

**DIREZIONE GENERALE OPERE DON BOSCO
ROMA**



**POLICIES
FOR THE SALESIAN PRESENCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
2016 - 2021**

Rome, July 2016

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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 that the institutions of higher education, with the schools and the vocational training centres, "promote the integral development of the youth by the assimilation and the critical reworking of the culture and education to faith, with the 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 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 action 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 evolved by the Salesian Institutions for Higher Education (IUS)

[03] In 1997, as part of the six year plan (1996-2002) of the governing body and the initiative of the former Rector Major of the Salesians, Don Juan Edmundo Vecchi, *General Direction of the IUS*, was created as a support and animation service. It became part of Youth Ministry Department from 2002. The specific task assigned to the responsible of this service, favoured the development of a

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

particular experience of animation and accompaniment of the Salesian presence in higher education.

[04] The characteristic feature of this animation experience is that there has not been a series of events spread over time, but a real process, developed over the years following agreed programs and with a methodology developed strategically.

[05] The main challenge has been to propose to the higher education institutions the joint construction of the model to be achieved, model defined by the same institutions and then approved by the highest authority of the congregation, the Rector Major and his Council.

[06] The first step in this process has allowed us to equip the IUS a statute, consisting of a number of documents that were the result of a joint programme of action². This enabled the fulfillment of three fundamental objectives: to know the situation of institutions, to define their common identity and to propose guidelines for the development of the Salesian presence in Higher Education.

[07] The second phase was the promotion of the ideal contents of the *Identity of the Salesian Institutions for Higher Education* document, through a series of orientations, gathered from various *Policies* documents developed over the years³. The implementation of the policies was put into practice through common programs of many years, first developed by all the institutions together and then, from 2012, by the IUS of every continent or region.

² *Common Program for the promotion of the IUS, 1998 – 2001*, Rome 1998, produced as a result the documents: *IUS Report 2001*, *Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education*, and *Policies for the Salesian presence in higher education 2003-2008*.

³ The validity of this document has been extended to the years 2008 - 2011, by resolution of the Rector Major and his Council. A second *Policies* document was drafted by the VI General Assembly of the IUS for the period 2012-2016.

3. Challenges to the Salesian presence in higher education

[08] Higher education institutions have undergone profound changes in recent years, not only as a result of the processes that affect this level, but also as a result of the transformations that characterize the social, cultural and economic context of the societies where they are located. These changes have produced a higher level of complexity in their organization and in the management model required to meet the demands they face from society in accomplishing their core functions.

[09] As Higher Education institutions of Christian inspiration, Catholic nature and Salesian identity⁴, the IUS also face the challenge of proposing, consistence with the specific task assigned to them within the Church, a proposal for life that, based on faith, enters into dialogue with the knowledge and the science in the context of the new evangelization and an educative - pastoral model inspired by the Preventive System.

[10] The IUS face a triple challenge: firstly, to ensure the quality of their educative and cultural proposal; secondly, to guarantee the fulfilment of his pastoral educational purpose, according to the charismatic Salesian identity; and finally, achieve an economic and financial sustainability to ensure its continuity in time. These challenges demand the IUS to move together into the process of defining their own model of being present in higher education and to exercise their core functions of teaching, research and service to society.

⁴ Cf. *Identity of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education*, Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, Roma 2003, n. 14.

4. Objectives of the Policies for the years 2016 - 2021

[11] Therefore, in continuity with the policies adopted for the period 2003 - 2016, the policies contained in this document are intended to:

a) Give continuity to the process developed by the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education in the previous period, ensuring their identity and institutional strength;

b) Guarantee the fulfilment of their pastoral educative purpose, through the assurance of the quality of the formation and the impact of their educative and cultural proposal.

[12] The option for the Salesian presence in higher education has been realized with the firm determination of having an impact at the educative and cultural level⁵. This means that the effort and commitment that characterizes this type of presence should ensure an impact on the lives of students and promote the transformation of the societies in which they are located.

[13] To ensure an education of quality to the students requires that the formation processes that favour their personal and professional growth, as well as their integration into society as "good Christians and honest citizens".

[14] The desire to have an impact is also evident in the aspiration to offer a cultural contribution to the Salesian Congregation, the Church and society. This is accomplished mainly through the formation of students who are called to be protagonists of social change, but also through research and service to society.

⁵ Cf. *Identity*, nn. 24 y 31. The document *Policies for the Salesian presence in higher education 2003-2008*, pointed some permanent and operational options that were necessary for its implementation (Nos. 10 to 14). In continuity with such policies and options, this document highlights the clear will of each IUS of having an impact on the educative and cultural context in which it is located.

5. Conditions for the applications of these policies

[15] The implementation of these policies presume a firm decision of the institutions to achieve together through the journey of reflection and action that contributes to the development of a common educative heritage in the field of higher education and the consolidation of each particular presence according to the guidelines of the common identity defined⁶.

[16] The application of these policies will be effective through the coordination of the roles and responsibilities of the different governance and animation structures of the Congregation, related to the orientation of the Salesian Institutions of Higher Education: the Department for Youth Ministry, the Provinces and the IUS.

[17] The application should take into account the cultural, social and religious places where the institutions are located. For this reason more contextualized model of implementation shall be adopted, which based on the decisions taken within the General Assembly, become more effective through the Continental Conferences and other forms of meeting, oriented to the reflection and practical application of these policies.

⁶ Cf. *Identity*, n. 18.

I. POLICIES

Premises

[18] These Policies, as those previously in force, are aimed exclusively at higher education institutions that are under the responsibility of the Provinces or the Salesian Congregation. In the case of centres of shared responsibility, the position and the particular contribution of the Provinces to such centres will be oriented by these guidelines.

[19] The implementation of these policies in each IUS, involves a commitment to deepen the principles and options contained in this document, and apply them within the own institutional project, taking into account the particular characteristics of the social context and the options taken by the province.

[20] As with the previous document enacted, these policies were elaborated for the period 2016 to 2021. At the end of this time, the Assembly of provincials and heads of the institutions is called to verify, validate and guide the implementation of the choices made and the realization of approved joint projects.

[21] Continuing with the practice experimented⁷, the Youth Ministry Department will encourage and guide their implementation, promoting the coordination with other government and animation structures of the Provinces. The responsibility for planning and implementation of the policies falls on the General Coordinator, the Board of Directors and the Continental Co-ordinations, who will facilitate the implementation of processes at the continental level.

⁷ Cf. *Common Program 1, 1998-2002; Common Program 2, 2003-2007; Common Program 3, 2007-2011. Common Program 4, 2012-2016.*

POLICIES RELATED TO THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF IUS

[22] 1. Ensure a continuous deepening of the identity and mission of the Salesian presence in higher education which is reflected in an educative model-University ministry and preferential option for the young people of the lower classes

[23] 2. Guarantee in each institution an active Salesian presence, both quantitative and qualitative, made up of religious and laity, capable of directing and animating a project at cultural, scientific, academic and pastoral levels.

POLICY RELATED TO THE INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH OF THE IUS

[24] 3. Ensure an efficient management of the human, economical and financial resources of the IUS in view of sustainable development of institution.

POLICIES RELATED TO THE EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT

[25] 4. Guarantee the quality and the relevance of the formation of the students, inspired by the principles of the preventive system of Don Bosco, ensuring their personal and professional growth, and their commitment as citizens of the country.

[26] 5. Promote a social and cultural impact through academic activity in any IUS institution and contribute to a better understanding of the social situation and to its transformation, specially on those aspects that concern the living conditions of the young, human rights, preservation of the environment, intercultural relations, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

POLICIES RELATED TO UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

[27] 6. To implement the Salesian university ministry model in each institution.

[28] 7. To promote the formation of the pastoral animators of the Salesian Institution of Higher Education.

POLICIES RELATED TO THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS

[29] 8. To encourage synergy of the IUS, at all levels, through networking and the promotion of relations with other institutions.

[30] 9. To foster the relationship and articulation of the IUS with the government and animation structures of the province.