

APPROVED by
Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in
Higher Education
15 November 2016 Order No V-98

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS SELECTION PROCEDURE

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) shall regulate the principles and process for selection of Lithuanian and foreign experts to be invited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter to as the Centre) to assess the quality of activities of higher education institutions, the study programmes intended to be or being carried out, the minor field studies, the applications of higher education institutions to obtain authorisation to conduct studies and thereto related activities, to submit proposals and/or recommendations, opinion, conclusions of qualifications related to higher education and acquired under educational programmes of foreign states and international organisations (hereinafter referred to as the Foreign Qualifications), academic recognition and/or establishment of equivalents of grades and subjects, and other issues related to creation of the conditions for free mobility of persons, as well as to develop and evaluate the analytical or other studies, insights, researches, methodological advice, reviews, study programmes, draft legal acts and similar and to perform other activities pertaining to the functions of the Centre or delegated to it.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORY OF EXPERTS

2. The Centre shall select experts on the basis of the directory of experts that is constantly updated and revised in the electronic information system of the Centre.
3. The directory of experts shall be compiled in observance of public information and proposals that may be made by:
 - 3.1. education and research institutions, the Research Council of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the Lithuanian Students Union and/or the European Union of Students;
 - 3.2. professional and creative associations and organisations;
 - 3.3. ministries and other state institutions or bodies;

3.4. state institutions, business and industrial companies or organisations, educational or other institutions interested in the training of specialists;

3.5. other Lithuanian and foreign expert institutions;

3.6. researchers, experts experienced in evaluation;

3.7. persons wishing to be included in the directory of experts.

4. Persons recorded into the directory must comply with the requirements set forth in points 6, 7 or 8 herein.

5. When entering persons into the directory, their competence, objectivity, integrity, innovation, and responsibility shall be taken into account.

6. Experts, with the exception of students' representatives and social partners, must meet at least one of the following requirements depending on the nature and content of an individual task:

6.1. activities in studies and/or research have to be active and efficient;

6.2. they must be familiar with the educational and study problems in Lithuania and/or with the characteristics of one of the study or research fields abroad;

6.3. have experience in international cooperation pertaining to the research and/or studies, preparation of projects (activities) and/or their implementation;

6.4. have experience in administration and/or management of research or studies;

6.5. have experience in execution and/or administration, management of the admission to studies of the persons who have acquired foreign qualifications;

6.6. have experience in execution/administration/management of the assessment and/or recognition of acquired foreign qualifications and the establishment of equivalents of grades or subjects;

6.7. have experience in development and/or administration and management of education systems;

6.8. have experience in evaluation of study and research activities, research and academic institutions.

7. Students' representatives shall be selected to the directory of experts from the students' representations of the national higher education institutions, from the list of persons delegated by the Lithuanian Union/Unions of Students and/or the European Students Union or from the persons proposed by experts or lecturers of higher education institutions. Their performance results have to be good, they must be interested in assuring the quality of higher education and be students not lower than the second year of the first cycle studies or of integrated study programmes, or the second, third cycle or non-degree programmes, or graduates of any cycle or non-degree study

programmes who have graduated not later than one year before they are called to participate in the review.

8. Social partners shall be selected to the directory of experts in accordance with the list of persons delegated by professional and creative associations or organisations, state institutions or bodies, business and industrial companies or organisations, the organizations and institutions interested in training of specialists, and (or) from publicly accessible sources of information.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF EXPERTS

9. Experts to perform a particular task shall be selected in accordance with the procedure established by the simplified procurement rules of the Centre approved by the order of its Director.

10. Having regard to the nature of the task, the Centre shall set the number of review teams to perform the same task.

11. The Centre, having regard to the task content, its complexity or any other relevant circumstances, shall decide how many experts have to be selected to the review team to complete the task.

12. Experts for a particular task shall be selected from the directory according to qualification requirements formulated by the Centre for each member of the review team having regard to the complexity of the task.

CHAPTER IV

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF EXPERTS

FIRST SECTION

SELECTION OF EXPERTS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES, MINOR FIELD STUDIES

13. To evaluate the ongoing study programmes or to perform a targeted evaluation of minor field studies, the review team shall consist of at least three experts.

14. To evaluate the study programme or minor field studies that are intended to be conducted, the review team shall consist of at least two experts.

15. To conduct an additional evaluation of the study programme or minor field studies only one expert may be selected.

16. If the review team consists of four experts, it is not allowed to select more than two persons working in the same institution. If the review team consists of two or three experts, all of them must come from different institutions. More than half of the experts in the review team should be from the research and educational institutions.
17. The review team, which evaluates the ongoing study programmes, should involve at least one social partner.
18. The review team, which evaluates the ongoing study programmes and study programmes that are intended to be conducted, should involve at least one student representative.

SECOND SECTION

SELECTION OF EXPERTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

19. The review team shall consist of not less than five experts.
20. The review team shall consist of experts from different institutions and/or having no work and other connections with higher education institutions and their academic units which experts are going to review. At least two experts should have working experience in research and other higher education institutions and/or evaluating the quality of higher education.
21. The review team must include foreign experts.
22. The review team must include:
 - 22.1. at least one social partner;
 - 22.2. at least one member experienced in higher education management;
 - 22.3. at least one student representative.

THIRD SECTION

SELECTION OF EXPERTS TO EVALUATE THE APPLICATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO OBTAIN AN AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT STUDIES AND THERETO RELATED ACTIVITIES

23. The review team shall consist of at least three experts.
24. If the review team consists of four experts, it is not allowed to select more than two persons working in the same institution. If the review team consists of two or three experts, all of them must come from different institutions.
25. The review team must include:

- 25.1. at least one member experienced in the area of higher education management;
- 25.2. at least one member proficient in the study or education field to which at least one study programme is related under the application;
- 25.3. at least one member who is an expert in law, management, finance or economics.

SECTION FOUR

SELECTION OF EXPERTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS AND/OR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EQUIVALENTS TO GRADES AND SUBJECTS AND THE CREATION OF CONDITIONS RELATED WITH FREEDOM OF MOBILITY

26. The review team shall consist of not less than three experts.
27. At least half of the review team invited to help with the academic recognition of foreign qualifications or the establishment of equivalents of grades and subjects must have experience in creation and/or execution or administration and expert evaluation of the secondary education programmes and/or the performance assessment system (in case of secondary education qualifications) or a certain type, field and cycle of study programmes (in the case of higher education qualifications).
28. If the review team consists of not more than four experts it is not allowed to select more than two persons working in the same institution. If the review team consists of two or three experts, all of them must be from different institutions.

CHAPTER V

EXPERT'S DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND A PROMISE NOT TO DISCLOSE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

29. Any expert performing the task must complete the Expert's Declaration of Interests and a Promise not to Disclose Confidential Information presented by the Centre (hereinafter referred to as the Declaration) and indicate a potential conflict of interests if there is a situation that could hinder the expert to be impartial and objective while fulfilling the task.

30. A conflict of interest may be considered if:
 - 30.1. the expert or someone among the expert's close relatives (spouse, cohabiting partner, the partner where partnership is registered in the manner established by laws as well as their parents (adoptive parents), children (adopted children), brothers (step brothers), sisters (step sisters),

grandparents, grandchildren and their spouses, cohabitants or partners - (hereinafter referred to as the close persons) in the last 5 years worked in the institution under review or in the institution where the issues of qualifications are being considered;

30.2. the expert or someone among the expert's close relatives during the last 3 years studied in the institution under review or in the institution where the issues of qualifications are being considered;

30.3. the expert or someone among the expert's close relatives during the last 2 years participated in the evaluative activities of the institution (acted as a member of the Senate, the Academic Council, the Committee of the Final Thesis Defence, the Committee of Doctoral Studies, a member of the management bodies, shareholder or similar);

30.4. the expert or someone among the expert's close relatives participates in any ongoing project or other joint activity with the institution he works for, with the institution under review or the institution whose issues of qualifications are being examined;

30.5. other circumstances which are unspecified herein and are related to the expert or his close relative and which may prevent the expert from being objective (i.e., he has publicly expressed a negative attitude towards the institution under review or the institution the issues of qualifications of which are being examined; has terminated work relations after the conflict with the institution under review or the institution the issues of qualifications of which are being examined or similar).

31. If the expert declares a potential conflict of interests in the declaration, the Centre shall take one of the following decisions:

31.1. remove the expert and replace him by another expert;

31.2. remove the expert from the part of the task in relation of which the expert has declared a potential conflict of interests, retaining a possibility to participate in execution of the part of the task as an observer;

31.3. do not remove the expert from execution of the task if, in the Centre's opinion, the declared conflict of interests will have no substantial impact on the performance of the task.

32. If it turns out that the expert has incompletely declared his interests or in the event of a conflict of interests occurs or is detected and he has failed to inform the Centre thereof, the Centre shall take one of the decisions specified in point 31 herein.

33. Experts who do not comply with the requirements of the task, with the principles of good behaviour and ethics, and whose action or inaction discredits the Centre shall be excluded from the evaluation.

34. In the event of circumstances described in points 32 and 33 herein, the experts may participate in other calls for experts only under the decision of the Centre.

CHAPTER VI

FINAL PROVISIONS

35. In other cases not specified herein the Centre shall select experts having regard to the complexity of the task, its execution time and determining the required qualifications of education, research (artistic), pedagogical or other professional experience.
 36. If the expert is unable to fulfil functions of the member of the review team due to relevant reasons, the Centre shall select another exert to replace him or his functions shall be taken over by other members of the review team.
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