



POLICIES FOR THE SALESIAN PRESENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2022 - 2026

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Salesian mission in higher education

[01] The Salesian Congregation affirms its presence in the field of Higher Education as part of its mission and the institutions of higher education, with the schools and the vocational training centers, "foster the total development of the young person through the assimilation and critical re-elaboration of culture and education to the faith, in view of the Christian transformation of society".¹

[02] This presence is accomplished by the promotion of academic centres under the responsibility of the provinces or the Salesian Congregation, in the case of Salesian Pontifical University (UPS), or in shared responsibility with other religious institutions, and by the presence of Salesians working in higher education institutions exercising management, teaching, or doing the research. The presence also extends to the mission of those Salesians who take care of the management and the animation of student hostels or develop a specific pastoral work for young students in Salesian or non-Salesian institutions of higher education.

2. The process being developed by the Salesian Institutions for Higher Education (IUS)

[03] The service of animation and accompaniment of the Salesian presence in the field of Higher Education, was born as General Direction for the IUS as the initiative of Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi in 1997. In 2002 it became part of the higher education of the Sector (Dicastery) for Youth Ministry.

[04] The main achievement of this animation experience is that it began a

¹ *Regulations of the Society of St. Francis de Sales*, 13.



participatory process that led to the definition of identity elements, common options and flexible structures of animation and governance.

[05] The first phase of this process provided the IUS, a Frame of Reference that made possible to achieve three fundamental objectives: to know the situation of the institutions, to define a common identity for all of them and to propose orientations for the development of the Salesian presence in Higher Education.

[06] The second phase involved the accomplishment of the ideal embodied in the document *Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education*, through a series of guidelines contained in the various documents called Policies².

[07] The policies have been implemented through common programs developed for all the institutions under the responsibility of the General Coordination. In addition, since 2012, continental or regional programs have been implemented to guide the joint work of the IUS in Africa, America, South Asia, East Asia and Oceania and Europe.

II. POLICIES

1. Challenges of the Salesian presence in higher education

[08] Institutions of Higher Education, as well as all educational institutions and society, have been affected by the consequences of the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The crisis caused by Covid19 has forced to accelerate technological, pedagogical, communicational, and administrative changes to face the educational, social, economic, cultural, and emotional effects of the pandemic. This severe disruption has revealed limits and even threats to higher education, but also great opportunities that need to be captured.

² The validity of the first Policy document has been extended to the years 2008 - 2011, by the approval of the Rector Major and his Council. A second policy document was prepared by the VI General Assembly of the IUS for the period 2012-2016. The VII Assembly elaborated a third document for the period 2016-2021.



[09] Pope Francis in *Veritatis Gaudium* (2017) invites universities to a wise and courageous renewal that they respond to the evangelizing mission of a Church that "goes forth" in this new epoch of history, marked above all by an unprecedented anthropological and socio-environmental crisis.

[10] The Rector Major, Fr. Ángel Fernández Artime, in the reflection following GC XXVIII (2020) (AGC 433) - that were incorporated in the program of the Sector (Dicastery) for Youth Ministry - points out as challenges for the Congregation to grow in the Salesian identity so that it becomes a presence and evangelizing accompaniment of young people, giving absolute priority to the poor, abandoned and defenseless. Particularly challenging is the mission and formation together with the laity, missionary generosity and, especially, the commitment to an integral human ecology that ensures a sustainable future.

[11] In this social, ecclesial, and congregational context, the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) face a fourfold challenge:

- a) To rethink the relevance of university academic functions based on the technological and pedagogical digital transformations produced by the pandemic, and, at the same time, to achieve economic and financial sustainability of the institutions in a context in which restrictive public policies, the context of commodification of higher education, and the worsening of the economic crisis - especially in developing countries due to the covid-19 pandemic – that has placed the institutions in a situation of economic vulnerability.
- b) To guarantee the Salesian identity by ensuring an affective and effective presence and animation of religious and lay people and, at the same time, placing the institutions in a ministry key according to the multi-cultural and religious contexts.



c) To ensure the Salesian quality of the educational and cultural proposal by integrating the academic community around a pedagogical model inspired by the Preventive System, especially designed for poor young people and the working classes.

d) To take advantage of the digital technological transition and the institutional and academic development of the institutions to deepen networking at all levels, seeking alliances with Salesian and other non-traditional partners such as technology companies, innovation and entrepreneurship sectors.

2. Objective

[12] The policies developed in this document want to:

Consolidate as a Salesian higher education sector, a higher quality of our academic proposal ensuring its Salesian identity, educational-cultural impact and economic sustainability in function of serving especially the poor youth and working classes.

3. Policies

[13] These policies, like those previously promulgated, are directed to institutions of higher education that are under the responsibility of the provinces or the Salesian Congregation. In the case of those centers with shared responsibility, the position and particular contribution of the Provinces to such centers will be guided by these orientations.

These policies, in continuity with the previous ones, were formulated by the VIII General Assembly with reference to the evaluation of the last quinquennium, the development of the IUS, the challenges of the Congregation and the situation created by the covid19 pandemic. They seek, at the same time, to ensure academic quality with Salesian identity and economic sustainability.



First Policy: **Salesian presence.**

[14] To guarantee in each Institution of higher education a significant Salesian presence, quantitatively and qualitatively, constituted by religious and lay people qualified to orient, animate, accompany, and manage a project at the cultural, scientific, and educational level.

Second Policy: **Option for the poor young people and working classes.**

[15] To deepen the reflection on the option for poor young people and the working classes as a key to understanding the totality of university functions: teaching, research and extension.

Third Policy: **Ministry Model**

[16] Implement the ministry model expressed in the document: *Orientations for Campus Ministry in Salesian Institutions of Higher Education*. This model should be applied as a transversal axis of the institutional Project, assumed by the entire academic community, with special participation and protagonism of young people and the performance of teams formed for pastoral animation.

Fourth Policy: **Pedagogical Model.**

[17] To develop in each of the IUS a pedagogical model inspired by the Preventive System that responds to its own context, as an instrument to achieve the educational-pastoral purpose of the entire academic community.

Fifth Policy: **Sociocultural Impact.**



[18] Promote initiatives, projects, research, and community service programs that highlight institutional options and influence collective thinking, territorial development, the formulation of public policies and offer solutions to serious social problems, especially in these fields: youth, family, ecology, migration, human rights, interculturalism, digital technologies, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue.

Sixth Policy: **Networks.**

[19] Deepen intra and inter-institutional networking according to the nature of each IUS in terms of the development of teaching, joint research, student exchange and mobility, resource optimization, innovation and entrepreneurship, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by digital technologies.

Seventh Policy: **Efficient management.**

[20] Implement an economic, financial, academic, and organizational management characterized by efficiency, creativity, participation, transparency, and respect for the environment, so as to ensure the sustainability of the IUS and, at the same time, the access and permanence of poor young people and working classes sectors to them.

III. CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE POLICIES

[21] The implementation of these policies presupposes the motivation and commitment of the Institutions to carry out together a pathway of reflection and action that contributes to the development of a common educational heritage in the field of Higher Education and to the consolidation of each particular presence according to the guidelines of the defined common identity.



[22] The application should take into account the cultural, social and religious diversity of the places where the Institutions are located. For this, the Policies should be studied, assumed, and applied, at the continental or regional level, through the Continental Conferences and other modalities of meeting. And, at the level of each IUS, by means of the commitment to assume these Policies in the Institutional Project, in coherence with the options assumed on the part of the province itself.

[23] Animation to ensure the application of these policies is the responsibility of the Sector (Dicastery) for Youth Ministry through the General Coordinator, the Direction Council and the Continental Coordination which should encourage the implementation of processes at the continental or regional level in coordination with the Provinces and the IUS themselves.

[24] At the end of the period for which these Policies have been approved, the Assembly of Provincials and responsible of institutions are called upon to verify, validate and guide the implementation of the choices made, as well as the realization of the approved common programs.