



Recognition and valuation of student engagement at EHESP



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Law No. 2017-86 of 27 January 2017 on equality and citizenship requires higher education institutions to provide arrangements within the organisation and the conduct of studies for students who have responsibilities in associations, trade unions, or who are undertaking civic service or military volunteer work.

In parallel, the aim is to be able to recognise the skills acquired in these “extracurricular” activities.

By virtue of its various statutes and values, the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique (EHESP) wishes to be involved in an ambitious policy that recognises the engagement of the School's students.

This document sets out the institution's policy, starting with a review of the context and challenges specific to EHESP, before setting out its policy regarding the recognition of student engagement.

1. CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES FOR EHESP

Successive legislative changes have allowed progress to be made in consideration of student engagement. This article looks at the regulatory obligations and the challenges for EHESP.

1.1. Regulatory references

Law 2017-86 on equality and citizenship was enacted on 27 January 2017. This text aims to move beyond the logic of segregation by reconciling equality of opportunity and social diversity on a national scale. Promoting social integration and combating the phenomena of withdrawal and intolerance is the essential foundation for fraternity and solidarity. This Law incorporates numerous measures in various fields: republican engagement, housing, regional planning, employment, food, education, media rights.

Article 29 sets out that the skills, knowledge and abilities acquired by students in the context of an extracurricular activity should be valued in order to recognise student engagement. In this context, EHESP is deeply committed to recognising the value of students' involvement in extracurricular activities.

Decree No. 2017-962 of 10 May 2017 on the recognition of student involvement in associative, social or professional life fleshes out and supplements the Law. Thus, as of the start of the 2017/2018 academic year, all higher education institutions were required to set up a system for recognising skills and abilities acquired through voluntary activity within an association. Professional activities, military activities in the operational reserve, volunteer firefighter commitments, civic service or volunteer missions are also recognised and valorised in line with the same procedures.

Lastly, Circular No. 2017-146 of 7 September 2017 on the recognition of student engagement in higher education institutions under the direct supervision of the Ministry for Higher Education set out the terms of application of these regulatory provisions.

1.2. Challenges for EHESP

Over and above compliance with the regulations, the promotion of student engagement is in line with the values promoted by EHESP. EHESP stands for fundamental collective values based on the ethics of public service, general interest, respect, openness and cooperation, and social and environmental responsibility.

For the School, promoting student engagement helps to take into account the many social issues linked to republican commitment around the concepts of "social integration" and the openness of the academic and university sphere to the professional and associative sphere.

These issues are also fully in line with the Objectives and Performance Contract (COP) signed by EHESP and its supervisory ministries for the period 2014-2018. Thus, the School wished to highlight its commitment in particular to defending the following values:

- diversity and complementary nature of its missions,
- a sense of general interest that must guide EHESP professionals in their daily tasks and transmitting a number of professional values linked to the nature of public service and being attentive to our fellow citizens,
- overarching professional values that are rooted in the principles of our laws: continuity, commitment, integrity, legality, loyalty, neutrality, respect, responsibility.
- adaptability, efficiency, quality and responsiveness of professionals,

2. A POLICY OF RECOGNITION AND VALUATION OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

3.1. Objectives

EHESP has set the following strategic objectives:

- Build and implement a coherent, cross-functional policy of “recognising and valuation of student engagement” as part of an inclusive approach, allowing recognition in all areas of student engagement, as long as these are consistent and aligned with the values outlined above: human resources, accessibility, training, awareness-raising, communication, digital development, and so on;
- Promote the success of all students who demonstrate engagement by taking into account their specific needs, from reception to professional integration;
- Create favourable conditions for students to successfully complete the courses in which they are matriculated;
- Promote and encourage research and teaching on the subject of student engagement;
- Develop the School's social responsibility (social, environmental and economic concerns in its activities).

3.2. Governance

The recognition and valuation of student engagement is grounded in the strong will of the EHESP Board of Governors.

Under the impetus of the School's senior management, this policy is implemented and jointly supported by the Department of Studies, which is responsible for managing the policy, the general principles of which were approved by EHESP bodies.

The schooling department is in charge of distributing documents to students that allow them to apply to the school so that their skills may be recognised and valorised.

Applications are reviewed and assessed under the responsibility of the Department of Studies according to the procedures outlined below (see points 3.3.2. and 3.3.4.).

Lastly, it is up to the various educational committees of each master's programme to decide whether or not to validate a TU (Teaching Unit) Student Engagement.

3.3. Operational organisation: student engagement TU

A student engagement TU has been launched at EHESP. This unit is optional. It can be taken by all students, regardless of the master's programme in which they are matriculated. Only marks above 10 are taken into account.

3.3.1. Application for recognition made by the student

In line with the regulations in force, the request to recognise and valorise student engagement is the subject of a proactive approach by the student, who must fill in a specific form describing the nature of the engagement.

Students may apply for recognition and valuation of their skills if they:

- Are active members of an association, inside or outside the university (excluding any political or ideological engagements),
- Are elected to EHESP bodies,
- Are engaged in military activity in the operational reserve,
- Are a volunteer firefighter,
- Undertake a civic service mission,
- Make a voluntary commitment to the military,
- Are gainfully employed.

Applications may, if necessary, concern another area of student engagement. It is up to the student engagement review committee to judge the relevance and suitability of the student engagement with the values of the school. Applications must be submitted to the schooling department before 30 November of the current academic year.

3.3.2. Student Engagement review committee

This committee is responsible for judging the relevance of the application. It is composed of:

1. The Director of EHESP or their representative,
2. A representative from the schooling department,
3. The head of the master's programme or their representative in which the student applying for recognition and valuation of student engagement is matriculated.

On the basis of the application completed by the student and a cover letter, this committee decides whether or not to authorise the student to follow the Student Engagement TU. The committee's decision is based on the following criteria:

1. Compatibility of the student's commitment with the School's values, taking into consideration the charter of values signed by EHESP,
2. Compatibility of the student engagement with the regulatory principles of the Law and the regulations made under it,
3. The cover letter, which should highlight the description of the experience relating to student engagement, and identify the associated skills based on the 8 skills that can be recognised and reviewed,
4. The administrative compliance of the application.

The Committee makes a decision before 31 December of the academic year. The decision, signed by all the members of the Committee, is then sent to the student.

3.3.3. The skills portfolio

The Student Engagement TU is based on the 8 skills below.

1. Engagement, taking a stand
2. Teamworking
3. Communication
4. Organisation
5. Being proactive in making proposals
6. Leading and managing one or more projects
7. Leading a team or teams
8. Taking responsibility

After being authorised to matriculate in the Student Engagement TU, the student is responsible for completing the skills portfolio for this TU.

This portfolio, for each of the skills to be acquired, accurately sets out the nature of the engagement, the link between the engagement and the skill to be acquired.

The portfolio must be handed in to the Schooling Department by 31 May of the academic year.

3.3.4. Skills Review Committee

A skills review committee is responsible for reviewing the student's acquisition of skills. This committee is composed as follows:

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- The Director of EHESP or their representative,
- The head of the master's programme, or their representative
- A person from the professional world.

This committee assesses skills acquired on the basis of a skills table, intended to help in this process.

It is broken down as follows:

1. a "skills" column which lists eight main skill categories,
2. an "applied skills" column, which breaks down each of the 8 main skills into associated skills;
3. an "illustration" column, which lets the committee assess the acquisition of the associated skills,
4. finally, a "level" column, allowing a score to be given as to the degree of skill acquisition of the skill, according to the following scale:
 - 1: no acquisition
 - 2: poor acquisition
 - 3: good acquisition
 - 4: very good acquisition

On the basis of this assessment table (due before 15 July of the academic year), the TU can potentially provide 3 ECTS credits if the student validates at least 4 skills out of 8.

Master's courses should be adapted to include the possibility for students to take this unit.

Forms of validation may preferably include (but are not limited to):

- incorporation within a dedicated existing TU in the diploma curriculum, with attribution of ECTS credits;
- the allotment of "bonus" points to the overall average;
- substitution of teaching unit elements with or without an attendance exemption. Such an attendance exemption may only be considered if the student can certify or attest the acquisition of skills, knowledge and abilities as part of the above-mentioned activities (e.g. first-aid training).

Appendices

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Appendix 2: Template skills portfolio

Appendix 3: Skills assessment table to be completed by the student engagement review committee