

LEGAL BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM BASED ON LAW NO. 12 OF 2012 ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study discusses the legal basis for the development of higher education curricula based on Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education. This study examines the legal provisions governing the formulation and development of curricula in order to ensure the quality, relevance, and sustainability of higher education in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that Law No. 12 of 2012 provides a strong and comprehensive legal basis for higher education institutions to develop curricula that are in line with national standards and national development needs. In addition, this law regulates the rights and obligations of higher education institutions in developing holistic, adaptive curricula that are oriented towards learning outcomes covering attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The implications of this legal basis encourage higher education institutions to implement a high-quality, character-building curriculum that is competitive at the national and international levels.

Keywords: Legal Basis, Higher Education Curriculum, Law No. 12 of 2012, Higher Education, National Higher Education Standards.

Introduction

The development of higher education curricula is a crucial aspect of the national education system because it directly determines the direction, content, and procedures for implementing the learning process and achieving the expected graduate outcomes. The curriculum not only serves as an academic guideline but also as a concrete manifestation of the vision, mission, and objectives of higher education institutions in producing quality human resources (Prasetyo, 2021).

Therefore, curriculum development must be based on a strong and clear foundation in order to respond to national and global development needs that continue to change over time and with the advancement of science and technology. Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education is legally the main legal umbrella for curriculum development in all higher education institutions in Indonesia.

This law stipulates that every higher education institution is required to develop a curriculum that refers to the National Higher Education Standards (SN-Dikti) and has an orientation that prioritises learning outcomes that combine intellectual intelligence, noble character, and practical skills. This regulation is a concrete manifestation of the constitutional mandate to organise higher education in accordance with the needs of national character building and increasing competitiveness (*Higher Education Curriculum Book*, 2014).

The higher education curriculum developed based on Law No. 12 of 2012 does not stand alone but is also guided by the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) as the national standard for determining graduate competency outcomes. The KKNI provides a reference for the qualification level structure that integrates aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, so that the curriculum can prepare graduates who are not only broad-minded but also ready to compete nationally and internationally. This is relevant given the increasingly complex and dynamic demands of the world of work and society (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2003).

Law No. 12 of 2012 also regulates the role and responsibilities of higher education institutions in the process of curriculum development, which must be carried out in a planned, systematic, and sustainable manner. The curriculum developed must be able to respond to the needs of stakeholders, including the needs of the labour market, technological developments, and scientific developments. Thus, higher education institutions not only play a role as educational institutions but also as centres of innovation that are adaptive to the changing times (Hidayat, 2021).

In the context of curriculum development, national standards regulated in further regulations such as Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 49 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Higher Education provide technical guidance related to the development of learning outcomes, curriculum content, and curriculum evaluation mechanisms. This approach encourages each higher education institution to have academic independence in developing curricula based on regional characteristics and the specific needs of their respective study programmes (Mulyasa, 2003).

Curriculum development based on legal principles is expected to produce graduates who not only meet academic standards but also have good moral attitudes so that they are able to carry out their social roles responsibly. The curriculum must integrate Indonesian national and cultural values to strengthen the character of students as individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also nationalistic (Karli & Yuliantiningsih, 2002). In addition, the curriculum developed must be responsive to developments in science and technology and the challenges of globalisation, which require higher education graduates to have high levels of adaptability and innovation skills. Global dynamics demand continuous changes to learning patterns, strategies, and materials so that graduates are able to compete and contribute productively to society (Muharrom et al., 2023); (Astuti et al., 2023). Therefore, curriculum development requires evaluation and revision mechanisms that take place periodically in accordance with developments in the academic and professional world.

Based on this legal foundation, curriculum development is also closely related to the quality assurance system in higher education institutions, which must run in parallel. Quality assurance involves various aspects, ranging from curriculum planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure the sustainability of quality education (Aslan & Wahyudin, 2020); (Aslan, 2023). This is in line with the mandate of

the law, which requires higher education institutions to have an effective and efficient education quality management system.

In implementing curriculum development, collaboration is needed between various parties, both internal to the higher education institution and external, such as the government, professional associations, and industry. The involvement of these various stakeholders is important to create a curriculum that is relevant and adaptive to the real needs of the job market and developments in science and technology.

This collaboration also ensures the integration of education policy with national development needs (Laila, 2024). Furthermore, the development of a curriculum based on Law No. 12 of 2012 also reflects the government's efforts to support the strengthening of quality and equitable higher education throughout Indonesia.

A clearly and measurably designed curriculum will guarantee equitable access to quality education, while minimising disparities between higher education institutions in different regions (Safitri, 2023). Therefore, the legal basis serves as a balancing and guiding instrument for the transformation of higher education in Indonesia.

Ultimately, the development of a curriculum based on a legal foundation is not only a matter of compliance with regulations, but also a strategic foundation for building a higher education ecosystem that provides added value to the development of Indonesia's human resources. The curriculum is the main tool for preparing Indonesia's young generation to be able to compete in the global era and contribute positively to the progress of the nation (Putri, 2022).

With this description, this research is important to conduct a thorough review of how Law No. 12 of 2012 provides a legal basis for the development of higher education curricula, as well as the real implications of this basis in the practice of curriculum development in higher education. The results of this research are expected to provide recommendations for policy makers, academics, and education practitioners in optimising the implementation of curricula in line with national and global needs.

Research Methodology

The research method used in this study is a qualitative method with a normative juridical approach, namely a literature study that examines and analyses relevant legal regulations, particularly Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education and other related regulations that form the legal basis for the development of higher education curricula. This study uses a statute approach that investigates the content of legal norms and provisions in depth, as well as a conceptual and historical approach to understand the philosophy and evolution of law in the context of curriculum development (Eliyah & Aslan, 2025). Data were collected from official documents, scientific journals, and academic literature related to policy, educational standards, and the legal aspects of curriculum development. The analysis was conducted deductively, starting from a general understanding of legal norms to their application in the specific

context of higher education, with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of the legal basis governing curriculum development and its practical implications in higher education institutions. This approach enables the study to explore legal certainty, consistency of implementation, and provide relevant recommendations for curriculum development based on statutory provisions (Green et al., 2006).

Results and Discussion

Legal Basis in Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education

Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education is the main legal umbrella governing the implementation of higher education in Indonesia, including curriculum development as one of its most strategic aspects. This law stipulates that every higher education institution is required to formulate and develop a higher education curriculum based on applicable national standards. This provides a strong legal basis to ensure that curriculum development is not partial or subjective, but rather integrated and in line with the needs of national development (*Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2012 on Higher Education*, 2012).

Article 35 of Law No. 12 of 2012 explicitly states that the higher education curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, teaching materials, and learning methods used as guidelines in learning activities to achieve higher education objectives.

With this definition, the curriculum not only functions as a formal document but also as an operational instrument that guides the entire learning process in higher education institutions (Wahyudi, 2017). Furthermore, paragraph (2) of the same article explains that the curriculum is developed by each higher education institution with reference to the National Standards for Higher Education (SN-Dikti), which ensure the consistency and quality of the education provided. These national standards include the development of intellectual intelligence, noble character, and skills that are integral to the profile of high-quality and competitive Indonesian graduates (National Education Standards Agency, 2015). Law No. 12 of 2012 also requires that the curriculum include courses in religion, Pancasila, citizenship, and Indonesian language.

This provision is outlined in Article 35 paragraph (3), which emphasises the importance of national values and character in higher education curricula. This is an important foundation for shaping the character of students as the nation's future generation (Hartanto, 2021).

The implementation of the curriculum according to this law is carried out through curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities as stipulated in Article 35 paragraph (4). Thus, curriculum development not only involves formal learning materials but also supporting activities that enrich the overall education process (Mufrodi, 2012).

The development of professional education curricula is specifically regulated in Article 36, which states that higher education institutions must formulate professional curricula together with the Minister, other ministries, LPNK, and/or professional organisations responsible for the quality of professional services. This indicates that the development of professional curricula must involve multisectoral collaboration to ensure that graduate competency standards are relevant to professional needs (Cahyawardani & Henderik, 2020).

Legally, Law No. 12 of 2012 grants academic autonomy to higher education institutions in developing curricula, but within the framework of rules and standards set by the government. This autonomy provides flexibility for higher education institutions to adapt curricula to regional characteristics and needs, without neglecting applicable national standards (Siti Aisyah, 2022).

This legal basis also mandates the need for quality assurance in higher education, which includes the process of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the curriculum. This quality assurance is carried out so that curriculum development can run consistently and sustainably through an integrated and open mechanism. In addition, Law No. 12 of 2012 contains educational principles that must be reflected in the curriculum, such as openness, professionalism, and accountability, which serve as guidelines in the curriculum development process in higher education institutions. These principles support the creation of a credible and competitive higher education system (Nugroho, 2022).

In the context of globalisation and rapid developments in science and technology, this law emphasises the need for an adaptive and innovative curriculum so that higher education graduates are able to face global challenges. The curriculum must be designed to be not only locally relevant but also internationally competitive (Hidayat, 2021).

Law No. 12 of 2012 also stipulates that the curriculum must be oriented towards learning outcomes that include attitudes, knowledge, and skills in accordance with the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI). The integration of KKNI in curriculum development ensures that graduates have clear and nationally accountable qualifications (Putra, 2023).

In order to ensure the success of this legally-based curriculum development, the law requires the involvement of stakeholders such as the government, universities, industry, and relevant professional organisations. This involvement ensures that the developed curriculum remains relevant and responds to real needs in the field (Margin, 2015).

The strong legal basis in Law No. 12 of 2012 is an instrument for shaping higher education policies that support the development of quality human resources with character. With this legal basis, curriculum development is not only a technical activity but also a strategic responsibility in national development (Nasution, 2014). Apart from

legal aspects, the law also contains norms that regulate the ethics and responsibilities of higher education institutions in implementing higher education professionally and with integrity. This is important in the context of curriculum development, which must pay attention to moral and social aspects as part of national education objectives (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2014).

The link between the legal basis and national standards is the foundation for higher education institutions in maintaining the quality of education on an ongoing basis, particularly through consistent and adaptive curriculum development in response to social and technological changes. Good curriculum development will increase the added value of graduates in the job market and society (Junaidi, 2020).

Thus, Law No. 12 of 2012 not only regulates curriculum development technically but also strategically directs higher education institutions to produce graduates who are competent, have noble character, and are ready to face the challenges of globalisation with a strong foundation of national values. Furthermore, curriculum management as part of university autonomy must be balanced with high social responsibility and accountability to the state and society. The legal basis provided by this law serves as a foundation for realising quality, relevant, and sustainable higher education for the advancement of the nation.

Implications of Legal Foundations for Higher Education Curriculum Development

The solid legal basis in Law No. 12 of 2012 has significant implications for the development of higher education curricula in Indonesia. First, the existence of clear legal regulations makes curriculum development an obligation that must be fulfilled by every higher education institution, leaving no room for the development of arbitrary or non-standardised curricula. This stipulation encourages higher education institutions to develop structured curricula based on national standards (Wulandari, 2024).

Furthermore, Law No. 12 of 2012 implies that the curriculum must be able to accommodate the development of students' intellectual intelligence, noble character, and practical skills, so that learning does not only focus on the transfer of knowledge, but also on character building and professional competence. This indicates a holistic and integrative curriculum that addresses the moral and skill needs of the 21st century (Lestari, 2019).

Another implication of this legal basis is that the curriculum must refer to the National Higher Education Standards (SN-Dikti), which cover learning outcomes, content, learning processes, and assessment.

SN-Dikti serves as a technical guideline that ensures uniformity in the quality and output of higher education throughout Indonesia, while still providing flexibility for universities in its implementation (Prasetyo, 2021). This legal basis also affirms the rights and obligations of universities to develop their curricula autonomously as long as they refer to national standards.

This means that higher education institutions are authorised to adapt the curriculum to local characteristics, regional potential, and stakeholder needs, without deviating from national standards. This policy strengthens the diversification of higher education in accordance with the socio-cultural and economic context of each region (Supriyadi, 2018).

In the context of quality assurance, this legal basis requires higher education institutions to have a systematic approach to the periodic evaluation and revision of their curricula. This continuous evaluation is part of the legal responsibility of higher education institutions to ensure that study programmes are always relevant and effective in achieving national education goals and meeting the needs of the job market (Ramadhani, 2019). In addition, the legal basis emphasises the need for active collaboration between higher education institutions and external stakeholders such as industry, professional associations, and the government. The involvement of various parties is an important strategy to ensure that the curriculum developed is not only academic but also applicable in the world of work and national development (Kusumaningrum, 2022).

In terms of developing professional education curricula, this law implies that the formulation must be carried out in collaboration with relevant ministries and professional organisations. This signifies a highly integrated and professional approach in determining competency standards that are in line with professional needs, so that graduates are ready to work and meet user expectations (Rahmawati, 2023).

The implications of the legal basis also show the importance of a curriculum that is adaptive to developments in science, technology, and social dynamics. A rigid and static curriculum is no longer relevant to meet global demands, so this legal basis mandates a dynamic, innovative, and responsive curriculum. With a learning outcome orientation that refers to the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI), these legal implications reinforce the need for standardised, measurable, and clear graduate competencies. The KKNI provides a systematic structure for learning outcomes at different levels, which serves as a guideline in the development of study programme curricula (Bahjah, 2023).

In addition, the legal basis requires the integration of Pancasila values, nationality, and religion into the curriculum as an effort to shape student character based on national identity. The implementation of these values becomes a moral foundation so that higher education not only produces professionals but also ethical and responsible individuals (Setiawan, 2017).

The development of a curriculum based on this law also encourages the effectiveness of holistic learning by covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. This triple domain approach enriches the learning process so that the educational outcomes are more comprehensive and balanced between knowledge and skills. From a governance perspective, the legal basis implies the need for coordination

mechanisms between institutions, both internal and external to the campus, to achieve synergy in curriculum development. This synergy is important to avoid duplication of material and ensure consistent quality of education (Yani, 2020).

The next impact is the need for adequate technological and human resource support to implement the curriculum optimally. This legal basis is the foundation for higher education institutions to provide infrastructure, lecturer training, and the latest learning facilities so that the curriculum can run effectively (Irwan et al., 2024); (Aslan, 2019); (Aslan et al., 2020).

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the legal implications require openness and accountability from higher education institutions to the public and the government regarding the success of curriculum development and implementation. Open knowledge about curriculum performance is a tool for supervision and continuous quality improvement (Firmansyah, 2021). Furthermore, the legal basis encourages the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) programme, which provides flexibility for students to take various courses across study programmes and higher education institutions. This approach enriches the learning experience while adapting to personal needs and the future job market (Susanto, 2023).

Overall, the legal basis provides a legal and ethical framework that strengthens the position of the curriculum as a key pillar in the higher education system, which is oriented towards providing quality, relevant, and equitable education. This is in line with the government's vision to develop superior human resources that can compete globally.

Conclusion

Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education is the main legal basis for curriculum development in Indonesian higher education institutions. This law explicitly stipulates that every higher education institution is required to formulate and develop a curriculum based on the National Standards for Higher Education, which include the development of intellectual intelligence, noble character, and practical skills. With this legal basis, curriculum development is not only a normative obligation but also a key strategy in producing competent graduates with the right character in line with national development needs and global challenges.

Furthermore, curriculum development based on Law No. 12 of 2012 ensures uniformity in the quality of higher education in Indonesia while providing space for academic autonomy for higher education institutions to adapt the curriculum to local characteristics and stakeholder needs. This facilitates the creation of a diversified curriculum that is adaptive to developments in science and technology as well as the needs of the job market. This approach ensures that the curriculum is not only theoretically relevant, but also applicable and innovative.

Overall, this legal basis requires the implementation of a systematic curriculum that is integrated with the higher education quality assurance system. This is important to maintain the sustainability of education quality and increase the competitiveness of graduates at the national and international levels. The enforcement of the legal basis in curriculum development is a strategic foundation for higher education institutions in producing excellent, ethical human resources who are ready to face future challenges.

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