

APPROVED by  
the Director of the Centre for Quality  
Assessment in Higher Education  
31 December 2019  
Order No. V-149

## **PROCEDURE OF ORGANISATION OF EXPERTS' WORK**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Procedure of Organisation of Experts' Work (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) shall regulate the principles and process of the organisation of work of Lithuanian and foreign experts to be invited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the Centre) to perform institutional review, evaluate new study programmes, the study fields, the applications of higher education institutions and branches to obtain authorisation to conduct studies and 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 grades transfer and comparison of 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, research, methodological advice, reviews, training programmes, draft legal acts and similar and to perform other activities pertaining to the functions of the Centre or delegated to it.

2. The provisions of the Procedure shall apply to the extent to which other legal acts do not provide any special regulation.

### **CHAPTER 2 PRINCIPLES OF EXPERTS' WORK**

3. When forming the expert team, the Centre shall follow the Experts Selection Procedure approved by the order of the Director of the Centre as well as the principles of impartiality, transparency, objectivity and reasonableness.

4. All experts selected for a specific evaluation shall, before signing the agreement on public procurement services against remuneration, fill in and sign the Expert's Declaration of Interests and Commitment not to Disclose Information obtained in the course of the expert evaluation.

5. Members of the expert team shall adhere to the following principles:

5.1. The principle of objectivity. An expert shall honestly achieve the aims of the expert evaluation and objectively perform the expert evaluation. When expressing his/her opinion, formulating conclusions and taking decisions, the expert shall act without any prejudice and shall refer to the facts, the information provided and his/her own competence.

5.2. The principle of impartiality. During the expert evaluation, the expert shall act independently, shall not represent any institution and express any interests, and shall declare his/her interests before the performance of the evaluation and make every effort to avoid a conflict of interests.

5.3. The principle of respect for the participants of evaluation. During the expert evaluation, the expert shall act in a professional and polite manner, he/she shall not abuse the expert's position and shall not use any financial, psychological or any other pressure. The expert shall consider the evaluation participants as persons capable of taking responsibility for their actions, therefore, the expert shall specifically and clearly indicate the strengths of the object under

evaluation and the areas, which require further improvement, yet the expert shall refrain from advice on what, in his/her opinion, could lead to the best solutions.

5.4. The principle of confidentiality. All the information relating to the expert evaluation (issues analysed at meetings or during the visit and opinions offered by other participants of expert evaluation, documents provided by higher education institutions) shall be used strictly for the purposes of evaluation and may not be published or disclosed to third persons.

5.5. The principle of cooperation. As a member of the expert team, the expert shall seek common aims with other members of the team and shall perform the tasks assigned to him in the team.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **ORGANISATION OF WORK OF EXPERTS TO BE INVITED TO EVALUATE THE NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES AND THE FIELD STUDIES, THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW, THE APPLICATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND BRANCHES TO OBTAIN AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT STUDIES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES**

6. The expert team shall perform the expert evaluation in line with the evaluation areas and/or indicators approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, and/or the evaluation criteria set forth in the methodologies approved by the Centre, and/or under the procedure established by the Government according to the criteria approved by the Centre.

7. The stages of work (hereinafter referred to as the Expert Evaluation) of the experts invited by the Centre to evaluate the new study programmes and the field studies, the institutional review, the applications of higher education institutions and branches to obtain authorisation to conduct studies and related activities:

- 7.1. preparation for expert evaluation;
- 7.2. visit at higher education institution;
- 7.3. preparation of expert evaluation report and submission thereof to the Centre;
- 7.4. examination of the expert evaluation report by the Study Programme Evaluation Commission or the Higher Education Evaluation Commission;
- 7.5. submission of the final evaluation report to the Centre.

#### **FIRST SECTION**

##### **PREPARATION FOR EVALUATION**

8. The work of the expert team shall be organised by the leader of the expert team selected by the Centre. He/she shall chair the meetings of the expert team, distribute the functions and specific tasks for the members of the expert team and take responsibility for the work of the whole team. During the visit at the higher education institution, the leader of the expert team shall chair or appoint a person to chair the meetings with the target groups.

9. The work of the expert team shall be coordinated by an employee or a civil servant (hereinafter referred to as the Evaluation Coordinator) appointed by the Centre.

10. Communication between the higher education institution and the expert team in all cases shall be performed via the Evaluation Coordinator.

11. Experts shall familiarise with the information about the Lithuanian system of education provided by the Centre, the key legal acts governing higher education, the principles of the organisation of experts' work, other information and documents relevant for evaluation.

12. Experts shall familiarise with the documents provided by the Centre and the data necessary for the performance of the evaluation. Documents related to the evaluation are confidential and may not be published, except the documents, which are public, or the documents specified by the Centre as non-confidential.

13. During the examination of the documents and the data, the experts shall adhere to the evaluation areas and/or indicators, and/or the criteria, which have been made public and submitted to them in advance.

14. After the examination of the information provided in the documents the expert team shall prepare the draft report, submit it to the Centre prior to the visit, define the areas and issues that will require specific attention during the visit at higher education institution.

15. The expert team has the right to request the higher education institution to provide additional information at any moment prior to the end of the visit at higher education institution.

## **SECOND SECTION VISIT AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

16. The duration of the visit shall be defined by the Centre with regard to the size and scope of activities of the higher education institution or a branch, and the scope of the studies under evaluation.

17. The visit of the expert team at higher education institution shall be organised by the Evaluation Coordinator appointed by the Centre. He/she shall coordinate the agenda of the visit together with the higher education institution and the expert team.

18. The aim of the visit is to collect maximum information about the object to be evaluated. The visit shall include meetings with the target groups of the evaluation and the review of the infrastructure of the higher education institution or a branch as well as the examination of documents necessary for the purposes of the evaluation.

19. At the end of the visit, the expert team shall discuss the outcomes of the visit at its meeting and shall briefly present the strengths of the object under the evaluation and the areas that require further improvement to the community of the higher education institution.

## **THIRD SECTION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT**

20. Having assessed each area of evaluation according to the evaluation areas and/or indicators, and/or the criteria provided for in the legal acts, the experts shall indicate the strengths of each area as well as the aspects that require further improvement. It shall also evaluate the efforts of the higher education institution to improve the quality of the object under evaluation.

21. The expert team shall prepare the draft report and submit it to the Centre via e-mail under the terms specified in the methodologies of the Centre. The Centre shall review the draft report and shall submit the comments to the expert team, which the latter will consider when editing the draft report. The draft report shall be edited until the Centre has no comments with regard to it.

22. The evaluation report of the expert team shall be drafted in line with the form provided by the Centre. The evaluation report of the expert team shall be drafted in a clear business language, ambiguities and interpretations should be avoided. The conclusions and recommendations should be motivated and based on the data provided by the higher education institution or a branch, the information collected during the visit, other objective data and expert experience. The arguments of the expert evaluation in the report should be related to the evaluation areas and/or indicators, and/or criteria, and should be based on the actual data, the strengths and aspects requiring further improvement of each area should be specified.

23. The expert team shall agree on its decisions after consideration thereof. In exceptional cases, when no agreement has been reached, (an) expert(s) may express a separate opinion.

24. If the higher education institution makes comments regarding the factual errors contained in the draft report or the evaluations based on these errors, the Centre shall forward these comments to the expert team that performed the evaluation.

25. The experts shall examine the comments made by the higher education institution regarding the factual errors contained in the draft report or the evaluations based on these errors,

pay regard to them within the time limits specified in the legal acts or specify the reasons for refusing to pay regard to the comments, and submit the final evaluation report to the Centre. The Centre shall review the final evaluation report and, if necessary, shall submit its comments to the expert team, which the latter will amend the final report as appropriate. The final report shall be edited until the Centre has no comments with regard to it.

26. Upon the request of the Centre, (a) member(s) of the expert team shall participate during the examination of the report at the meeting of the Study Programme Evaluation Commission or the Higher Education Evaluation Commission directly or at a distance.

27. Upon the request of the Centre, (a) member(s) of the expert team shall participate during the examination of the report at the meeting of the Appeal Commission directly or at a distance. In the event none of the expert team members can participate at the meeting of this commission, the expert team shall email to the Centre written clarifications regarding the issues analysed at the meeting.

28. In the event the Study Programme Evaluation Commission or the Higher Education Evaluation Commission does not agree with the experts' evaluation conclusions, or the commission examining the appeal within its competence decides to satisfy the appeal of the higher education institution, the expert team shall analyse the submitted arguments and edit the experts' evaluation report or shall provide a reasoned opinion on the refusal to take the comments into consideration.

#### **CHAPTER IV**

#### **ORGANISATION OF WORK OF EXPERTS INVITED TO SOLVE THE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE ASSESSMENT OF FOREIGN QUALIFICATIONS AND/OR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GRADES TRANSFER AND COMPARISON OF SUBJECTS AND THE CREATION OF CONDITIONS RELATED TO FREEDOM OF MOBILITY OF PERSONS**

29. The expert team shall perform the expert evaluation according to the tasks specified in the agreement concluded with the Centre and in line with the information provided by the Centre.

30. The report and other results of the expert evaluation provided for in the agreement shall be submitted under the terms and procedure specified in the agreement.

31. The work of the expert team shall be coordinated by an employee appointed by the Centre.