

ACCREDITATION AND RATING INTERNATIONAL AGENCY (ARIA)



ARIA Standards and Guidelines for International Accreditation of Foreign Educational Organizations and Educational Programs

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Goals and Objectives of International Accreditation

The objective of the international accreditation (hereinafter - accreditation) is to evaluate and recognise the quality of educational organization (hereinafter - EO) and offered study programs against international accreditation standards according to European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG-ENQA).

The international accreditation procedure serves the common goal of quality evaluation of educational organization and / or study programs in higher education and compliance with European standards. When conducting international accreditation, the specific legislation of relevant countries is taken into account.

The standards and procedures of international accreditation comply with the main principles and documents of the Bologna process.

For program accreditation, in order to ensure a qualitative assessment of the educational program (hereinafter - the EP) and the effectiveness of the External Expert Panel (hereinafter - EEP), a cluster approach is being implemented, which provides for the division of the accredited educational programs into clusters. One cluster includes no more than 5 educational programs. It is allowed to evaluate no more than 20 educational programs for one visit of the External Expert Panel.

The main principles of international accreditation are:

- professional and public character of evaluation;
- voluntary basis;
- independence;
- objectiveness and professionalism;
- transparency, credibility and relevance of information about accreditation procedures;
- collective decision making;
- publicity of positive and negative outcomes.

Procedure for Carrying Out International Accreditation

The procedure includes the following stages:

1. Applying for accreditation.

Applying for an application by the educational organization for institutional and (or) program accreditation with copies of title and authorization documents.

ARIA considers the application of the educational organization.

2. Conclusion of a contract between the EO and ARIA.

The ARIA decision to start the procedure of institutional or program accreditation of the educational organization. The schedule of visits to the educational organization, conditions and financial issues of accreditation are determined by the contract between the ARIA and the educational organization.

At the request of the organization of education, ARIA can organize training to clarify the standards and procedures of institutional and (or) program accreditation to internal experts of the educational organization at special seminars on the theory, methodology and technology of institutional and (or) program accreditation. This seminar procedure is not a mandatory component of the accreditation process.

3. Preparation of a self-assessment report.

The EO independently organizes and carries out the self- assessment of the EO and the educational program (cluster of programs) in order to establish the compliance with the international accreditation standards and prepares a self-evaluation report according to the second section of the Guidelines.

In case of institutional or program accreditation of medical educational organizations and / or educational programs, a self-evaluation report is prepared on the basis of separate Standards and Guidelines developed on the basis of WFME standards.

The EO is provided with guidelines and methodological materials to facilitate the preparation of the self-assessment report.

EO sends a report on institutional or program self-assessment and all necessary applications to ARIA at least 8 (eight) weeks before the visit of the EEP.

ARIA sends a self-assessment report to the experts for review at least 6 (six) weeks before the visit after the internal examination for compliance.

An expert reviews the self-assessment report for compliance with the International Standards of ARIA, prepares and sends the review to ARIA within 10 (ten) calendar days. In case of non-compliance with the requirements of ARIA, the review is sent to the expert for revision. In the case of repeated inconsistencies, ARIA is entitled to remove this expert from participation in the EEP.

Based on the analysis of the report on the self-assessment of the educational organization, ARIA is entitled to make one of the following decisions:

- develop recommendations on the need to finalise the self-assessment report;
- carry out further accreditation procedures (the EEP site visit to EO);
- postpone dates of the further accreditation procedures due to inconsistency of the self-assessment report with International Standards of ARIA.

4. EEP site visit to an EO

In case of continuation of further accreditation procedures, ARIA forms an External Expert Panel, which is approved by the ARIA General Director. The external evaluation of the quality of the EO and the implementation of the EP (cluster of programs) for compliance with International Standards of ARIA is carried out by the EEP during a visit to the EO.

The composition of the EEP is determined depending on the workload of the external evaluation. The panel consists of independent experts including foreign experts experienced in teaching and quality assurance, a representative of an employer and a student community representative.

In case of continuation of accreditation, ARIA will coordinate with the EO the dates for institutional and (or) program accreditation and the Program of EEP site visit.

The program of the EEP site visit is developed by the Chairman of EEP and the ARIA Coordinator with the participation of an EO. The agreed program of the visit of EEP is approved by the ARIA Director at least 2 (two) weeks before the visit to an EO. The structure and content of the program is developed taking into account the specifics of the EO and (or) the EP in accordance with the recommended sample program of the EEP visit program (*Annex 1*).

The duration of the visit is 3-5 days. During the site visit, the EO creates conditions for

the work of EEP in accordance with the Service Contract:

- submits an electronic and (or) paper version of the self-assessment report for each member of the panel;
- provides the necessary office equipment in consultation with the representative of ARIA and according to the number of members of EEP;
- organizes an inspection of infrastructure and resources, meetings, questionnaires, interviews and other types of EEP work in accordance with the Program of EEP visit;
- provides the requested information.

The results of the visit to the EO are reflected in the report on the results of the external evaluation.

The draft of EEP report is reviewed by the ARIA and sent to the EO for approval. If the EO reveals factual inaccuracies, the Chairman agrees with the EEP members and makes the necessary changes to the EEP report. In case of disagreement with the EO's comments to the EEP report, the Chairman, together with the ARIA coordinators, prepares an official response with justification.

The report contains a description of EEP visit, a brief assessment of the compliance of the activities of the EO in the context of the international standards of ARIA, recommendations to the EO for improving activities and quality assurance, recommendations for the Accreditation Council (hereinafter - AC). Proposals to the Accreditation Council contain a recommendation for accreditation (including recommended accreditation period) or non-accreditation.

The EEP report, including recommendations, is developed by the EEP members collectively.

5. Decision-making by ARIA

The basis for the decision making on institutional and (or) program accreditation by the Accreditation Council is the evaluation report of the EO by the external expert panel and the self-assessment report of the educational organization.

The Chairman of the EEP speaks to the Accreditation Council following the visit of the EEP.

The exclusive competence of the Accreditation Council of ARIA includes making

decisions on accreditation or refusal to accredit the educational organization. The composition of the Accreditation Council is determined in accordance with the Regulations on its activities. The meeting is held in the presence of a quorum. The Accreditation Council has the right to make an informed decision that does not comply with the recommendations of the external expert panel.

The Accreditation Council has the right to take following decisions:

- *accreditation for a period of 1 (one) year* - in compliance with the standards in general, but in the presence of some shortcomings and opportunities for improvement (when assessing standards that require improvement from 40% to 60%, the absence of strong standards);
- *accreditation for a period of 3 (three) years* - in compliance with the standards in general, but in the presence of certain minor shortcomings and opportunities for improvement (when assessing standards that require improvement from 20 to 40%, in the presence of strong standards);
- *accreditation for a period of 5 (five) years* - if the standards are observed in general and there are positive results (when assessing standards that require improvement up to 20%, in the presence of strong standards);
- *accreditation for a period of 7 (seven) years* - in compliance with the standards in general and the presence of examples of best practice translation (when assessing those requiring improvement up to 20%, and strong standards at least 20%)
- *refusal of accreditation* - if there are significant shortcomings (when assessing at least one standard as "unsatisfactory" or requiring an improvement of 60% or more).

If the Accreditation Council makes a positive decision, ARIA sends an official letter to the EO with the results of the decision and a certificate of institutional and / or program accreditation of the EO. Further, the decision on the accreditation of the EO is sent to the authorised educational authority of the relevant country and is posted on the ARIA website. Also a report of the EEP is posted on the ARIA website.

After receiving the accreditation certificate, the EO posts a self- assessment report on its website. When the Accreditation Council makes a negative decision, ARIA sends an official letter to the EO with the decision made.

The EO in the prescribed manner in accordance with *the Service Agreement* and *the Regulation on the Commission for the Review of Appeals and Complaints* may appeal to ARIA on the decision of the Accreditation Council. In case of doubt about the competence of the EEP and representatives of the Agency, or a gross violation committed by members of the EEP, the EO may send a complaint to ARIA according to *the Regulation on the Commission for the Review of Appeals and Complaints*.

6. Follow-up procedures

In case of a positive decision by the Accreditation Council of ARIA, the EO provides ARIA with a Plan of measures to improve and refine quality in the framework of recommendations of an EEP (hereinafter - Plan), which is signed by the head and sealed, and also concludes a Service Agreement with ARIA. The Agreement and Plan are the basis for post-accreditation monitoring.

In accordance with the Regulations on the procedure for post-accreditation monitoring of EO and (or) EPs, accredited EOs must prepare interim reports in accordance with the Plan. Interim reports are sent to ARIA before the expected date of post-accreditation monitoring.

Post-accreditation monitoring of EOs and (or) EPs is carried out in accordance with the regulations on the procedure for post-accreditation monitoring of EOs and (or) EPs.

In the event of non-compliance with the Plan and the requirements put forward by ARIA in relation to the EO, as well as the lack of information about changes made in the EO, the Accreditation Council has the right to take one of the following decisions:

- temporarily suspend validity of the institutional and (or) program accreditation of the EO;
- withdraw the accreditation of the EO, which may entail the cancellation of all previously achieved accreditation results.

In case of failure of the EO to conduct post-accreditation monitoring, expressed in not signing the Service Agreement with ARIA, the Accreditation Council of ARIA has the right to decide on the termination and revocation of the accreditation status. In case of early termination and revocation of accreditation status, the EO has the right to apply

for accreditation to ARIA within one year from the date of the decision to revoke the accreditation of the EO.

External Expert Panel (external evaluation expert group)

External review of an EO and/or EP(cluster of programs) is performed by an External evaluation panel (external evaluation expert group) which consists of independent experts including foreign experts experienced in teaching and quality assurance, a representative of an employer and a student community representative.

EEP is formed on the basis of the order of the Director of ARIA from among the certified representatives of the academic, professional and student community included in the database of experts of ARIA. Foreign experts may be recruited from partner accreditation agencies.

During the program accreditation, the composition of EEP is formed depending on the number of EPs in the accredited EO.

In order to eliminate a conflict of interest, ARIA sends an official letter on the composition of EEP to EO 14 (fourteen) calendar days prior to the visit.

EO is entitled to notify ARIA in an official letter of a conflict of interest with a justification within 3 (three) working days. ARIA replaces the expert if necessary.

All members of EEP sign a Statement of Obligation on the absence of a conflict of interest and the Code of Ethics of the external expert of ARIA during each visit.

The expert is obliged to notify the coordinator of ARIA of any connection with EO or his own interest, which may lead to a potential conflict related to the external evaluation process.

Each member of EEP should perform his or her functions and duties with high quality. Failure to comply and refusal without a proper reason are considered as a violation of the Code of Ethics of an external expert of ARIA and may lead to exclusion from ARIA expert database.

Information about EO, obtained during the external evaluation, is presented as confidential and is not subject to disclosure.

EEP members should not disclose or comment on the recommended accreditation dates

before the decision of the AC.

External Expert Panel includes:

- Chairman of EEP, responsible for coordination of experts' work, preparation and oral presentation on preliminary conclusions, drawn up during the site visit of EO, also responsible for preparation of the final Report on the results of the external review of an educational program (cluster of programs).
- External experts – representatives of the academic community responsible for assessing the compliance of an accrediting EO and / or EP (s) with the ARIA international accreditation standards.
- External expert – a representative of the professional community (an employer) who is to assess whether an accrediting EP and/or educational program(s) (a cluster of programs) and professional competencies of its graduates comply with the labour market requirements.

External expert - a representative of a student community, who is responsible for assessing the compliance of an accrediting EO and / or EP(s) with the needs and expectations of students (for each cluster, 1 representative of the student community).

ARIA appoints from among its staff a coordinator responsible for coordinating the work of the expert group. The EO, for its part, appoints an authorised person responsible for the process of international accreditation of the EO and / or EPs(cluster of programs).

II. SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

The self-assessment report (SAR) is one of the basic documents of international accreditation.

Key Principles of the Report Preparation

1. Structuring: strict compliance of the presented information with the sections of the document.
2. Readability: the text of the document should be easy for apprehension from the point of view of printing, semantic and stylistic features of the text.
3. Analyticity: analysis of advantages and disadvantages, analysis of development dynamics of the EO or EP (cluster of programs).
4. Criticism: objectiveness of assessment.
5. Conclusiveness: provision of facts, data, information as arguments for conclusions.

Those features of the EP which have not been described in the guidelines must be included in the documents of the corresponding part.

During the cluster accreditation the aspects common to all programs are described once in the introductory section to avoid repetition.

The final document must be well-structured, the pages numbered (including annexes).

Report Format

The report should be drawn up in the form of a coherent and logical text with tables, graphs, figures, where appropriate and attachments, in which large tables (occupying more than half of a sheet in A4 format) and other large-scale sources of information are placed.

The self-assessment report shall include an introduction, main body, conclusion and annexes. All statements, judgments, assumptions of the report must be supported by necessary documents in the main body of the text and attachments (*Annex 2. Recommended Structure of the Self-Assessment Report*).

Report shall be drafted in the following format: font type - Times New Roman, font size

-12, space between lines - 1.5, paragraph spacing before and after titles - no more than 6 pt, at the beginning of report, there is automatically edited inline table of contents, page numbers. The report is printed in A4 format in portrait orientation, attachments may also use landscape orientation. The first annex to report contains text confirming the reliability, exhaustive nature and accuracy of all data provided, signed by the head of the EO and executors who prepared the report with the contact details of compilers of report for further consultations if necessary: “I, [name of head of organization], confirm that in self-assessment report [institution name] containing [number of pages in the main body of report, i.e. without attachments] pages, provided absolutely reliable, accurate and comprehensive data, which adequately and fully characterise activities of the institution”.

Contents of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The SAR consists of introduction, main section, conclusion and annexes.

It is recommended that the introduction should include information on the conditions and organization of self-evaluation, its goals and objectives.

The introduction presents general information about the EO for institutional accreditation, the structural division of the EO, which implements the accrediting EP (cluster of programs) for program accreditation:

- brief background;
- organizational and legal provision of activity;
- organizational structure and management system;
- interaction with educational, research, professional organizations on the local, regional and national levels;
- international activity;
- headcount of students (in each year);
- dynamics of the student population of different educational forms during the last 3-5 years.

The main section includes an analysis of the conformity of the activities of the EO and (or) the EP being accredited to the international accreditation standards.

The articles of the section are supposed to be arranged according to the order suggested

in the guidelines. The SAR must provide answers to all the main questions and include all necessary documentary evidence in the annexes.

The EO must provide information on the achievements of the EO and/or the EP for the last 3-5 years individually for each article of the second section of the report. It is also supposed to point out in the report problems and areas for improvement which were revealed with the help of the SWOT analysis.

The conclusion of the report is supposed to include general findings and the conclusion of the self-assessment process, giving grounds for applying an application for passing an external quality assessment procedure.

Annexes must include tables, general information about the EO, information about the accredited EP (cluster of programs), achievements of the EP (no less than 2 pages) (in case of program accreditation), and the list of material and documentary evidence, which are presented for the consideration of the EEP during the visit to the educational organization.

The SAR must be presented in English¹ – officially in electronic version if there were no other preliminary agreements. The report must not exceed 50-60 pages (without annexes). To reduce the number of attachments, it is recommended that the text of self-assessment report, as much as possible, include links to supporting documents located on electronic resources of EO.

The SAR should be presented from the name of the head of the EO and signed by the head of the EO.

The main provisions and conclusions of the report must be brought to notice of all participants of the self-assessment process; posted on the website of the EO. All persons responsible for self-assessment and accuracy of the material presented in the report must be involved in filling out the “Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee” table (see Annex 2, section 3.2).

The evaluation table “Conclusion of the Self-Evaluation Committee” has following positions for assessment:

- **“Strong”** is characterised by a high level of indicators of one standard of international accreditation. This position of this standard makes it possible to serve as

an example of good practice for dissemination among other EOs.

- **“Satisfactory”** is determined by the average level of indicators of one standard of international accreditation and means compliance with the standard.
- **“Suggests improvement”** is characterised by a low level of performance of one standard of international accreditation.
- **“Unsatisfactory”** means that indicators of EO or EP does not meet the standard of international accreditation.



¹ Large documents can be submitted in the original language on condition that they are accompanied by a short summary in English

III. INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The self-assessment procedure at the international level must contain the following parts: Standards 1-10 and relevant annexes.

These standards are applicable for institutional and program accreditation of non-medical educational organizations or educational programs of higher and postgraduate education (including initial accreditation of EO or EPs (ex-ante)).



Standard 1. POLICY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

EOs should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Guidelines:

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the EO. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the EO. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the EO operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. Such a policy supports

- the organization of the quality assurance system;
- departments, schools, faculties and other organizational units as well as those of institutional leadership, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
- academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud; guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff; the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance.

The policy translates into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution. How the policy is implemented, monitored and revised is the EO's decision.

The quality assurance policy also covers any elements of an institution's activities that are subcontracted to or carried out by other parties.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Does EO have a strategic plan? Mission and vision statements?*
- ✓ *What documents reflect the quality assurance policy? Where is it published? Is it posted on open resources or only on internal ones? What is the process of developing and approving quality assurance policy?*
- ✓ *Is the quality assurance policy available to teaching staff, employees and students? Is it known and available to employers and other interested parties?*
- ✓ *Do other institutions or stakeholders participate in the design and implementation of the quality assurance policy?*
- ✓ *How did the quality assurance policy changes occur?*
- ✓ *Demonstrate the results of assessing the satisfaction of the main stakeholders with the quality assurance policy.*
- ✓ *Does the EP match the stated mission or overall strategy of the EO?*
- ✓ *How is the link between research work, teaching and learning reflected in the quality assurance policy?*
- ✓ *Does the quality assurance policy include interaction between business community, scientific community, teaching staff and students?*
- ✓ *With the help of what mechanisms does this relationship come to life. Give examples.*
- ✓ *Are the competences and decision-making processes of the bodies involved in the development of the EP defined?*
- ✓ *How much is the information on the educational process for students available and transparent?*
- ✓ *Are there any revision procedures of the objectives of the EP, the concept and its implementation?*
- ✓ *How much do the developed EPs comply with the regulatory documents of the EO?*
- ✓ *Does the EO have a concept of gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities?*
- ✓ *Describe a valid quality assurance system at the university. How is it applied during the implementation of the EP? How is its continuous improvement ensured?*
- ✓ *What activities are outsourced (contractors, partners) and what are the requirements for them? How is their adherence monitored?*

Standard:

EOs should have processes for the design and approval of their programs. The EPs should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a program should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Guidelines:

EPs are at the core of the EOs' teaching mission. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills including those that are transferable, which may influence their personal development and may be applied in their future careers.

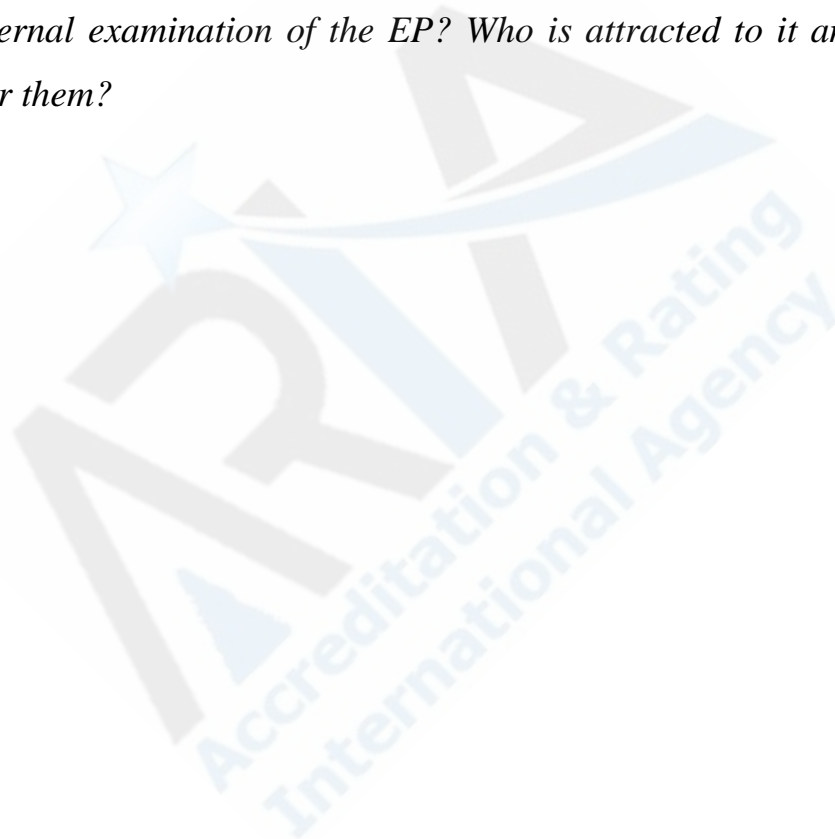
EPs

- are designed with overall program objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes;
- are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work;
- benefit from external expertise and reference points;
- reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and Concepts);
- are designed so that they enable smooth student progression;
- define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS;
- include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate;
- are subject to a formal institutional approval process.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *What is the goal of the EP / general qualification / target group (students)? Are the qualification objectives set out in an adequate manner in the documents governing the educational process and the evaluation of academic achievement and in the Diploma Supplement?*
- ✓ *What skills and methodological competencies are taught?*
- ✓ *What skills (including foreign languages) can be developed as a part of the program?*
- ✓ *Are there any opportunities for successful learning and participation in society?*
- ✓ *How does the university monitor changes since the last quality assurance procedure?*
- ✓ *What recommendations and suggestions were offered by the EO/ EP management on the basis of the latest quality assurance procedure? What decisions were made at the university following the last external quality assurance procedure? How and how fully are they implemented?*
- ✓ *How are changes taken into account in preparation for the upcoming external assessment procedure?*
- ✓ *Are the requirements of the professional environment properly reflected?*
- ✓ *Do the EPs have a special profile (for example, a double degree, additional education, dual education, related studies, correspondence education, distance, intensive education, combinational education, teacher training, etc.), and was it properly described and justified?*
- ✓ *How is the correspondence of the content of academic disciplines and learning outcomes to the level of education (bachelor, master, doctoral) ensured?*
- ✓ *Are the volume of compulsory, elective and optional modules/ disciplines reasonable?*
- ✓ *Is there a mobility window (for example, a semester abroad)? Is it advisable to have it in the EP?*
- ✓ *How does the system of assessing students' knowledge correlate with the ECTS system?*

- ✓ *Is the EP harmonious with respect to the expected learning outcomes? Does the content of the disciplines (modules) ensure the achievement of the planned results of the EP?*
- ✓ *Does the name of the EP match the content?*
- ✓ *Are modern achievements of science reflected in EP?*
- ✓ *Is the ratio of classroom attendance and self-study time appropriate?*
- ✓ *Is the module description complete and competent? Are they informative enough?*
- ✓ *Is the EP technically possible in terms of student workload?*
- ✓ *Are the procedures for the development of the EP and their approval at the institutional level defined and documented?*
- ✓ *Is there an external examination of the EP? Who is attracted to it and what are the requirements for them?*



Standard 3. STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Standard:

EOs should ensure that the programs are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Guidelines:

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of EPs and the assessment of outcomes.

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;
- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

Considering the importance of assessment for the students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment take into account the following:

- Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field;
- The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance;
- The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process;

- Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;
- The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;
- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Does EO have a Teaching and Learning strategy?*
- ✓ *Are respect and attention given to different groups of students and their needs, are they provided with flexible learning trajectory?*
- ✓ *How are students' needs taken into account in the formation of the EP?*
- ✓ *What opportunities do students have in forming an educational trajectory?*
- ✓ *How are equal opportunities for students in achieving learning outcomes ensured, including in the context of different groups of students?*
- ✓ *How does the implementation of the EP take into account the individual peculiarities of students?*
- ✓ *Is there any own research in the field of teaching academic subjects of the EP? (Give examples).*
- ✓ *Does the EP have a feedback system on the use of various teaching methods and the assessment of learning outcomes?*
- ✓ *How is the academic freedom of students ensured in the EP?*
- ✓ *Does the EP ensure consistency, transparency and objectivity of the mechanism for assessing learning outcomes for each EP?*
- ✓ *How is the mechanism of assessing knowledge, skills and professional competencies implemented?*
- ✓ *What forms of learning and teaching are used, including innovative teaching methods (for example, online learning)? Is there sufficient variability?*
- ✓ *Do the didactic concepts ensure the formation of career-oriented competencies among students?*
- ✓ *Are learning achievement assessment tools competently oriented? Is there*

sufficient variability in inclusion of different qualification criteria?

✓ *Are learning achievement assessment tools modular oriented? Are combined achievement assessment tools applied?*

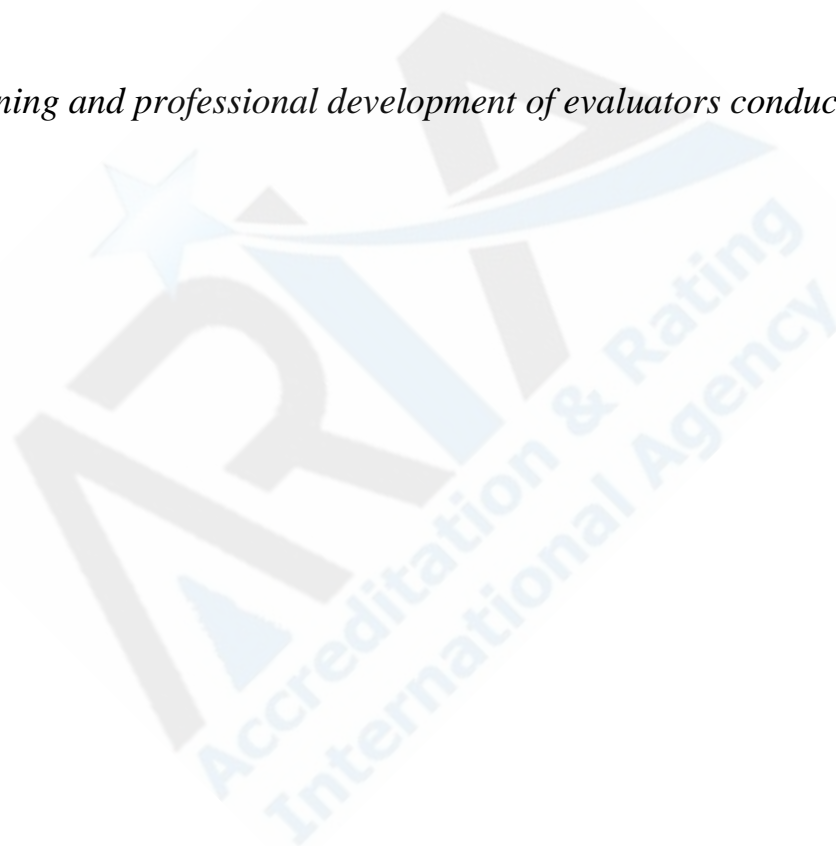
✓ *Do normative documents / training documents reflect examination procedures and types of examinations?*

✓ *Do examination-taking normative documents take into account conditions for students with disabilities?*

Are there any procedures for responding to students' complaints and appeals in the EP?

✓ *What are the methods of assessing learning outcomes used in the framework of the EP?*

✓ *How is the training and professional development of evaluators conducted?*



Standard 4. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

Standard:

EOs should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Guidelines:

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest of the individual students, programs, EOs and systems. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems.

It is important that access policies, admission processes and criteria are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. Induction to the EO and Eps is provided.

EOs need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students’ progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on

- institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention;
- cooperation with other institutions and quality assurance agencies with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students’ period of study. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

Sample questions for assessment:

How is a contingent of students formed in the EO and what additional requirements does the university impose on applicants applying for studying?

- ✓ How do students and applicants learn about the method of implementing contingent formation procedures (admission rules, transfer from one course to another course, from other universities, re-crediting procedure, mastered at other universities, expulsion, etc.)?*
- ✓ How does the university evaluate the correspondence between the admission process and the subsequent progress of students?*
- ✓ Is there recognition of prior learning outcomes and qualifications?*
- ✓ Are training requirements transparent to all target groups? What areas of information are available to students (Internet, university fairs, information days, contact partners, etc.)?*
- ✓ Is there a mechanism for recognition of students' results, including those mastered during academic mobility, as well as the results of additional, formal and non-formal education?*
- ✓ What are the requirements for recognition of prior learning outcomes? Give examples of previous learning outcomes recognition.*
- ✓ What normative university document brings under regulation the procedure of recognition of academic mobility results?*
- ✓ Is there an opportunity to prepare students for professional certification? What types of professional certification are possible in the professional sphere?*

Standard 5. TEACHING STAFF

Standard:

EOs should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Guidelines:

The teacher's role is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centered learning and teaching and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing (cf. Standard 1.3).

EOs have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively.

Such an environment

- sets up and follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching;
- offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff;
- encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;
- encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Are human resources sufficient to implement the EPs and guarantee the profile of the program? What documents reflect the personnel policy? Are management decisions transparent?*
- ✓ *How are appointments made to promote?*

- ✓ *Does the personnel potential of teachers correspond to the development strategy of the university and the specifics of the EP?*
- ✓ *How is the level of teachers' competence defined at the university related to the professional standard, the industry framework and the EQF (European Qualifications Framework)?*
- ✓ *Are there any differences between the requirements for teachers holding positions of different skills levels?*
- ✓ *How do the requirements for the qualifications of teachers differ depending on the level of the EP (BA, MA, PhD)?*
- ✓ *What are the requirements for experience, field and quality of teaching?*
- ✓ *Is the teaching and examination load balanced?*
- ✓ *Is an interdisciplinary approach to learning implemented?*
- ✓ *What are the measures for professional development and staff qualification?*
- ✓ *How is the professional and personal development of the teachers of the EP stimulated, for example, are self-development of qualification, knowledge acquisition, application of innovative teaching methods, integration of scientific activity and education stimulated?*
- ✓ *Do the teachers use information and communication technologies in the educational process (for example, on-line education, e-portfolio, MOOC, etc.)? How has the quality of teaching and the quality of knowledge, skills and competencies of graduates in connection with the introduction of new technologies changed?*
- ✓ *Are practices of the relevant industries involved in teaching?*
- ✓ *How does the selection of teachers of practitioners conduct?*
- ✓ *Describe the dynamics and results of the academic mobility of teachers in the framework of the EP over the past 5 years and the contribution to ensuring the quality of education, the development of the EP.*
- ✓ *How is the involvement of teachers for research work conducted?*

Standard 6. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Standard:

EOs should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Guidelines:

For a quality education experience, EOs provide a range of resources to assist student learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors and other advisers. The role of support services is of particular importance in facilitating the mobility of students within and across education systems.

The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centered learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support.

Support activities and facilities may be organized in a variety of ways depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are fit for purpose, accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Are the financial resources and educational infrastructure sufficient to achieve the goals of the EP?*
- ✓ *Do the material-technical and information resources ensure the achievement of the planned results of the EP? How is the development of material resources for EO and the accredited EP planned?*

- ✓ *What information systems are used at the university and what problems do they solve, what processes do they serve?*
- ✓ *How do students have access to information on the subjects they study?*
- ✓ *How is the website used to inform students, employees, all interested parties - what information is published, how often is it updated, why is this information published, is there an access to the most up-to-date information through the university website?*
- ✓ *Do the information resources match the specifics of the EP? Is there an examination of the results of research work, graduation works, theses for plagiarism? Is there an access to educational Internet resources and does WI-FI function?*
- ✓ *Are library resources sufficient? Is the library open for a long time?*
- ✓ *Are online technologies used in training? Their expediency?*
- ✓ *Are the regulation and planning of individual support and consulting for students provided appropriately (educational program manual, a consulting hour, teaching aid support, etc.)? Are students assisted in finding accommodation, internships, passing semesters abroad?*
- ✓ *What are the procedures for supporting various groups of students, including information and consulting?*
- ✓ *Do support programs exist for students with disabilities and in special life situations and do they meet the requirements?*
- ✓ *Are cooperative relations with other organizations established for professional practice?*
- ✓ *Are there any educational equipment and software used for learning programs similar to those used in their respective industries?*
- ✓ *How does the EO ensure compliance with safety requirements in the learning process?*
- ✓ *How are the needs of various groups of students taken into account in the context of the EP (adults, workers, foreign students, as well as students with disabilities, etc.)?*

Standard 7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Standard:

EOs should ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for the effective management of their programs and other activities.

Guidelines:

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making and for knowing what is working well and what needs attention. Effective processes to collect and analyze information about EPs and other activities feed into the internal quality assurance system.

The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the EO. The following are of interest:

- Key performance indicators;
- Profile of the student population;
- Student progression, success and drop-out rates;
- Students' satisfaction with their programs;
- Learning resources and student support available;
- Career paths of graduates.

Various methods of collecting information may be used. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *What information systems are used to improve the internal quality assurance system?*
- ✓ *How is the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities of the EO assessed, including the context of the EP?*
- ✓ *What are the quality system assessment processes in the EO (assessment of teaching, satisfaction monitoring, analysis of employment and career growth of*

graduates, collection and processing of information on areas of activity, etc.)?

- ✓ What information management processes are implemented at the EO? How are stakeholders involved in the process of collecting and analysing information and making decisions based on them?*
- ✓ How constantly is the processed, adequate information used to improve the internal quality assurance system?*
- ✓ How are risks identified and projected based on the information analysis?*
- ✓ How is the internal reporting on information management carried out at the university?*
- ✓ How do the tools change when the requirements for the nature and structure of information change?*
- ✓ What are the communicative mechanisms of the implementation of the EP plan and changes used in the EO?*
- ✓ How does the EO protect information?*

Standard 8. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Standard:

EOs should publish information about their activities, including programs, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Guidelines:

Information on EOs' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, EOs provide information about their activities, including the programs they offer and the selection criteria for them, the intended learning outcomes of these programs, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students as well as graduate employment information.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *What information processes of stakeholders are defined in the EO?*
- ✓ *Does the EO have a special information resource (website, portal, etc.) through which information is distributed (including relevant) regarding the formation and implementation of the EP development plan?*
- ✓ *What are the ways of distributing information, including the media, information networks for informing the general public and stakeholders in the EO?*
- ✓ *Does the EO publish information that meets the needs of the stakeholders (implemented programs, expected learning outcomes, assigned qualifications, teaching and learning, assessment procedures, passing points, tuition fees, studying opportunities provided to students, information about teachers, employment opportunities, cooperation with partners, financial statements, etc.)?*
- ✓ *How is the satisfaction of interested persons in the quality of the received information and in its completeness investigated?*
- ✓ *Is there graduates' community (association) and how does it participate in the activities of the EO?*

Standard 9. ON-GOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

Standard:

EOs should monitor and periodically review their programs to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the program. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Guidelines:

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programs aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

They include the evaluation of:

- The content of the program in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the program is up to date;
- The changing needs of society;
- The students' workload, progression and completion;
- The effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students;
- The student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the program;
- The learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the program.

Programs are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analyzed and the program is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Revised program specifications are published.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *How are the programs monitored and evaluated at a university?*
- ✓ *How is the achievement of the objectives of the EP tracked?*

- ✓ *How is the need for changing the content of curricula and educational programs (changes in the labor market, the requirements of employers and the social demand of society) determined in the EO?*
- ✓ *Are students represented in collegiate bodies? Are students involved in the further development of learning?*
- ✓ *How are students, employers and other stakeholders involved in the review of the EP?*
- ✓ *Are the results of surveys taken into account in evaluating and revising the EP?*
- ✓ *Does the content of programs reflect the latest achievements of science in a particular discipline?*
- ✓ *How is the monitoring of satisfaction with the quality of the organization of the practice and its results monitored?*
- ✓ *How are the achievement of the goals and objectives of professional practice, its compliance with the upcoming professional activity guaranteed?*
- ✓ *How is the monitoring of student and community needs conducted?
Demonstrate its results.*
- ✓ *Describe how the learner's personal development is monitored during the program processing? What methods are used for this? Where are the results recorded?*
- ✓ *Are students and graduates surveyed?*
- ✓ *Do surveys take into account student load check?*

Standard 10. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

EOs should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Guidelines:

External quality assurance in its various forms can verify the effectiveness of EO' internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement and offer the EO new perspectives. It will also provide information to assure the EO and the public of the quality of its activities.

EOs participate in cyclical external quality assurance that takes account, where relevant, of the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate. Therefore, depending on the framework, this external quality assurance may take different forms and focus at different organizational levels (such as program, faculty or institution).

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback or report or its follow-up process within the institution. Therefore, EOs ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Do the EO and the EP participate in external evaluation procedures?*
- ✓ *How regularly do(es) the EO and / or EP undergo an external assessment? What are the results of external evaluations, national and international, in which the EO took part? In case of publication of the results in open sources, provide the links.*
- ✓ *What decisions were taken in the EO following the results of the last external quality assurance procedure? How and to what extent are the recommendations and proposals implemented following the last external assessment procedure?*

How are changes taken into account in preparing for the upcoming external assessment procedure?

✓ *What is the role of the effectiveness of external evaluation in the development of an internal quality assurance system of the EO?*



Standard 11. Research capacity

Standard:

EOs should create, maintain and improve research inspiring environment for their staff members and students.

Guidelines:

Research activity can significantly improve the performance of EO in numerous directions. New initiatives and ideas can be initiated, implemented and developed in an environment which stimulates research activity.

EOs develop research policy, set the principles of conducting research activity and monitor the performance of staff members engaged in research activity. EOs focus on research activity is not limited with the staff members; moreover, EOs pay significant attention to the development of students' research capabilities using different forms.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *Do the EOs have research policy? How it is developed, monitored and disseminated?*
- ✓ *How regularly research policy implementation is monitored?*
- ✓ *How the links with external bodies (industry representatives, foundations etc.) are established and maintained?*
- ✓ *What quantitative and/or qualitative indicators are used to evaluate the performance of staff members in research activity?*
- ✓ *How frequently EO's staff members participate in local/international conferences? What about students?*
- ✓ *How frequently EO's staff members publish their research works? Do students play role in their research activities?*
- ✓ *What is the contribution from research into overall revenue flow of EO?*

Standard 12. Impact on local community

Standard:

EOs should make contribution to the development of the communities where they operate using a variety of forms.

Guidelines:

EOs are regarded as a significant contributor to the overall development of the society and community of their present. Contribution can be made by numerous forms.

Cooperation with EOs of different forms and levels, cultural organizations, local authorities is regarded as a cornerstone of successful integration of EO in the local community's life.

Sample questions for assessment:

- ✓ *How the extracurricular activities of the students are arranged? Do they embrace the local community?*
- ✓ *Are staff and students encouraged to cooperate with local community?*
- ✓ *What are the forms of cooperation with other EOs in the area. EOs of the same level, upper level if applicable, lower level if applicable?*
- ✓ *What are the relations with other organizations (cultural organizations, sport organizations, local authorities, NGOs etc.)*