



POLICIES FOR 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 that its presence in the field of Higher Education is part of its mission and that Higher Education Institutions, together with schools and professional training centers, "promote the integral development of the young person through the assimilation and critical elaboration of culture and through education in the faith, with a view to the Christian transformation of society".¹

[02] This presence is realized through the promotion of academic centers under the responsibility of the Provinces or of the Salesian Congregation, in the particular case of the Salesian Pontifical University (UPS), or in co-responsibility shared with other religious institutions, as well as through the presence of Salesians who work in Institutions of Higher Education exercising responsibilities of directive management, administrative management, teaching, research, campus ministry and extension. The presence is also extended to the action of those Salesians who take care of the management and animation of schools or residences for university students or carry out a specific pastoral work in favor of young university students in Salesian works and in others not belonging to the Congregation.



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

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

[04] The main achievement of this animation experience is that it has unleashed a participatory process that led to the definition of identity referents, common options and flexible structures of animation and governance.

[05] The first phase of this process provided the IUS with a Frame of Reference that has made it 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 achievement of the ideal embodied in the document Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education, through a series of guidelines contained in various documents called Policies.²

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

¹ *Regolamento della Società di San Francesco di Sales*, 13



II. POLICIES

1. Challenges to the Salesian presence in higher education

[08] Higher Education Institutions, as well as the whole of education 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, administrative and management changes to face the educational and social effects, economic, cultural and emotional impact of the pandemic. This severe disruption has revealed limits and even threats to higher education, but also great opportunities that need to be seized.

[09] Pope Francis in *Veritatis Gaudium* (2017) invites universities to a wise and courageous renewal so that they respond to the evangelizing mission of a Church "going 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) (ACG 433) and included in the programming of the 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.

2 The validity of the first programmatic document was extended to the years 2008 - 2011, by agreement of the Rector Major and his Council. A second "Policies" document was prepared by the VI General Assembly of the IUS for the period 2012-2016. A third document was prepared by the VII Assembly for the period 2016-2021.



[11] In this social, ecclesial and congregational context, the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education (IUS) face some challenges that lead them to:

- a) Rethink the relevance of university academic functions given the digital technological and pedagogical transformations produced by the pandemic.
- b) Achieving economic and financial sustainability of institutions in the context of many restrictive public policies, the growing commodification of higher education, and the increasing economic crisis, especially in emerging countries due to the covid-19 pandemic.
- c) 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 pastoral key according to the multi-cultural and religious contexts.
- d) 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.
- e) To promote networking at different levels both within the Salesian institutional framework and with other interested parties, taking advantage of the digital technological transition and institutional and academic development.

2. Target

[12] To offer a higher quality academic proposal, ensuring Salesian identity, educational-pastoral impact and economic sustainability.



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 guidelines.

These policies, in continuity with the previous ones, have been formulated by the VIII General Assembly based on the evaluation of the last five-year period, the development of the IUS, the challenges of the Congregation and the situation created by the covid19 pandemic. At the same time, they seek to ensure academic quality with Salesian identity and economic sustainability.

Policy 1: **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, professional and educational-pastoral level.

Policy 2: **Option for poor youth and popular classes.**

[15] to deepen the reflection on the option for poor youth and the popular classes as a key to understanding the university functions: teaching, research and extension.



Policy 3: **Pastoral Model.**

[16] Implement the pastoral model expressed in the document: "Guidelines for a pastoral ministry in the IUS", which is reflected in the entire institutional project and is assumed by the university community, with a special role for young people and pastoral animation teams.

Policy 4: **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.

Policy 5: **Socio-cultural impact.**

[18] Promote initiatives, projects, research and community service programs that demonstrate institutional options and influence collective thinking, territorial development and the formulation of public policies, contributing to the solution of serious social problems, especially those related to the educational-pastoral mission.

Policy 6: **Networks.**

[19] Promote internal and inter-institutional networking according to the nature of each of the IUS in terms of the development of teaching, joint research, exchange and mobility of students, administrative and teaching



staff, optimization of resources, innovation and entrepreneurship, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by digital technologies.

Policy 7: **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, access and equity for poor youth and popular sectors.

III. **CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE POLICIES**

[21] The implementation of these policies presupposes the will and commitment of the Institutions to undertake together a path 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, through 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 Dicastery for Youth Ministry through the General Coordinator, the Council of Direction and the Continental Coordinations, 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 inspectors and heads of institutions is called upon to validate the implementation of the approved common programs.