendation CM/Rec (2012) 13 of the Committee of Ministers members of the Council of Europe and the Final Declaration of the Ministers of Education Permanent Conference of the



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Council of Europe, held in Helsinki on 26 and 27 April 2013, reaffirmed the need to promote ethics and integrity in education, with particular attention to the fight against corruption and fraud in education and research. To this end, the University of San Marino adopted, among the regulatory acts, also a Code of Ethics.

The present governance structure consists of three governing bodies (University Council, Academic Senate, Rector) entrusted with strategic decision-making powers, and an administrative structure responsible for implementing decisions.

The **University Council** is the administrative governing body, and it is responsible, in agreement with the Academic Senate, for identifying strategic development plans. It approves the financial planning and monitors the achievement of the University's objectives. Compared to the Board of Directors, which was a governing body provided for by the previous law, the University Council presents some important differences, in particular:

- it is an administrative governing body and not an administrative management unit, which translates into effective separation of functions and more transparent identification of responsibilities;
- it provides for a joint composition of members appointed by political institutions and scientific staff.

The external members are three: two appointed by the *Consiglio Grande e Generale* (San Marino's parliament), and one appointed by the Minister of Education.

The internal members are the Rector (who presides over the Council) and a professor appointed by the Academic Senate, as well as representatives of students and technical-administrative staff.

The **Academic Senate** represents the highest scientific authority of the University and leads the University's strategic choices. In fact, it defines the University's programmatic, strategic and development guidelines, it formulates proposals and binding decisions on research and teaching; it coordinates and provides liaison with academic structures. The Academic Senate consists of:



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- the rector who presides over it;
- three professors appointed by the three department councils;
- one student representative;
- one representative of the technical-administrative staff.

In the previous law the Academic Senate was not foreseen and this was one of the major gaps that the new law has filled.

The **Rector** has functions of direction, leadership and coordination of the University's scientific and educational activities. He promotes and implements strategies for the development of the University aimed at ensuring and strengthening the pursuit of institutional goals according to quality criteria and in compliance with the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, impartiality and promotion of merit. It ensures the unity of the guidelines expressed by the Academic Senate and the University Council and is responsible for the implementation of their deliberations.

The Rector is nominated by the Academic Senate, his nomination is ratified by *Consiglio Grande e Generale* (Government legislative and control body) and he/she may serve a maximum of two terms. If *Consiglio Grande e Generale*, which does not have the power to select or choose a Rector, rejects the nomination, with valid and well-founded motivations, the Academic Senate will propose a new one. However, since the introduction of the 2014 law the *Consiglio Grande e Generale* has never rejected Rector's nomination.

In order to make the administrative governance and administrative management functions separate, the University has introduced the new position of Director General. He/She represents the top of the technical-administrative apparatus and constitutes the link between the governing bodies and the administrative structure. He/She is responsible for the implementation of the decisions taken by the governing bodies, making proper use of human resources and finances.



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The new law has introduced some significant changes in the organizational structure of the University, in particular: a reduction in the number of Departments (from 6 to 3): Department of Human Sciences, Department of History, Department of Economics, Science and Law, and the concentration of many technical-administrative functions in the so-called Service Centres.

This restructuring allows, on the one hand, a more rational and effective use of human resources and, on the other hand, the implementation of new services, such as students' orientation, student services, and the internationalization activities.

The new law has also introduced for the first time measures for the full social inclusion of people with disabilities.

The University Law and related regulatory acts include a number of advisory bodies in the governance:

- Students Council;
- Technical-administrative Staff Council;
- Territorial Pact.

The advisory bodies allow achieving broader participation in the identification of the University's development strategies. Participation is open to all stakeholders, internal and external.

In particular, the Territorial Pact includes the representatives of the entrepreneurial, trade union, cultural, professional and social organizations of the local territory in the sharing of the University's strategic choices, in their dissemination and, if possible, in their economic support.

The intent to join the EHEA implies the commitment to adopt a quality assurance system, in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area through an internal and external evaluation system. The purpose of adopting such a system is above all to allow a careful evaluation of all teaching and research activities as well as the administrative ones. In the new University Law the different levels of quality assurance are



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already envisaged to be implemented following the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education. (ESG).

At present, the new University Law has been almost completely implemented. The part that is still to be finalized and that is now being defined is the Quality System: a permanent body (IAB-Independent Assessment Body) was established in December 2019 and has become operational in recent months. This body has the function of verifying that the University policies on teaching quality, research and third mission are implemented by an appropriate internal Insurance Quality Systems and that the procedures, set up within the AQ System, are implemented in the management of processes which are related to teaching, research and the third mission.

San Marino do not plan to establish a national quality assurance agency, but it intends to make agreement with QAA agency already established in other country.

The new government of the Republic of San Marino, which took office in January 2020, intends to pursue its participation in the EHEA, placing it as one of the most qualifying points of its Higher Education Program.

For this reason, it will strive to take all required measures to achieve all major goals of the EHEA and to implement all Bologna reforms, including adopting new regulations and/or reforming current ones. One of these reforms will concern student and staff representatives, for whom the right of vote in each body they take part in will be recognized.

To this end, a working group, coordinated by the Director of the Education Department and composed of members of both the Minister of Education and the University, is already actively working to submit to the government the steps needed to be taken in this regard.

In order to complete the whole reform process, the Government of San Marino also intends to adopt a roadmap for implementing the recommendations of the BFUG ad hoc group.

At this stage, the Government of San Marino estimates that it will be able to complete the whole reform process within three years.



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### Overall size of the University of San Marino in 2019

In 2019 the Teaching staff was composed of 10 tenured professors and about 200 adjunct Professors, while the administrative staff includes 35 people. The number of graduates was: 130 in the First Cycle and 23 in the Second Cycle.

Despite the small size, enrolments have been increasing year by year. In the 2018/2019 academic year the total students enrolled were 1,021, whereas in the current academic year they are 1,085. 81% of them are students with Italian citizenship, 15% are San Marino citizens and 4% are citizens from other countries, but they are resident in Italy or San Marino. In both years the student gender ratio was similar: about 55% male and 45% female. Further data are on the following tables:

		2018/2019		2019/2020	
New enrolments (first year)	BSD	331	59%	344	61%
	NBC	234	41%	216	39%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>100%</b>
Following years	BSD	445	98%	525	100%
	NBC	11	2%	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>100%</b>
Total	BSD	776	76%	869	80%
	NBC	245	24%	216	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1021</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>100%</b>

	2018/2019		2019/2020	
<b>BSD STUDENT AGE</b>	<b>num.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>num.</b>	<b>%</b>
UP TO 25	610	60%	708	65%
26-30	79	8%	73	7%
31-40	48	5%	52	5%
41-50	27	2%	25	2%
OVER 51	12	1%	11	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>776</b>		<b>869</b>	



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NBC STUDENT AGE	2018/2019		2019/2020	
	num.	%	num.	%
UP TO 25	11	1%	16	2%
26-30	65	6%	67	6%
31-40	58	6%	48	4%
41-50	61	6%	54	5%
OVER 51	50	5%	31	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245</b>		<b>216</b>	

KEY: BOLOGNA STRUCTURED DEGREES= BSD  
NOT BOLOGNA COURSES = NBC

### **Tuition fees**

Tuition fees represent a consistent part of the University of San Marino income. Below an overview of its annual rates.

Bologna structured degrees:

- First cycle: from € 2,000.00 to € 2,800.00
- Second cycle: € 3,000.00
- Third cycle: € 620.00



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Other programmes:

- *Master di primo livello*: from € 2,000.00 to € 3,500.00
- *Master di secondo livello*: from € 2,500.00 to € 3,500.00
- Advanced Training Courses and Advanced Courses: from € 820.00 to € 1,500.00

## **Degree System**

The Degree system is organized in three cycles, according to the EHEA structure:

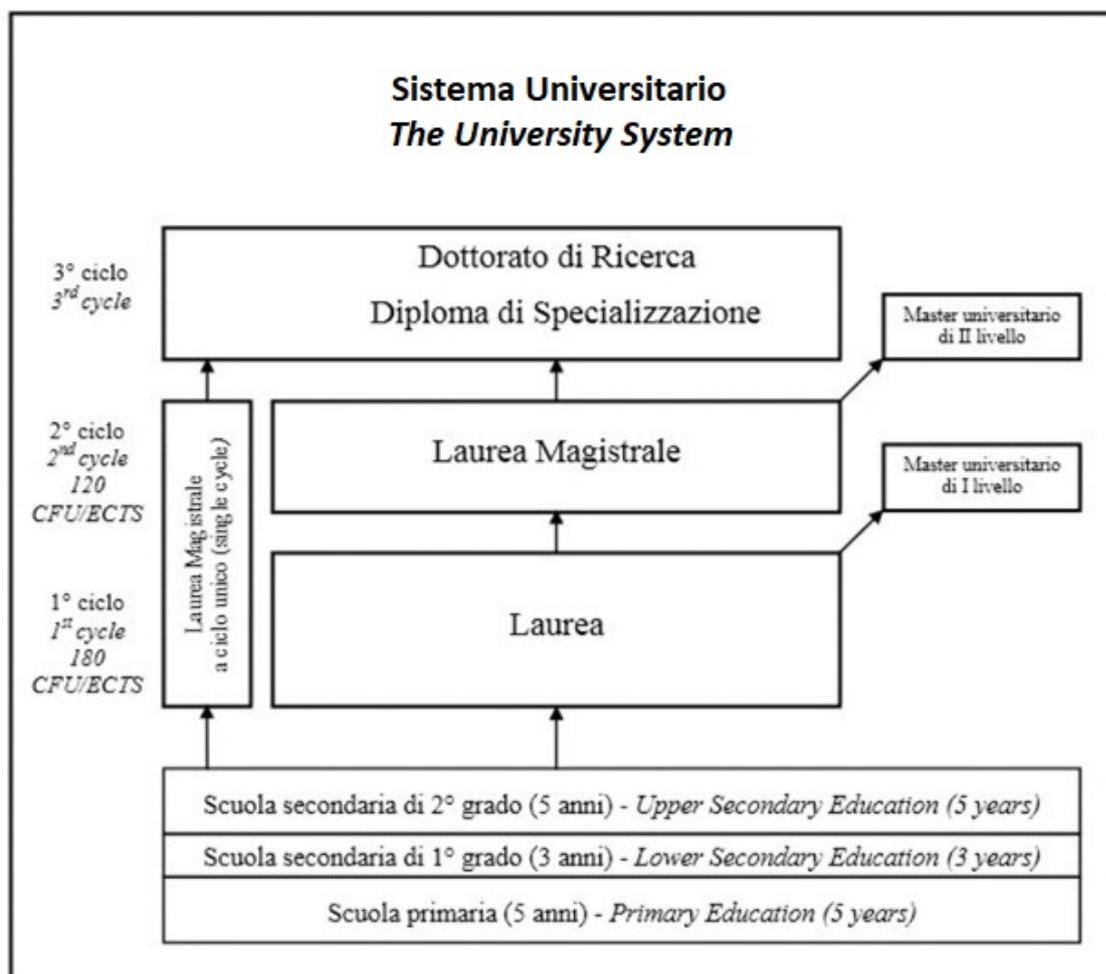
- ***Laurea (1st cycle)*** - These degree programmes provide students with an adequate command of general scientific methods and contents as well as with specific professional skills. The general access requirement is an upper secondary school leaving qualification, comparable foreign qualifications may also be accepted. Admission to some degree courses may be based on specific requirements. The studies last 3 years. The *Laurea* is awarded to students who have gained 180 ECTS credits (called *Crediti Formativi Universitari - CFU*) and satisfied all curricular requirements, including the production of a final written paper or equivalent final project. The *Laurea* gives access to the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle study programmes.
- ***Laurea Magistrale (2nd cycle)*** – These programmes provide education at an advanced level for the exercise of highly qualified activities in specific areas. Access is by a *Laurea* degree or a comparable foreign degree; admission is based on specific course requirements. The studies last 2 years. The *Laurea Magistrale* degree is awarded to students who have gained 120 ECTS/CFU credits and satisfied all curricular requirements, including the production and public discussion of an original dissertation. A *Laurea Magistrale* degree gives access to *Corsi di Dottorato di Ricerca*.



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- **Dottorato di Ricerca** (3rd cycle) - the students/young researchers enrolled in these programmes will acquire methodologies for advanced scientific research, will be trained in new technologies and will work in research laboratories, wherever appropriate. Access is by a *Laurea Magistrale* degree (or a comparable foreign degree); admission is based on a competitive exam; studies last at least three years and include the completion and public defence of an original research project.

Current legislation could allow also long degree programmes (*Laurea Magistrale a ciclo unico*), whose curricula consist of just one cycle of 5-6 years and 300 to 360 ECTS credits in total, but such programmes have never been established.





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The University of San Marino offers degree programmes in all three cycles and also other programmes outside the Bologna degree structure.

In the first cycle, it offers five *Corsi di Laurea* or Degree Programmes, all of them Double Degree programmes in partnership with Italian universities: Design; Communication and Digital Media; Civil and Environmental Engineering; Management Engineering; Construction and Land Management.

In the second cycle, it offers three *Corsi di Laurea Magistrale*, all in partnership with Italian universities: two as Double Degree programmes (Management Engineering; Design) and one as a Joint Degree programme (Civil Engineering).

In the third cycle the University of San Marino is currently running only the *Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca* in Historical Sciences.

### **Other programmes**

There are some professional undergraduate and postgraduate courses which are related to but outside of the Bologna structure. Although they are based on the ECTS system and access to them is gained by having completed a first or second cycle programmes, completing them does not provide access to the higher level of Bologna-structured degree courses. A minimum number of students is required to activate the programmes, which are approved year by year.

Some courses aim at meeting specific needs of the local community, such as the qualifying teacher training course addressed to Sammarinese teachers-to-be, others are established calling notable Professors in their fields, who design and offer specific programmes addressed at a specialized target of postgraduate students.

*Master Universitario di Primo Livello*. These courses provide students with further specialization or higher continuing education after completion of the first cycle. Requirements for access: First cycle degree or a comparable foreign degree. Admission may be subject to additional requirements. The minimum course length is of 1 year (60 ECTS/CFU credits). These are programmes intended to provide students with the knowledge and skills required for the practice



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of professions. Available courses at present are: International Master Course in the Strategy and Planning of Sports Organizations, Events and Facilities; Criminology and Forensic Psychiatry; Rehabilitation Techniques for Specific Learning Disabilities; Didactics and Psycho-pedagogy for Specific Learning Disabilities; General Pediatrics; Nutraceuticals and Food Education; Communication, Management and New Media.

Master Universitario di Secondo Livello. These courses provide students with further specialization or higher continuing education studies after completion of the second cycle. Requirements for access: Second cycle degree or a comparable foreign degree. Admission may be subject to additional requirements. The minimum course length is of 1 year (60 ECTS/CFU credits). These are programmes intended to provide students with the knowledge and skills required for the practice of professions. Available courses at present are: Geriatric Medicine; Perioperative Medicine for elderly; Criminology and Forensic Psychiatry; International Security Studies; Assessment and Neuropsychological Treatment for Specific Learning Disabilities; Management of Public Services.

Corsi di Alta Formazione and Corsi di Specializzazione (Advanced Training Courses). These programmes are aimed at providing students with the knowledge and skills requested to practice qualified professions or to deal with specific topics thoroughly. Length can vary (1 Semester, 1 or 2 years). Requirements for access: depending on the specific programme. Available courses are: Criminology and Forensic Psychiatry; Crime Scene Technician; Facility Manager; Business Analysis for Executives; Trust Law in San Marino; Training Teaching Certificate; Learning Technician for Specific Learning Disorders and Special Learning Needs; Internationalization Processes. Legal and Economic Professions; Teaching Support and Inclusion; Teaching and Psycho-pedagogy for Specific Learning Disorders.

**Credits:** University courses are structured in credits (*Crediti Formativi Universitari - CFU*), based on the workload students need in order to achieve the **expected learning outcomes**. Each credit corresponds to 25 hours of student workload, including independent study.



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The average workload of a full time student for first and second cycle programmes is conventionally fixed at 60 credits per year. Thus, the CFU fully coincide with ECTS credits.

**Academic Titles:** Those who receive the *Laurea* are entitled to be called "*Dottore*", the holders of a *Laurea Magistrale* have a right to the title of "*Dottore Magistrale*", the *Dottorato di ricerca* confers the title of "*Dottore di Ricerca*" or "PhD".

### **Double and Joint Degrees**

The University of San Marino may establish degree courses in cooperation with foreign partner universities.

As more than 80% of the students come from Italy, the university has signed agreements with Italian universities for the awarding of double and joint degrees that allow students automatic recognition of their qualifications in Italy.

A scientific committee composed by professors of both universities establishes the programmes. Exams are organised by the academic staff of the University of San Marino and approved by partner universities through a Joint Committee. All classes are taught by San Marino professors (regularly appointed on the basis of a public competition), professors from partner universities and adjunct professors.

Student mobility depends on the specific agreement. Usually students enrolled in the University of San Marino spend the first two years in San Marino and 6 months of the third year at the Italian partner university. At the same time the University of San Marino hosts a certain number of students coming from partner universities for 6 months. Students can take their exams at the hosting universities, too. This exchange programme with the partner university allows students, both incoming and outgoing with respect to the University of San Marino, to obtain the Double Degree.



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Degree courses in the first and second cycle run by the University of San Marino are all double degrees, except for *Laurea Magistrale* in Civil and Environmental Engineering (second cycle), which is a joint degree.

### **Relation between HE and Research**

Research is an important part of the University's activities. The State directly finances the University of San Marino through funds included in the budget of the Ministry of Education. The University then allocates part of its budget to research, with an amount that can vary substantially each year.

In 2019, the total annual budget of the University of San Marino was 6,374,980 euro: the State contribution was 3,250,000 euros (51%); the remaining funds came from tuition fees (45%), partnerships with the public and private sectors and third parties (4%).

In 2019, the University allocated 220,000 euros for research: 180,000 euros were spent for PhD scholarships as direct support for all its doctoral students; 40,000 for directly funded research projects.

In addition, in 2020, it has allocated a further € 50,000 to fund internal research projects.

San Marino is not part of the UE, so the University of San Marino has very limited or no access to EU projects for funding higher education institutions. Most of the applied research is carried out through "Third-party committed projects" (obviously through external contributions and funds).

Both Design and Civil Engineering courses have their own internal laboratories available for either teaching or research. However, most of the university research is carried out in external laboratories or is based on documentary research (history), social research surveys, and collaborations with the partner Universities.



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## **Employability of graduates / cooperation with employers**

In order to monitor the employment of graduates, the University annually arranges a survey addressed to all graduates. The survey is administered by the Students' Office along with the Directors of the Degree programmes.

In 2018/19, a more significant number of data on graduate employment was received by the University on the occasion of an initiative (*Notte Bianca dell'Università*) aimed at rewarding those who had distinguished themselves in their postgraduate activities.

One of the most noticeable results of the cooperation of the University with employers is the fact that many students of the University of San Marino after graduation find work in the same companies where they did their internship during their university career.

The Students' Office, in collaboration with the Director of the Degree programmes, is responsible for providing training support to graduates through internships and orientation, scholarships, and job placement activities to promote the matching of job offer and demand.

Moreover, the Republic of San Marino established a monitoring and advisory body within the University, which is defined as the Territorial Pact. It includes representatives of the University and representatives of the institutions, and of the cultural, economic, professional, trade union and association sectors of San Marino. It is a meeting point between the University and the local community. One of its tasks is to provide guidelines and development proposals for the University. Therefore, there is a very significant and well-structured dialogue between the University and the job market.



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## **Implementation of National Qualifications Framework**

The Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area aims to facilitate and promote a better understanding and comparability of qualifications from different national higher education systems. The Framework also serves the purpose of presenting the overall European educational offer to students from all over the world.

San Marino has not yet its own National Qualifications Framework. Up to now, it took as reference the Italian National Qualifications Framework, in relation to higher education, since it has double and joint degree courses with Italian universities.

However, the current Government of the Republic of San Marino has decided to set up a National Qualifications Framework for the entire San Marino education system, based on the Standards of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area.

To this end, the Resolution of the State Congress n. 02/03/2020 established a Working Group in charge of drafting the National Qualifications Framework.

The Working Group will design the National Framework by structuring the process in several phases, the first of which consists in designing the National Framework: profile, level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), credit ranges.

The next phase will involve the launch of a national consultation subdivided into a discussion of the project and a collaboration of all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the national framework, or who will be involved once it has been formally adopted.

Stakeholders will be involved in the process since the beginning, in order to take into due consideration their views. The need to consult those who may contribute to the development of NQFs, who will use NQFs and/or who are likely to be affected by NQFs will also guide the identification of stakeholders.



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For San Marino, the most relevant stakeholders include representatives of Higher Education Institutes, administrative staff and students, representatives of public and private employees and of professional organizations.

The Working Group is expected to submit the outcome of these early stages of the process to the State Congress within six/eight months.

The State Congress will then officially approve the National Qualifications Framework and start the implementation phase at all levels of the National Education System, including the University.

If necessary, the institutional implementation of the Framework will ensure that the study programmes are reformulated according to the learning outcomes-based approach. (Reformulation of individual study programmes).

Finally, the last step will be the Self-certification of San Marino National Framework compatibility with the EHEA framework.

### **Stage of implementations of ECTS**

ECTS is already adopted and used as credit system by the University of San Marino and is fully implemented within all Degree System and all other university programmes. ECTS is also implemented for the recognition of credits for prior learning in other HEIs. The use of ECTS is also accompanied by the following supporting documents: Course Catalogue, Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records, and the Diploma Supplement.

### **ECTS for programme design, delivery and monitoring**

Following the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), the University of San Marino links study credits with both learning outcomes and student workload and includes the attainment of learning outcomes in assessment procedures.

The University of San Marino is in the process of updating the online description of its degree programmes, including all details: structure, components, learning outcomes, workload,



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learning/teaching approaches, assessment methods, assessment criteria, and progression rules. Every course will be provided with an accurate description of the structure, components, learning outcomes, workload, learning/teaching approaches, assessment methods, and assessment criteria.

### **ECTS for mobility and credit recognition**

The University of San Marino adopts an open and flexible approach to the recognition of credits obtained in another context, including degree mobility and credit mobility. Moreover, the use of ECTS and Learning Agreements for credit recognition have facilitated the international mobility of the University of San Marino' students, thus improving its internationalization.

### **ECTS and quality assurance**

University teachers are asked to follow the ECTS guidelines according to the learning outcomes-based approach in the programming of their courses, and to build progressive tests to assess those outcomes. The University of San Marino is also committed to strengthening the shift from teacher-centred to student-centred teaching, recognized as an underlying principle of the EHEA, and to implement the use of ECTS in the context of lifelong learning, following EHEA recommendations.

## **National Implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA**

The University of San Marino acknowledges the fundamental role of the quality assurance system in order to guarantee the achievement of efficacy and efficiency goals in its activities, comparable to those pertaining to higher education institutes abroad.

For this purpose, the University of San Marino aims to provide a quality assurance system concerning the educational syllabus, teaching activities, research activities, third mission initiatives and administrative processes. The quality assurance system intends:



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- to define responsibilities of the people involved in performing activities and administrative processes;
- to formally define strategies, policies and procedures adopted in order to realize its own quality system and aimed at the continuous improvement of quality;
- to build a continuous process of internal evaluation of research, teaching and administrative activities;
- to conduct a periodic cost analysis aimed at comparing costs to higher education institutes in other countries;
- to monitor international attendance, cooperation and networking on the topic of quality assurance.

**Internal quality assurance in higher education institutions**

The internal quality is constantly monitored through the administration of questionnaires to all students of Bachelors, Masters and other University programmes, thanks to the collaboration of the Students' Office.

The questionnaires are then analysed by the Student Ombudsman and monitored by the Rector's Delegate to Education. Questionnaires, regarding the quality of the teaching provided, are also reviewed and analysed by the Directors of the undergraduate and graduate programmes. Finally, the results of the questionnaires are also sent to the relevant Department Council.



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## **Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance**

### Politics for Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is formalized by current legislation and implemented operationally in accordance with the provisions of the statutes and the deliberations of academic bodies (including the Territorial Pact, which welcomes stakeholders' representatives of the territory in compliance with the principles of its code of ethics.

Procedures aimed at achieving quality objectives, which have already been operational, are being progressively formalized and systematized, with a view to continuous improvement. Objectives to be pursued and ways to reach them are in line with those of similar higher education institutions, both inside and outside Europe, especially those sharing joint initiatives with the University of San Marino.

### Design and approval of programmes

Regulation 4 February 2016 no.2 – *Regolamento didattico di ateneo – Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino* regulates the organization and operating criteria of the degree programmes. In particular, for each degree programme, it provides for the following to be determined: the field(s) of study, the level of the programme, the main focus, the key learning outcomes expected on completion, the learning environment and the main learning, teaching and assessment activities, with reference to the descriptor system adopted at European level; the expected occupational opportunities; the general framework of the educational activities to be included in the curricula; the credits assigned to each educational activity and to each field, referring to one or more scientific-disciplinary sectors as a whole; the characteristics of the final examination for the achievement of the qualification.

Degree programmes are established after an accurate validation and authorization procedure provided by the Statute and the Didactic Regulations of the University. Programmes are designed in line with the institutional strategy and must have explicit learning outcomes. The educational plans are submitted annually by departments and approved by each authorized Academic Body.



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They are modulated in line with the strategic plan of the University, whose guidelines are shared with stakeholders, identifying available resources and goals to be achieved. Their contents are always in line with present and future needs of the local community.

Students benefit from a suitable teaching framework and experience a good mix of lecture teaching, workshops and internships (national and international). Students' workload is expressed in ECTS. The University of San Marino confers joint undergraduate and graduate degrees with several Italian universities, which are regulated by official agreements.

Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Teaching is based on a student-centred approach and cultural-pedagogic development. The excellent qualitative and quantitative relationship between teachers and students allows the development of a cohesive and virtuous university community, which considers the needs of any involved part.

Students' heterogeneity and their needs are guaranteed and promoted. Students' involvement, in every academic body and their participation in institutional and non-institutional University activities are clear signs of a shared governance, in principle and in practice. The Student Ombudsman is the referent for any possible violation of the founding principles and values of the University, engraved in the University Law, in the Statute and in the Code of Ethics.

Assessment methods include the whole range of written, oral and practical tests and examinations, projects and portfolios that are used to evaluate the student's progress and ascertain the achievement of the learning outcomes of a course unit or module.

The assessment criteria are rigorous, clear and transparent, consistent with the learning outcomes that have been defined. The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance. More than one examiner carries out assessment; in particular, Regulation 4 February 2016 no.2 – *Regolamento didattico di ateneo – Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino* requires that the final assessment board be composed of the teacher responsible for the specific discipline and at least one other teacher, expert in the subject.



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Students can file an appeal. The current University law regulates the appeal procedure. However, more rapid and less formalised internal procedures for student appeals are under way.

Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

The University, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention, recognises higher education qualifications and previous academic careers.

Admission to the University programmes is granted to anyone who qualifies for enrolment. Bachelor's degree programmes in Design and Digital Media require entry tests aimed at recruiting a predetermined number of students for each programme. Admission to the PhD programme is possible on the basis of a public call every two years.

The Student Office provides a variety of support for University students and efficiently monitors students' academic careers. Students can check in real time their university careers and rapidly report to the Student Office any kind of problem, which will be easily solved under the current regulations.

Almost all programmes include a six-month mobility programme abroad in one of the several partner universities. Likewise, the University of San Marino welcomes students from the partner universities. The University of San Marino fosters an open and flexible approach to the recognition of credits gained at partner universities, as well as training activities, according to the principles of the ECTS guidelines. The credits recognitions based on the Learning Agreement signed between the student, the sending institution and the receiving institution before the start of the mobility period.

The Student Office issues certifications detailing the learning outcomes achieved and the Diploma Supplement.



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Teaching staff

The University recruits its teachers through public calls, open to all those who have the necessary academic qualifications. Selection is conducted through transparent evaluations carried out by independent and qualified committees appointed by the highest academic authorities.

The University of San Marino provides, within the limits of its own resources, opportunities and incentives for teachers' professional development. Moreover, it promotes innovation of teaching methodology in order to enhance inclusion of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged background, with disabilities or who cannot attend ordinary teaching activities. It supports as well new teaching technologies to provide a flexible learning environment especially for working students.

Learning resources and student support

The University provides suitable, accessible, well-equipped facilities, connected to the Internet, to meet the educational and scientific needs of professors and students: lecture rooms, study rooms, laboratories, meeting rooms, library and support services. The university library is part of a wider international library system.

Online teaching activity is available to students of certain courses through a streaming service both synchronously and asynchronously. Synchronous service is for students who cannot attend lessons in person. Lessons are uploaded in a specific on-line repository and are asynchronously available to students. The learning materials are filed and made available on a specific e-learning platform.

Administrative and technical staff is specifically trained for administrative and support activities. It attends regularly training and professional development courses aimed at constantly improving academic support activities.



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Information Management

Art.22 of Regulation 4 February 2016 no.2 – *Regolamento didattico di ateneo – Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino* states that each Department shall approve an annual report on educational activities and services to students drawn up by a Teacher-Student Joint Commission. The annual report illustrate and discuss the adequacy of the structural allocations, the development of indicators of the regular development of students' careers and effectiveness also in terms of graduate employment, as well as students' opinions on training activities and teaching support services.

The University has been adopting systematic solutions to collect, treat and spread information in order to achieve a more efficient management of its own institutional activity. In order to provide the best decisional support to Academic Bodies and appropriate report to internal and external Quality Assessment Bodies, the following indicators are going to be defined, measured and represented:

1. significant outcomes indicators;
2. features of the student population;
3. percentage of study progress, success and dropout rate;
4. students' satisfaction levels;
5. teaching suitability and support resources for students;
6. levels and quality of graduates' professional careers

Public information

The University provides all relevant information about its institutional activity with the utmost transparency. The University makes available all information on its study programmes (admission criteria, expected learning outcomes, adopted performance audits, etc.) and on its performance (exam success rate, learning opportunities available, student employment levels),



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through its own institutional internet website, through the reports of the annual financial statement and the reports to the Territorial Pact.

On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes are actively pursued in order to align the characteristics of the programmes to the levels of effectiveness required by students in relation to the changing needs of our society.

Academic bodies evaluate constantly courses for sustainability, possible improvement, workload, expectations, needs and satisfaction of students, learning environment, support services, etc.

The path of evaluation and possible revisions is widely shared. All revisions are given appropriate communication and dissemination to all stakeholders, through the University website and other initiatives.

Cyclical external quality assurance

San Marino is ready to undergo an external cyclical quality assessment of the University, by an independent external agency.

**Stage of development of external quality assurance system**

San Marino intends to enter into an agreement with a QAA agency already established in another country, and the process is expected to be completed within three years. All data, documents and information concerning the quality assurance system will be publicly accessible.

In the meanwhile the Independent Assessment Body (IAB) was recently established to develop the guidelines of an initial and very streamlined internal QA System which will then be revised once an external evaluation agency has been identified. The IAB is made up of three members (two external Lecturers – one of them is appointed President – and one internal Lecturer). The report, submitted by this body at the end of the first year of its activity, will be examined by the



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competent academic bodies, together with feedback from follow-up internal activities, in order to support a better approach of the development strategies concerning the future Quality Assurance activities of the University.

IAB will help to define the processes and indicators adopted for internal quality assurance, and will encourage their progressive implementation and their continuous improvement.

The main aim of external quality assurance system is to assist the University in improving progressively the quality of its institutional activity and to reduce the deviations between objectives and results.

The external quality assurance system receives all the basic necessary information for assessment from the internal quality assurance representatives and the competent institutional leaders. These data are supplemented by regular interviews with key stakeholders and published for the benefit of all.

### **Standards and guidelines for quality assurance agencies**

San Marino do not plan to establish a national quality assurance agency but, as stated above, it intends to make an agreement with QAA agency already established in another country. The University is expected to complete this process within three years.

### **Level of student participation**

Within the University of San Marino bodies, students partake in higher education governance electing:

- one representative to the University Council;
- one member of the Academic Senate;



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- one representative for each degree course as a member of the related Departmental Council;
- two representatives belonging to the Territorial Pact, an authority with an advisory and constructive function, promoting orientation proposals and development approaches of the University in cooperation with local stakeholders.

There are 5 students involved in academic bodies and 4 in governing bodies. Internal rules define student and staff elections.

Within the University of San Marino there is the Students' Council. It is a coordinating body of the students' representatives and is made up of its own representatives in the University boards. The Students' Council delivers its opinion to the authority in charge, concerning teaching and services to the students with regard to:

- Annual budget expected;
- University three-year strategic programming document;
- Operating Regulations
- General norms about fees charged to students and about the right to study.

The Students' Council addresses to the University governing bodies proposals and questions concerning teaching and services for students. University bodies are expected to answer the proposals and questions.

The functioning of the Students' Council and the election of its members follow specially devised rules issued by the University Council, on a proposal of the Students' Council. The University guarantees resources and facilities to students in order to accomplish their duties.

The University has drafted a first proposal to regulate the Election of the Student Representatives. The final version of this regulation should be drawn up by the Students' Council and submitted to the university governance bodies for approval.



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To provide suitable and completely anonymous support to students, the figure of the “Student Ombudsman”, assisted by an actual counselling service, has been established.

Because of the extremely small dimension of the University, a structured student union has not been created yet. Moreover, students are not particularly active and involved in the academic governing life, basically because a tiny reality as ours allows students to have a direct contact both to teachers and administrative staff. However, students’ rights and proposals are guaranteed by the Students’ Council.

### **Level of international participation**

The University of San Marino is a member of the international scientific community and adopts its principles and instruments. It promotes its international dimension, fostering integration and cooperation between universities and research groups. The University of San Marino is one of the founding members of NUSCT – Network of Universities of Small Countries and Territories. It is also member of IAU – International Association of Universities, created under the auspices of UNESCO.

The University of San Marino participates in various international research projects as third party or strategic partner, including a three-year Erasmus+ project on the challenges of democracy in small states, a Horizon 2020 project in the field of civil engineering, and the Mediterranean Young Artists Biennale Project sponsored by Creative Europe.

San Marino is a “Partner country” in the Erasmus+ programme, so the university can take part only in certain Actions of the Programme, subject to specific criteria or conditions.

Consequently, the University has its own international mobility programme for students and professors, through the stipulation of general agreements, mobility agreements and MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with several European and non-European universities.



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To this day, more than 40 universities have signed agreements with the University of San Marino, which allow for the international mobility of students, enrolled in courses of the first and second cycle (to carry out study period abroad, internships and degree theses' research) and of academic and administrative staff.

In 2017, the University adopted regulations for International Visiting Researchers and Visiting Professors.

## **Recognition of Degrees and Study Periods**

### **Stage of implementation of Diploma Supplement**

The Diploma Supplement is an integrative certification of the official graduation qualification, written in both Italian and English. The University of San Marino adopted, and consequently, uses the DS standard format developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO-CEPES.

The University of San Marino provides the Diploma Supplement upon request of the graduated student, without any additional charge and, as already mentioned, both in English and in Italian.

At the moment the Diploma Supplement is issued at the request of the student upon completion of the First Cycle (Bachelor's Degree), Second Cycle (Master's Degree) and Third Cycle (Doctorate). In the next few months the University will be able to deliver it automatically.

The Diploma Supplement is used, if necessary, as a reference document when admitting students with a foreign degree to the University's Second and Third Cycle programmes.

It should be mentioned that Italian students, who make up the majority of the enrolled students attending the degree programmes at the University of San Marino, do not need to submit the Diploma Supplement at the time of enrolment, as there are, for evident reasons of proximity, long-standing bilateral agreements on the mutual recognition of Academic titles between San Marino and Italy.



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**National implementation of the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention**

The Republic of San Marino ratified the Lisbon Convention in 2011 through the Council Decree of 5 October 2011 no.157. Subsequently, on 6 March 2012 with Resolution no. 62 San Marino established the "National Centre for Information" for the recognition of academic qualifications (CINERTA); this office has become part of the ENIC-NARIC Network.

CINERTA is a reference point for the recognition of higher education qualifications and qualifications giving access to higher education, in accordance with the Lisbon Convention. It has no decision-making power, but it provides information and advice on recognition matters to HEI, State administrations and to the public.

Academic recognition is mainly a responsibility of the University of San Marino, which applies the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. In details, art. 7 of Regulation 3 August 2015 n.11 – *Regolamento studenti – Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino* and art. 7 and 9, Regulation 4 February 2016 no.2 – *Regolamento didattico di ateneo – Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino*, contemplate Sections IV, V and VI of the LRC. Those principles are applied to qualifications from all countries in the world.

In the San Marino educational system, fully comparable to the Italian one, qualifications giving access to higher education are awarded on completion of 13 years of global schooling. Qualifications from other country are also fully recognized, unless awarded on completion of less than 12 years of global schooling (substantial difference in Article IV.1 of the LRC)

Academic and non-academic recognition for certain specific purposes (e.g. allocation of scholarships, access to certain regulate professions), is the responsibility of some State administrations.

Further legislation on recognition of qualifications will comply with the requirements of the Convention itself. For example, art. 7 of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is not yet implemented as San Marino does not have refugees, but the next university law will take the article into consideration.



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San Marino is planning to join RECIPIT, on automatic recognition among Italy, Holy See and San Marino.

## **Lifelong learning**

### **Recognition of prior learning**

Currently San Marino does not have a legally established procedure to assess the recognition of students' prior learning, other than ECTS credits. Non-formal or informal educational pathways, as a basis for access to higher education programmes are not recognized.

### **Flexible learning paths**

Any secondary school leaving qualification giving access to higher education allows access to any HE programme in San Marino, to create opportunities for flexible learning paths in Higher Education.

In order to access HE, a secondary education qualification is always needed. Students who want to enrol in HE courses without possessing a secondary education qualification can get admission to the state exam without being obliged to go back to school.

The University of San Marino offers flexible learning paths for working students, consisting in allowing double time to graduate with the same total fees. No distance programmes are offered.

## **Double Degrees**

### **Establishment and recognition of double degrees**

The Republic of San Marino is an independent State, enclave in Italy. Therefore, the University of San Marino, in order to attract students from the neighbouring country, needs to offer degree



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programmes that can also be used readily in the Italian labour market, without going through a recognition procedure of a foreign qualification.

For this reason, the University of San Marino currently is offering only joint/double degree with Italian partner universities, i.e.: the University of Bologna, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, and the University of Parma. These degrees follow all requirements of Italian regulations and are implicitly evaluated by the respective university partner.

### **Removing obstacles to student and staff mobility**

The agreements with the Italian partner universities for the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes include also the free circulation of students and staff, whose terms and conditions are defined in the above-mentioned agreements.

Many of the Bachelor and Master programmes also include a compulsory or optional student exchange during the degree programme.

Beside the agreements with partner Universities, the mobility of students abroad as part of the curriculum is encouraged through financial contributions that the University makes available to students.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of San Marino guarantees its cooperation and support in providing study residence permits and other technical assistance to facilitate incoming and outgoing student mobility, when necessary.

International mobility exchange students are assisted by the University with a variety of services to support and welcome them in their integration into their academic programmes. Furthermore, the University also provides assistance in finding accommodation for their stay. At present, there are no University dormitories, but students can stay in private apartments.

Thanks to the Regulations for the Right to Study of the Republic of San Marino, San Marino residents who go abroad to attend officially recognized study programmes can receive



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scholarships, based on income and progress in their studies. Students are also entitled to merit-based scholarships, and financial contributions for the purchase of schoolbooks.

## **The attractiveness of the EHEA and Cooperation with other parts of the world**

### **Implementation of strategy**

Making the European system of higher education attractive to other parts of the world and competitive at international level is an integral part of the Bologna Process since its inception. Shared belief among the Bologna countries concerns the importance of the efforts, which have been carried out since 1999, to build a European dimension in higher education. The development of the changes in the structure of European higher education systems, mainly in terms of study cycles and ECTS, quality assurance system, student and staff mobility, lifelong learning, qualification recognition, joint degrees and qualification framework has strengthened “internally” the European higher education system as a whole, making it attractive and open to international higher education systems.

The principal aspects of the Bologna Process outlined in June 2003 were *attractiveness*, *openness* and *cooperation*: attractiveness “depends on many factors of which the most important are quality, transparency, diversity and visibility”; openness concerns the condition to “be open to students from all over the world”; cooperation as the action to cooperate in an open way with different countries, sharing ideas and experiences.

The document “The European Higher Education Area in a Global Setting” adopted during the Conference of Ministers held in London in 2007 stated a common strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process and focused on five core policy areas:

1. Improving Information on the EHEA;
2. Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its worldwide attractiveness and competitiveness;



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3. Strengthening Cooperation based on Partnership;
4. Intensifying Policy Dialogue;
5. Furthering Recognition of Qualifications.

Although at the present time San Marino has only partially developed the Strategy, a working group on the Strategy for the External Dimension of the Bologna Process will be formed in the coming months, whose aim will be to accomplish its own strategy up according to the EHEA guidelines.

Most of the actions promoted by San Marino so far concern Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its world-wide attractiveness and competitiveness, Strengthening Cooperation based on Partnership, and Furthering Recognition of Qualification

Promoting European Higher Education to enhance its worldwide attractiveness and competitiveness

Since the adoption of the law no. 67/2014 on the reform of the University, San Marino has been working in order to promote worldwide the country's higher education system and its institutions.

The University of San Marino website is well organized and provides a lot of information concerning Undergraduate, Graduate, and other Courses. Programmes, learning outcomes, ECTS, employability, admission requirements, lengths, fees, scholarships and grants are detailed and timely updated. A wide section provides useful information about life in San Marino, accommodation facilities, public offices, health assistance, etc.

### **Strengthening Cooperation based on Partnership**

The International Relations office of the University of San Marino coordinates and promotes the international activities of the higher education system. In addition, it stipulates agreements and memoranda of understanding with foreign universities, and deals with the granting of visas, residence and study permits.



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The University of San Marino has signed more than forty agreements with universities in Italy and other foreign countries, for the organization of joint degree programmes and for the international mobility of students and professors.

Moreover, a Memorandum of Understanding signed on November 25th 2013 with the Beijing City University (BCU) established the foundation of the Confucius Institute in the Republic of San Marino.

The University of San Marino is one of the founding members of NUSCT – Network of Universities of Small Countries and Territories. It is also member of IAU – International Association of Universities, created under the auspices of UNESCO.

In September 2020 San Marino will host the third Rectors' Meeting of NUSCT – Network of Small Countries and Territories.

San Marino is a strong supporter of student mobility projects not only for the undisputed advantages in terms of growth of professional knowledge, skills and competences, but also for enhancing fluency of languages spoken by world-wide partners. In order to provide our students as many mobility opportunities as possible the University of San Marino has been working on establishing strong collaborations with EU and extra-EU countries.

### **Intensifying policy dialogue**

San Marino is a UNESCO country and a member of the Council of Europe. As a party of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, San Marino participate to the ENIC-NARIC network with its own National Information Centre, CINERTA, whose activity is to provide information concerning education and qualification recognition.

### **Furthering recognition of qualifications**

San Marino is willing to intensify cooperation between countries in order to develop further steps in the field of recognition criteria, procedure and practices. In this perspective ENIC-NARIC Networks and Bologna stakeholders are excellent partners.



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## **Social Dimension of the Bologna Process**

### **Current state of affairs**

The growth of competitiveness within the European Higher Education Area must be balanced by strengthening the social aspects of the European area, in particular by reinforcing social cohesion and reducing social and gender disparities.

Higher education is an essential tool for the education of responsible citizens, who together will share a project for a fairer and supportive, sustainable and democratic society based on knowledge.

The commitment of individual countries to this end must be the highest and must ensure that "Access into higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and by providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies" (Leuven Communication, 2009).

Support, counselling and guidance services are needed, as well as flexible learning pathways and different ways of accessing higher education, including recognition of prior learning.

In San Marino this means, in short, the right to study: to broaden the admission to higher education as a prerequisite for social progress, to provide the material conditions so that students do not find any financial barrier or other obstacles.

San Marino has several laws on inclusion of students with special educational needs and disabilities in education and training. These laws require that students with disabilities or with specific learning disorders are supported throughout their educational path, including university.

Since 2017 the University of San Marino has provided a self-managed space to students. This space is available 24/7 and students can work on their assignments, set up working groups, arrange educational, cultural and entertainment activities.



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Since 2008 the University of San Marino has been planning and coordinating the training of professional figures who are involved in fighting and preventing the violence against women and children. More over it has been organizing several public events in order to make people aware about these themes.

**Portability of loans and grants**

The Republic of San Marino is not a member of the European Union, although some years ago, it started the negotiation process for an Association Agreement with the European Union. Therefore, the transferability of scholarships or research grants according to the principle that "money follows researcher" within the European area will not be guaranteed and each case needs to be evaluated individually.

Reaching arrangements with Italy, thanks to existing bilateral agreements, is more likely to happen. The procedure with other countries is longer and more complex, and it involves the University's International Relations Office, having the task to look for a possible solution, with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In San Marino, there is a law on the Right to Study, which allows for the financial support of even the most disadvantaged members of the population. This law enables the possibility to obtain study grants and scholarships, based on merit and income, to all San Marino students who apply for them.

The University of San Marino also offers scholarships to cover all or part of the tuition fees, based on merit and income.

The law on the Right to Study of San Marino allows San Marino citizens to benefit from significant scholarships to study abroad.

**Progress towards a more inclusive higher education system (Strategy for the future)**

Since January 2020, the "Special Needs Student Desk" service has been activated for students with special needs.



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This desk, through the presence of a delegate for students with special needs, serves the following purposes:

- orientation to incoming special needs students, with the aim of presenting the educational offer and special needs services available at the University;
- support to enrolled students with special needs, to prepare a personalized profile with indications for teaching, compensatory tools and study strategies;
- monitoring the progress of the university career;
- coordination of activities to support the inclusion of students with special needs.

In particular cases, a specialized tutor will be hired through a call for applications to help students with special needs to prepare for class, study for exams, or write a final paper.

In addition, the University will try to increase the number of Scholarships for students belonging to under-represented groups, allocating a fixed budget for this purpose.

## **Future Challenges**

Main challenges for higher education

The main challenges in the short and long term for the Republic of San Marino in the field of higher education and the Bologna Process mainly concern five areas:

- The implementation of the Qualifications Framework
- The completion of the quality assurance system
- Higher Education governance: student and staff representation
- Strengthening the principles of the Lisbon Convention



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- The implementation of the strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna process

Among these five areas, the priorities of the San Marino Government in the coming months will be the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, the completion of the Quality System and the revisions to the governance of our Higher Education system.

The government has already deliberated the constitution of a working group that will prepare the draft of the National Framework of San Marino. The time frame for its realization (now considering the COVID-19 emergency) goes from 12 to 18 months.

The completion of the Quality System based on ESG and Learning Outcomes is in the responsibility of the university. The completion of the System will be gradually achieved by working simultaneously on both the Internal and External Quality levels. It is estimated that the whole ESG-based process can be completed within 24/36 months. During this time, the decision on which QAA agency to adopt will also be taken.

It has already been mentioned that an external agency will be used, as San Marino does not currently intend to set up its own agency. It is also considered preferable not to turn to the Italian Agency, although territorially it would be a easier choice, and to choose instead an International Agency.

With regard to the governance of our higher education system, the University Law of 2014 had for the first time introduced the participation of students and staff in all university governance bodies, but not in all of them had the right to vote been considered. The Government of San Marino intends to rectify this situation by extending the right to vote to both students and administrative representatives in all university governance bodies.

This will require the adoption of a new Higher Education Law, which may also introduce some important adjustments in relation to the composition of the University Council, an administrative body that, at the moment, has a majority presence of the non-academic component. Moreover, some other important adjustments regarding fundamental values as institutional autonomy and academic freedom will be taken into account.



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The timing for the drafting and approval of the new law is less easily identifiable because it is linked to the activity of the parliament; therefore, we assume that it will be possible to conclude the process of adoption of the new law within the next three years.

The strengthening of the principles of the Lisbon Convention and the adoption of a strategy for the external dimension of the Bologna Process will also be addressed over the next three years.

In San Marino there is only one University and beginning in 2014, the year of the implementation of the Reform of the University of San Marino, the University has been growing rapidly and steadily both in terms of the number of students and the services provided by the University itself.

There is certainly a need to consolidate a system of control and monitoring of job placement rates for graduate students. In these years, the cooperation with the San Marino community has grown considerably, through the stipulation of agreements with a large section of the San Marino entrepreneurial world, but also with various associations and institutions, and it will be able, in time, to consolidate itself further and constitute an essential point of reference for the entire San Marino society. From this perspective, a new necessary step is the regulation of the establishment of university spin-offs and academic start-ups.

The expansion of the internationalization is also one of the areas that the University intends to focus on and will continue to pursue in the near future. In this respect, it seems increasingly urgent to expand our offer of accommodation for students, such as students' dormitories, to which we hope private entrepreneurial groups will also contribute.

While working in collaboration with Italian Universities (and therefore respecting rules and criteria that discipline the degree programmes), the University of San Marino has always sought to deliver a qualified offer with elements of uniqueness and innovation, that would also address the development needs of the territory. Many of these aspects can be found in San Marino University's postgraduate professional programmes.

The Doctorate of History (promoted by the School of Historical Studies) is an example of academic excellence. Its professors are all distinguished scholars in their fields. The Doctorate is



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open to San Marino, Italian and foreign citizens and the final title is automatically recognized in Italy.



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**Information on the National responsibility for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the National strategies**

The Ministry of Education and University of the Republic of San Marino and the Education Department are fully responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy.