

The Council of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, based on indent eight of the eleventh paragraph of Article 51.h of the Higher Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 32/12 – official consolidated text 7, 40/12 – ZUJF, 57/12 – ZPCP-2D, 109/12, 85/14, 75/16, 61/17 – ZUPŠ and 65/17; hereinafter referred to as: the ZViS), at its 124th meeting on 15 March 2018 adopted the following

## **Criteria for the Experts of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1 (Content and purpose)**

These Criteria lay down the conditions for experts of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: the Agency). Their purpose is to provide experts trained for professional and independent assessment of higher education institutions (hereinafter: institution) and study programmes and of higher vocational colleges (hereinafter: college) in accreditation and evaluation procedures according to the quality standards and criteria of the Agency.

### **II. CONDITIONS TO BE MET BY CANDIDATES FOR THE EXPERTS OF THE AGENCY**

#### **Article 2 (Candidates for the experts of the Agency)**

Candidates for the experts of the Agency shall include university teachers, college lecturers and students.

Candidates for the experts of the Agency shall also include other persons involved in the quality assessment in higher vocational education and higher education and holding at least a higher-education degree acquired in a second-cycle study programme. These candidates cannot be appointed as experts in the procedures of accreditation or external evaluation of study programmes.

Candidates for the experts of the Agency (hereinafter: candidates) must meet all general conditions and at least four specific conditions referred to in Articles 4 and 5. This shall not apply to student candidates and candidates referred to in the second paragraph of this Article.

#### **Article 3 (General conditions)**

Candidates shall demonstrate:

- knowledge of Slovenian higher education or higher vocational education (legal regulations, organisation, characteristics and operation);

- knowledge of the Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation, other criteria and standards of the Agency and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area - ESG (hereinafter: the European standards);
- ability to express themselves correctly in the Slovenian language;
- knowledge of the English language at least at the B2 level.

#### **Article 4** **(Special conditions for accreditation and external evaluation of institutions/colleges)**

Candidates shall demonstrate:

- management experience in an institution/college;
- management experience in pedagogical, scientific, professional, research or artistic work;
- experience in the evaluation of education, scientific, professional, research or artistic achievements;
- multi-annual references in pedagogical work at an institution/college;
- professional work (cooperation) in the development, drafting and preparation of study programmes;
- professional work in the (self)evaluation of institutions/colleges or study programmes;
- references on drafting and development of quality systems;
- relevant international experience in at least three fields listed above.

#### **Article 5** **(Special conditions for accreditation and external evaluation of study programmes)**

Candidates shall demonstrate:

- academic qualifications and scientific, professional, research or artistic achievements in the study programme field;
- experience in the evaluation of education, scientific, professional, research or artistic achievements in the study programme field;
- multi-annual references in pedagogical work at an institution/college;
- professional work (cooperation) in the development, drafting and preparation of study programmes;
- professional work in the (self)evaluation of study programmes;
- relevant international experience in at least three fields listed above.

#### **Article 6** **(Conditions for student candidates)**

Student candidates must comply with the general conditions referred to in Article 3 of these Criteria and demonstrate their participation in the (self)evaluation of institutions/colleges or study programmes.

#### **Article 7** **(Conditions for candidates referred to in the second paragraph of Article 2 of these Criteria)**

Candidates referred to in the second paragraph of Article 2 of these Criteria must comply with the general conditions referred to in Article 3 and special conditions referred to in Article 4 of these criteria.

### **III. PUBLIC CALL, APPLICATION AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES**

#### **Article 8 (Public call)**

The Agency shall select the candidates on the basis of a public call periodically published at its websites on the grounds of the need for experts from individual study, scientific, professional, research or artistic fields. The publication of a public call shall be decided on by the Agency's Council (hereinafter: the Council).

Besides general information, the published public call shall contain the following:

- subject of a public call with information about the professionals needed by the Agency and their study, scientific, professional, research or artistic fields;
- criteria to be met by candidates;
- information about the application to a public call and time limit for the application.

If candidates not meeting the criteria determined in the public call apply, their applications shall not be addressed by the commission referred to in Article 10 of these Criteria.

#### **Article 9 (Application to a public call)**

An application to a public call shall be submitted electronically, on an electronic form that is annexed to these Criteria. If an application is not submitted on this form, the commission referred to in Article 10 of these Criteria shall not address it.

The application shall be accompanied by the following:

- curriculum vitae in Slovenian,
- evidence of professional work (contribution) in the (self)evaluation of institutions/colleges or study programmes,
- evidence of fulfilment of special conditions indicated by the candidate in the application.

#### **Article 10 (Selection of appropriate candidates for the mandatory practical training)**

The selection of appropriate candidates for the mandatory practical training (hereinafter: practical training) for the Agency's experts shall be done by the commission for the assessment of professionals (hereinafter: the commission) composed of at least three Council members.

The Commission shall propose the selected candidates for practical training to the Council for approval.

#### **IV. (PRACTICAL TRAINING)**

##### **Article 11 (Invitation for practical training)**

The Agency shall invite candidates for practical training in view of the schedule of accreditations or evaluations of institutions/colleges and study programmes. It shall notify candidates in writing about the training in a specific accreditation or accreditation procedure.

If a candidate declines two invitations for practical training, the Agency shall not invite him or her again.

##### **Article 12 (Preparation for work in a group of experts)**

The preparation of a candidate for work in a group of experts shall begin by a preparatory meeting of the group of experts. A preparatory meeting shall be compulsory in all procedures in which the candidate participates.

A candidate shall be prepared for the meeting by the Agency staff authorised by the Council to conduct accreditation and evaluation procedures (hereinafter: the staff).

##### **Article 13 (Tasks of a candidate in the group of experts)**

In accordance with the instructions of the chair of the group of experts and staff, the candidate shall perform all tasks of an expert in a group, namely the following:

- participate in the preparation for an assessment of an institution/college or study programme,
- perform tasks in accreditation and evaluation procedures following the instructions of the chair of the group and staff.

The tasks and acts performed by the candidate in accreditation and evaluation procedures do not influence the final assessment and report of the group of experts.

##### **Article 14 (Assessment of a candidate)**

The work of a candidate shall be assessed by the chair of the group of experts in cooperation with other appointed members of the group, the Agency staff conducting an accreditation or evaluation procedure in which the candidate participates, and the commission.

After a completed accreditation or evaluation procedure, the group of experts and the staff shall prepare a joint written assessment (hereinafter: assessment) of the candidate. The assessment shall contain the findings concerning the following:

- correct application of acts, criteria and other provisions in accreditation and evaluation procedures,
- ability to work in a group of experts,
- quality of assessment of the actual situation,
- quality of report writing,
- impartiality or independence of the candidate.

The Agency staff does not assess the substantive assessment of a candidate concerning the compliance with quality standards set for accreditations and evaluations of institutions/colleges or study programmes.

The final assessment of the candidate shall be made by the commission.

## **V. AGENCY'S REGISTER OF EXPERTS**

### **Article 15 (Agency's register of experts)**

A candidate shall become an expert of the Agency upon his or her entry into the Agency's register of experts (hereinafter: the register). All Slovenian experts must be entered in the register.

Foreign experts shall be evaluators from foreign agencies entered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) or experts from the field of quality assessment in higher education.

### **Article 16 (Appointment by the Council)**

The Commission shall submit the final assessment of a candidate to the Council for further consideration. The Council shall adopt the decision on the (non)entry of a candidate in the register and notify the candidate thereof.

### **Article 17 (Entry in the register)**

An expert shall be entered in the register of experts for a period of five years. If he or she has fulfilled the obligations and tasks referred to in Chapter VII of these Criteria, he or she shall be re-entered for the same period. The re-entry shall be decided by the Council.

### **Article 18 (Removal from the register)**

An expert shall be removed from the register if:

- he or she has not been re-entered in the register in accordance with the preceding Article,

- he or she did not respect the provisions of the work contract concluded with the Agency.

## **VI. COMPOSITION OF EXPERT GROUPS**

### **Article 19 (Expert groups)**

The Council shall appoint at least three experts to a group of experts, of which one shall be a foreign expert and one a student. The composition of a group of experts depends on the size of an institution/college, type and complexity of an accreditation or evaluation procedure, and shall differ both in terms of number and in terms of required competences of experts.

The experts in a group must not be associated with the institution/college and the study programme assessed.

### **Article 20 (Accreditation or external evaluation of an institution/college)**

A group of expert shall be composed so that:

- at least one of the experts has management experience from an institution/college of at least the same type as the institution/college subject to the procedure of accreditation or evaluation,
- insofar as a university or independent faculty is accredited, most members of the group of experts must have a title of full-time or associate professor,
- insofar as a professional college is accredited, at least one member of the group of experts must have a title of assistant professor at least,
- insofar as a higher vocational college is accredited, at least one member of the group of experts must have a title of a lecturer at a higher vocational college.

A group of expert shall include:

- a) initial accreditation of an institution: experts from the fields of all proposed study programmes to be delivered by the institution;
- b) re-accreditation of an institution: experts from the fields of study programmes assessed in the context of the re-accreditation of the higher education institution;
- c) evaluation of a college: most experts from the fields of study programmes delivered by the college.

The study and scientific and research fields of the expert shall comply with the KLASIUS and Frascati classifications. The compliance by fields shall be assessed by the commission on the basis of bibliographic and biographic references related to the education, scientific, professional, research or artistic and teaching work of the expert.

**Article 21**  
**(Accreditation/evaluation of a study programme)**

All members of a group of experts shall be active in the field of the study programme and shall be appointed to the following titles:

- a) higher vocational study programme: besides lecturers and senior lecturers, at least one associate professor or assistant professor;
- b) university study programme, second cycle study programme and third cycle study programme: full-time and associate professors and assistant professors.

**Article 22**  
**(Chair of the group of experts)**

The chair of the group of experts must be a university teacher or college lecturer and must come from the principal field or at least one of the fields of the study programme or higher education institution/college according to the first two digits of the Klasius-P-16 classification.

If Slovenian experts entered in the register as suitable for the chair of the group do not include an expert meeting the condition referred to in the first paragraph of this Article, a foreign expert must meet it. He or she shall participate in the assessment as a member of the group, while an expert from the register shall be appointed a chair.

If the study programme is interdisciplinary and the condition referred to in the first paragraph has been fulfilled, the foreign expert should come from one of the other fields according to the two-digit Klasius-P-16 classification.

If none of the experts meets the condition referred to in the first paragraph, the Agency may exceptionally find an expert appropriate in terms of field and enter him or her in the register of experts following an invitation of the Council. He or she shall participate in the assessment as a member of the group, while an expert from the register who comes from the closest field shall be appointed a chair.

**Article 23**  
**(Student experts)**

A student expert must be, as a general rule, enrolled in the study programme of at least the same cycle as the study programme that he or she assesses. As a general rule, the study programme in which he or she is enrolled or the study programme that he or she completed must be from the closest field possible.

If the student status of a student expert expires in the course of an assessment, the student candidate must complete his or her work on the basis of a work contract until the finality of the decision on accreditation or evaluation.

**VII. OBLIGATIONS AND TASKS OF EXPERTS**

**Article 24**  
**(Continuing education)**

The duty of Agency experts is to:

- monitor the amendments of legislation and regulations in the field of higher education and higher vocational education,
- consider each change of criteria and other rules of the Agency in their work,
- regularly take part in training sessions or consultations of experts organised by the Agency.

#### **Article 25** **(Special training for chairs of groups of experts)**

When necessary, the Agency shall organise a special training for the chairs of groups of experts.

#### **Article 26** **(Tasks of experts)**

Experts shall sign a contract with the Agency determining their tasks. As a general rule, accreditation and evaluation procedures include a visit or inspection of the higher education institution/college (hereinafter: visit) in accordance with the ZViS, the Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation, and the visit protocol determined by the Agency. The work of the group of experts shall be monitored by the staff.

#### **Article 27** **(Reports of groups of experts)**

The chair of a group of experts shall be responsible for the preparation of joint reports determined in the Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation. All experts must participate in the writing (determining the contents) of reports.

The reports must be grammatically correct, completed until deadlines and written according to the instructions and on the forms determined by the Agency. If reports do not meet these criteria, the Agency staff shall return them to the chair of the group of experts and set the time limit for their revision. The failure to comply with the instructions of the Agency and the time limits shall have impact on the payment of services according to the contract.

### **VIII. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 28** **(Candidates that applied prior to the entry into force of these criteria)**

Candidates that applied prior to the entry into force of these Criteria shall be trained and appointed experts according to these Criteria.

#### **Article 29** **(Experts entered in the register according to previous criteria)**

Experts entered in the register according to the previously applicable criteria for the entry in the register of experts shall be subject to the provisions of the present Criteria in the processes of re-entry and removal from the register.

**Article 30**  
**(Termination of validity of previous criteria)**

The Criteria for the Classification of Experts in the Register Of Experts (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, Nos 95/10, 17/11 and 22/12) shall cease to apply upon the entry into force of these Criteria.

These Criteria shall enter into force on the day following their publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia.

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Council of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education  
of the Republic of Slovenia