

APPROVED

by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the  
Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in  
Higher Education

## **METHODOLOGY FOR EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAMMES**

### **I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes (hereinafter referred to as 'the Methodology') shall regulate external study programme evaluation organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Centre') in respect of their participants, procedures, evaluation areas, criteria, general requirements for study programme self-evaluation reports (hereinafter referred to as 'self-evaluation reports'), study programme analysis, expert team work organisation, ethical principles and appeals procedures.

2. The Methodology has been developed in the implementation process of the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes approved by Order No ISAK-1652 of 24 July 2009 of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2009, No 96-4083) (hereinafter referred to as 'the Evaluation and Accreditation Procedure') in accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* and other legal acts governing the provision and evaluation of study programmes.

3. For the purposes of this Methodology:

3.1. Stakeholders shall mean persons, groups of persons or organisations concerned with and capable of affecting the activities of a higher education institution and assuming responsibility for such influence (administrative and academic staff of the institution, students, their parents, alumni, employers, representatives of professional associations and trade unions, public institutions, etc.);

3.2. Evaluation coordinator shall mean an employee of the Centre responsible for the organisation of the evaluation of a specific study programme.

### **II EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES**

#### **I. PARTICIPANTS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

4. The main participants of the evaluation process shall include:

4.1. the higher education institution whose study programme is being evaluated;

4.2. the Centre;

4.3. other persons invited by the Centre to help with the evaluation;

4.3.1. the expert team performing the evaluation including team leader;

4.3.2. the Studies' Evaluation Committee (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee') acting in accordance with its regulations approved by the Director of the Centre's order. The Committee shall review the reports made by the expert team and advise the Centre regarding the objectivity, validity and comprehensiveness of the report of the expert team.

5. It shall be the usual practice to form an expert team for the evaluation of several programmes in the same study field.

6. The evaluation process shall consist of the following stages:

6.1. planning of the evaluation;

6.2. application to the Centre for the evaluation;

6.3. self-evaluation and the production of the self-evaluation report;

6.4. preparations for the evaluation;

6.5. visit of the expert team at the higher education institution (hereinafter referred to as 'the visit');

6.6. production of the evaluation report by the expert team;

6.7. discussions of the evaluation report by the Committee;

6.8. decision on evaluation and its publication;

6.9. follow-up activities.

7. The key stages in the evaluation process shall include self-evaluation, the visit, preparation of evaluation report (preparation of the evaluation report, its discussion and publication) and the follow-up activities.

8. The key actors of the planning process shall include the Centre and the higher education institution. The expert team shall not be involved at this stage.

9. The key actor at the self-evaluation stage shall be the higher education institution. The Centre shall be involved only as an adviser on the performance of self-evaluation and the submission of the self-evaluation report. The expert team may affect the self-evaluation process only by proposing improvements on the Methodology.

10. The key actors at the preparation stage shall be the Centre and the expert team it sets up. The higher education institution may make motivated proposals for replacing one or another member of the expert team.

11. During the visit stage, the evaluation coordinator appointed by the Centre shall act as a facilitator in setting the visit date and observing adherence to the schedule of the visit.

12. The key actor in the production of the evaluation report shall be the expert team. The higher education institution may only provide comments on the factual errors in the expert team's draft report. The role of the Centre at this stage shall be to ensure a timely provision of the expert team's draft report to the higher education institution and a timely provision of the institution's comments on the factual mistakes in the report (if any) to the expert team.

13. For purposes of the examination of findings the Centre shall engage Studies' Evaluation Committee.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

14. The key actor at the follow-up stage shall be the higher education institution tasked with improving the study programme with regard to the weaknesses found during the self-evaluation and in the evaluation report.

## II. EVALUATION PROCESS

15. A higher education institution wishing to have its study programme(s) evaluated by the Centre shall apply to the Centre for an evaluation and accreditation of any of its study programmes by e-mail sent to [kokybe@skvc.lt](mailto:kokybe@skvc.lt) or by letter at least 18 months before the accreditation deadline of the programme. The Centre shall publish the list of study programmes proposed for evaluation, the deadlines for the submission of self-evaluation reports and the character of the evaluation by indicating

which programmes will be evaluated by Lithuanian expert teams and which ones by international expert teams.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

16. If necessary, the Centre shall advise the higher education institution on issues related to self-evaluation.

17. The higher education institution shall be responsible for the proper conduct of its self-evaluation and the timely production of the self-evaluation report.

18. The higher education institution shall conduct its self-evaluation according to the procedure established by themselves. The self-evaluation report must meet the requirements set in this Methodology.

19. The self-evaluation process may include the following recommended stages:

19.1. setting up a self-evaluation group, which shall be approved by the order of the institution's head, for performing an internal evaluation of one or several study programmes within a certain study field;

19.2. defining the tasks and responsibilities of each member of the group;

19.3. drawing up the schedule of the group's activities;

19.4. collecting data for self-evaluation;

19.5. analysing the data;

19.6. discussing the results of the self-evaluation performed; and

19.7. producing a self-evaluation report.

20. The self-evaluation group should include active, experienced and competent representatives of the administrative and teaching staff, students and other stakeholders. It is recommended that the self-evaluation group should consist of no more than seven members. In case the higher education institution is conducting self-evaluation of several study programmes within a certain study field, it is possible to set up subgroups. The activities of the subgroups shall be coordinated by a person appointed from among the self-evaluation group members.

21. After its completion, the results of the self-evaluation must be discussed with the community of the institution or one of its units. The discussion should be attended by as many members of the community as possible, including students.

22. The self-evaluation group shall produce a self-evaluation report by taking into account the observations and comments offered during the discussions.

23. The higher education institution shall submit its self-evaluation report to the Centre by the deadline set by the Centre.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

24. The Centre shall start the evaluation only after it receives all the documentation referred to in Point 23.

25. The Centre may refuse to carry out the evaluation if:

25.1. the higher education institution fails to submit an application for the evaluation of a study programme by the deadline referred to in Point 15 of the Methodology;

25.2. the higher education institution fails to submit a self-evaluation report by the deadline referred to in Point 23 of the Methodology.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

26. Two weeks before the visit of the experts at the latest, the higher education institution may submit information on the essential changes in the study programme introduced after the submission of the self-evaluation report to the Centre.

27. The Centre shall verify the self-evaluation report for compliance with the requirements of the Methodology and shall notify the higher education institution of the necessary amendments within 20 days of the self-evaluation report receipt.

28. The higher education institution shall submit the amended self-evaluation report within 20 days of the receipt of the Centre's notification of its irregularities.

29. Study programme evaluation may be carried out by Lithuanian or international expert teams.

30. Expert selection shall be conducted according to the Expert Selection Procedure approved by the Director of the Centre (hereinafter referred to as 'the Expert Selection Procedure').

31. The Centre shall inform the higher education institution about the composition of the expert team by fax or e-mail. Within five working days of the receipt of this information, the higher education institution may submit motivated proposals on the replacement of one or several members of the expert team. The Centre shall consider all proposals so received and shall inform the higher education institution about the decision made. If the higher education institution fails to make a proposal requesting change in the expert team composition within the time limit set in this point, it shall be deemed that the higher education institution agrees with the composition of the expert team.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

32. The Centre shall organise a meeting of the expert team to help the experts understand the aims and objectives of the evaluation, to explain the Methodology and to introduce other legal acts governing external evaluation of study programmes.

33. The Centre shall make the self-evaluation report available to the experts at least one month before their visit at the higher education institution. In cases when, for reasons beyond reasonable control of the Centre, some of the experts on the team change, and it is objectively impossible to make the said information available to the new members within the time limit set in this point, the self-evaluation report shall be produced immediately after the new experts are included on the expert team.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

34. After their analysis of the information contained in the self-evaluation report, the experts shall draw up preliminary report and define the areas and issues requiring special attention during the visit. The Centre shall draw up the visit schedule and coordinate it with the higher education institution, which makes the data and the schedule of the visit publicly available.

35. The duration of the visit at the higher education institution shall be 1 to 3 days.

36. During the visit, the expert team shall meet the administration staff of the institution or its relevant unit, the self-evaluation group, the teaching staff, students, graduates and their employers. A visit shall be deemed effective when at least 2/3 of the expert team members attend the visit. During the visit, the experts shall have access to the learning resources of the study programme, students' term papers and final thesis, examination material and other documents.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

37. The higher education institution shall ensure that any member of its community wishing to meet the expert team can have an opportunity to do so.

38. The higher education institution shall ensure that the expert team has the appropriate premises and equipment necessary for its work and meetings.

39. During one visit, a member of the institution's community may participate only at one meeting with the expert team, except for cases agreed separately and in advance with a representative of the Centre.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

40. Meetings with graduates and employers may not be attended by persons who study and/or are employed at the higher education institution.

41. Where the evaluation is conducted by a team of international experts, the working language of the meetings shall normally be English. If necessary, the higher education institution may procure services of quality interpretation. During meetings with students an interpreter may only attend if agreed with the evaluation coordinator.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

42. At the end of the visit, the expert team shall hold a discussion of the outcomes of the visit within the team and make an oral presentation of its preliminary conclusions to the community of the higher education institution.

43. Within a month of the visit, the expert team shall produce a draft report and submit it to the Centre by e-mail. The draft report shall not provide evaluation of the study programme and evaluation areas in points.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

44. The higher education institution may submit to the Centre its comments on what the institution considers to be factual errors in the draft report within 14 days of the draft report's dispatch date. Comments with regards to factual errors shall be made in the Lithuanian language accompanied by a translation into the English language where evaluation was done by an international expert team. In all other cases comments shall be made in the Lithuanian language only.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

45. The Centre shall forward the institution's comments on what it considers to be factual errors in the draft report to the expert team.

46. The experts shall take account of the institution's comments on what the higher education institution considers to be factual errors in the draft report and shall, within 14 days, produce and submit an evaluation report to the Centre.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

47. For purposes of the examination of findings the Centre shall engage Studies' Evaluation Committee. The expert team leader, or some other member of the expert team, shall present the team's findings in the evaluation report during the meeting of the said Committee. Absence of the expert team leader, or some other member of the expert team, shall not preclude the Committee from examining the report. Representatives of the higher education institution may be involved in this stage of evaluation as needed.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

48. Where the self-evaluation group and other representatives of the higher education institution are invited to the meeting, they shall be sent documents to be examined at the meeting.

49. Having examined the evaluation report and the arguments presented by the attendees of the meeting, the Committee shall decide on one of the judgements provided in the Committee's Regulations.

50. In accordance with the evaluation report and with due regard to the proposal of the Committee, the Centre shall take a decision on the evaluation of the study programme according to the Evaluation and Accreditation Procedure. The decision accompanied with the evaluation report or its copy, or an extract from the evaluation report, shall be sent by e-mail or fax and by letter to the higher education institution.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

51. The Centre and the higher education institution shall make the evaluation report publicly available.

52. Responsibility for the follow-up activities shall usually be vested in the higher education institution unless specified otherwise in other legal acts.

53. The higher education institution shall define measures for the elimination of its weaknesses identified in the self-evaluation process and the improvement of the study programme. Information on the measures shall be made accessible to the academic community of the institution.

54. The higher education institution may apply to the Centre for the evaluation of its ongoing/intended action plan for the improvement of the quality of studies.

55. In organising a study programme evaluation, the Centre shall undertake to examine the way the study programme providers have acted on the weaknesses found in the latest evaluation and the way they have implemented proposals for the improvement of the programme.

### III. EVALUATION AREAS AND CRITERIA

56. A study programme evaluation shall involve examination of 6 areas: the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme, curriculum design, teaching staff, facilities and learning resources, study process and students' performance assessment and programme management.

57. Each evaluation area shall be analysed according to the established criteria, i.e. on the basis of evidence pointing to the quality of the studies.

58. The programme aims and learning outcomes shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 58.1. the programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible;
- 58.2. the programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market;
- 58.3. the programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered;
- 58.4. the name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

59. The curriculum design shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 59.1. the curriculum design meets legal requirements;
- 59.2. study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive;
- 59.3. the content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies;
- 59.4. the content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes;
- 59.5. the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes;
- 59.6. the content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies.

60. The teaching staff shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 60.1. the study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements;
- 60.2. the qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes;
- 60.3. the number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes;
- 60.4. teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme;
- 60.5. the higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme;
- 60.6. the teaching staff of the programme is involved in research (art) directly related to the study programme being reviewed.

61. Facilities and learning resources shall be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 61.1. the premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality;
- 61.2. the teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are adequate both in size and quality;
- 61.3. the higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice;
- 61.4. teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible.

62. Study process and students' performance assessment should be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 62.1. the admission requirements are well-founded;
- 62.2. the organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes;
- 62.3. students are encouraged to participate in research, artistic and applied research activities;

- 62.4. students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes;
- 62.5. the higher education institution ensures an adequate level of academic and social support;
- 62.6. the assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available;
- 62.7. professional activities of the majority of graduates meets the programme providers' expectations.
- 63. Programme management should be evaluated according to the following criteria:
  - 63.1. responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated;
  - 63.2. information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed;
  - 63.3. the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme;
  - 63.4. the evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders;
  - 63.5. the internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient.

### **III. PRODUCTION OF A SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

#### **I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

64. Higher education institutions shall conduct self-evaluation according to the procedures defined by themselves with due regard to the objectives of the self-evaluation.

65. The self-evaluation report should demonstrate the institution's capacity for analysis, critical evaluation of its own work and for projection of prospects for improvement.

66. Statements in the self-evaluation report should be supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence.

67. The self-evaluation report should present information necessary for evaluation in a succinct manner and the self-evaluation group should be careful not to make the report too long. The recommended scope of the self-evaluation report should not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes).

68. Self-evaluation shall be conducted according to each criterion specified in the Methodology. In case a certain criterion is not applicable to the study programme, the fact should be duly recorded in the self-evaluation report.

69. Compliance with the criteria specified in the Methodology shall be analysed in the context of the quality of the entire programme: compliance with a certain criterion shall be analysed and judged by taking into consideration its effect on the entire programme.

70. Examination of any area shall include analysis of the changes stimulated by the latest evaluation of the programme.

71. Analysis of each area shall be concluded with a summary of its strengths and weaknesses and the projected improvement actions.

72. If the evaluation of the programme is conducted by an international expert team, the self-evaluation report shall be submitted in English.

73. The higher education institution shall submit to the Centre the following: 1 printed copy of the self-evaluation report in Lithuanian and/or English (in case the English version is required) and one electronic copy of the same (on a computer medium or sent by e-mail at [kokybe@skvc.lt](mailto:kokybe@skvc.lt)).

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*



74. The self-evaluation report shall cover data of the past 5 academic years. In case the programme has been provided for a shorter period of time, the report should cover data of the entire period.

75. Each study programme shall be covered by a separate self-evaluation report. In case a study programme in the same study field is provided by a unit of the institution located in another city, it shall always be covered by a separate self-evaluation report. In case a study programme has specializations, those specializations shall be covered in the same self-evaluation report but each examined separately.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

76. In case a study programme is provided as a full-time and part-time programme, each mode shall be examined separately. The mode of studies which is analysed first shall be presented in full while the analysis of the other mode shall present information common to both modes of studies only through references to the description of the mode of studies analysed first.

*77. Revoke the validity of Point 77 of Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 on the approval of Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes.*

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

78. In case the programme is a joint study programme (i.e. it has been developed and provided together with another/other higher education institution(s)), the self-evaluation report shall clearly separate the parts of the programme provided by each institution and their learning resources (equipment, teaching materials and human resources) used for the provision of their part of the programme.

79. The electronic versions of the self-evaluation reports on the study programmes of the same study field shall be submitted on CD or sent to the Centre by e-mail. The common part of the report relevant to all the study programmes of the same study field shall be submitted as a DOC or PDF document. The self-evaluation report and its annexes shall be compressed in WinZip or WinRar format. The cover of the file shall carry the name of the higher education institution (abbreviated) and the title of the study programme (it is recommended that titles consisting of more than three words should be shortened) in Lithuanian or, if the external evaluation is to be conducted by an international expert team, in English. The titles of the files shall contain no Lithuanian characters. Each annex of the self-evaluation report shall be submitted as a separate document. Annexes submitted in separate documents shall be attached to the same folder.

80. The first page of the self-evaluation report shall contain the name of the higher education institution conducting the self-evaluation, its logo, the study field, the year of the self-evaluation report and the title of the study programme. The lower part of the page shall contain the personal details (title, first and last names) and the signatures of the head of the higher education institution and the leader of the self-evaluation team.

81. The bottom of the first page shall carry the venue, year and month of the self-evaluation report.

82. The second page of the report shall contain the title of the study programme, its national code, higher education type (college or university), level (first, second) or type (in cases of integrated studies), mode (full-time or part-time), duration in years, the scope of the programme in credits, qualifications awarded and the registration date of the study programme. It may also contain certain additional information such as the start of the programme provision, the language of instruction and other details.

83. The lower part of the second page shall contain personal details of the self-evaluation group members: academic rank, scientific degree, first and last name, position at the higher education institution, telephone numbers (office, mobile) and e-mail address, which will be necessary while organising the visit or clarifying issues relating to the self-evaluation report.

84. The self-evaluation report shall consist of the following parts: introduction, analysis of the programme, annexes.

85. The introduction should contain the following:

85.1. a brief description of the organisational structure of the higher education institution providing the study programme, its units, their management and interrelations, the appropriateness and weaknesses of the institution's organisational structure;

85.2. the composition of the self-evaluation group, the scope of the work and responsibilities of each member and the schedule of the team activities;

85.3. reference to the previous evaluation of the study programme, if any, and the evaluators.

86. The analytical part of the self-evaluation report shall cover six areas to be evaluated according to the criteria established in this Methodology:

87. The self-evaluation report shall be accompanied with the following annexes:

87.1. descriptions of the study subjects and/or modules;

87.2. list of the teaching staff;

87.3. descriptions of the teaching staff's activities;

87.4. list of the students' final thesis;

87.5. summary of the report of the previous evaluation (up to two pages);

87.6. agreement between the higher education institutions providing a joint programme.

88. The first annex to the self-evaluation report shall contain descriptions of the study subjects and/or modules. The descriptions may be presented in the form established by the higher education institution, but they shall contain the following information: title of the subject/module (in Lithuanian and English), code, scope in credits and hours, annotation, intended learning outcomes and their evaluation criteria, contents, literature, etc. In case the programme is being evaluated by an international expert team, the descriptions of the subjects/modules must be submitted in English. In case the higher education institution has produced a publication including the information on the subjects/modules referred to herein, their description may be replaced by the relevant extracts from the publication.

89. The second annex to the self-evaluation report shall contain data on the teaching staff: their names, surnames, dates of birth, the subjects taught and their scientific (artistic), educational and practical experience in years.

90. The third annex to the self-evaluation report shall contain descriptions of the teaching staff's activities presented in a free form. The description shall contain the following information: the person's name and surname, educational background, work experience (positions and duties involved), the most significant scientific (artistic) or methodological publications in the past 5 years (up to 5 publications), proficiency in foreign languages. The list of the teaching staff shall be presented in the alphabetical order of their surnames. In case of a joint study programme, the annex shall include descriptions of each institution's teaching staff involved in the provision of the programme. Descriptions of the activities of the staff teaching general subjects shall not be required.

91. The fourth annex to the self-evaluation report shall contain the list of the students' final thesis for the past two years.

## **II. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

92. Study programmes shall be examined according to six areas and the criteria established in the Methodology.

93. The aim of the evaluation of the programme aims and learning outcomes shall be to ascertain the validity and appropriateness of the need for the programme, its aims and learning outcomes.

94. Analysis of the programme aims and learning outcomes shall concentrate on and present the aims and learning outcomes of the programme.

95. It is also recommended that the analysis of the programme aims and learning outcomes includes the analysis of:

95.1. public resources (information publications, websites, etc.) containing the description of the programme aims and learning outcomes;

95.2. data on the regularity of evaluation of learning outcomes and the involvement of stakeholders;

95.3. compliance with legal acts and other documents establishing academic or professional requirements or recommendations for the qualifications of specialists trained;

95.4. research findings in the respective area of professional practice to support the validity of the intended learning outcomes;

95.5. professional activity areas of the specialists trained under the programme in terms of their links to the learning outcomes;

95.6. indication where the programme fits among the other programmes of the same study field provided by the higher education institution.

96. Evaluation of the curriculum design should seek to ascertain the appropriateness of the study plan and its contents.

97. Evaluation of the curriculum design shall involve the analysis of:

97.1. the study plan;

97.2. descriptions of the subjects taught and/or modules.

*Amendments to the clause:*

*Nr. V-45, 2013-08-01, Žin., 2013, Nr. 86-4327 (2013-08-07)*

97.3. the logic of the programme (relationship between the learning outcomes of the programme, learning outcomes of subjects/modules and study methods);

97.4. requirements for bachelor's and master's final thesis.

98. The aim of the teaching staff evaluation is to ascertain that the programme is being implemented by an adequately qualified teaching staff.

99. Evaluation of the teaching staff shall involve the analysis of:

99.1. the list of the teaching staff complete with information on each member's academic rank and scientific degree (if any); teaching experience; research interests; subjects taught; practical work experience in the area of the subjects taught;

99.2. description of each member's activities (to be presented as Annex 3 to the self-evaluation report);

99.3. information on the teaching staff's involvement in applied research, projects and research (artistic) activities directly related to the study programme being evaluated;

99.4. student/teacher ratio in the provision of the study programme;

99.5. data on the teaching staff exchange (visiting/outgoing teaching staff ratio).

100. It is recommended that the analysis of the teaching staff also includes:

100.1. data to prove compliance of the staff composition with legal requirements;

100.2. data on the teaching staff turnover;

100.3. data on the participation of the teaching staff in scientific conferences, workshops, exchange programmes, long-term visits, etc.

100.4. methods of professional (educational, scientific, practical) development of the staff;

100.5. professional development areas and statistics of participation;

- 100.6. age profile of the academic staff;
- 100.7. workload of the academic staff (in the provision of the programme under evaluation and other programmes; time allocated for research and/or other (professional) activities, etc.).
- 101. In evaluating facilities and learning resources it is necessary to ascertain that the learning materials, equipment and facilities are adequate to ensure a successful provision of the study programme.
- 102. Evaluation of this area should include:
  - 102.1. data on the facilities used for the delivery of the programme and their capacity;
  - 102.2. data on the equipment used for the delivery of the programme;
  - 102.3. data on the facilities used for students' practice;
  - 102.4. data on the teaching/learning materials available at the institution's library, reading rooms and subject rooms; access to e-publications, etc.
- 103. It is also recommended to include and/or analyse information on the updating and upgrading of the learning resources.
- 104. Analysis of the study process and students' performance assessment should seek to evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of such processes as student admission and selection, organisation of studies, student support and the employment success of graduates.
- 105. Evaluation of the study process and students' performance assessment should include the analysis of:
  - 105.1. admission requirements;
  - 105.2. average cut-off marks;
  - 105.3. student retention ratio;
  - 105.4. extent and forms of student participation in research, art and applied research activities;
  - 105.5. forms of student support;
  - 105.6. principles of student performance assessment;
  - 105.7. list of the bachelor's and master's final thesis for the past two years with the indication of the subject, supervisor and assessment of the project.
- 106. It is also recommended that the evaluation of the study process and students' performance assessment includes:
  - 106.1. data on admission to the study programme:
    - 106.1.1. the number of applications for admission;
    - 106.1.2. the number of admissions;
    - 106.1.3. the highest and lowest admission marks;
  - 106.2. data on the students' progress (examination marks) by linking this information to admission marks and attrition (drop-out) rates;
  - 106.3. data on attrition rates (by each year);
  - 106.4. causes for attrition;
  - 106.5. proportion of students' time allocated to contact hours, practice and independent work;
  - 106.6. number of students participating in mobility programmes (by indicating the number of outgoing and incoming exchange students pursuing studies under the programme);
  - 106.7. statistical data on students completing their studies and the need for specialists trained under the study programme (reference to the source of information on the need for specialists must be provided);
  - 106.8. data on the time needed for specialists fresh from a higher education institution to find permanent employment in the labour market;
  - 106.9. data on the employment of graduates who obtained qualifications under the evaluated study programme (employment (any) and employment according to the specialist qualifications) (including those who were in employment before leaving higher education);

- 106.10. methods and strategies applied to tackle the problem of plagiarism and cheating;
- 106.11. opportunities for selecting optional subjects and/or modules according to need.
- 107. In evaluating the programme management, it is necessary to ascertain that the programme is properly administered and the internal quality assurance of the programme is effective and transparent.
- 108. Analysis of programme management shall involve the following:
  - 108.1. programme management and decision-taking procedures;
  - 108.2. ways (means) to ensure the quality of the programme;
  - 108.3. summary of the latest evaluation of the programme (if any) (up to two pages; could be provided as an annex to the self-evaluation report).
- 109. It is recommended that the programme management analysis also includes the analysis of:
  - 109.1. documents defining the responsibilities of the programme providers;
  - 109.2. opinion of the programme's administrative and teaching staff on the distribution of responsibilities;
  - 109.3. documents regulating internal quality assurance within the higher education institution;
  - 109.4. data on information accumulation and analysis for the past 5 years. Where the programme has been provided for a shorter period than that, the report should present data on the entire period of its existence;
  - 109.5. data on the involvement of stakeholders in the process of programme evaluation and improvement and their impact on the improvement of the programme;
  - 109.6. ways of making the process and outcomes of programme evaluation and improvement accessible to the institution's (faculty's) community and social partners and the impact of such publicity;
  - 109.7. feedback from the teaching staff, students, alumni and employers on the provision of the programme;
  - 109.8. sources of information on the quality of studies;
  - 109.9. most important changes triggered by the latest evaluation outcomes.

## IV EXTERNAL EVALUATION

### I. EXPERT TEAM WORK

110. The general principles of expert team formation and work shall be defined by this Methodology and the Procedure for Expert Selection.

111. In setting up an expert team, the Centre shall adhere to the principles of objectivity transparency, impartiality and reasonableness.

112. All the members of the expert team shall complete and sign a Declaration on the Expert's Interests and a pledge not make the information obtained during the evaluation publicly available.

113. Expert team members shall be guided by the principles of objectivity, impartiality, respect for the participants of the evaluation process, confidentiality and cooperation.

114. Objectivity principle. An expert shall be fair in his/her efforts to achieve the aims of the evaluation and to evaluate the study programme objectively. While expressing his/her opinion, formulating conclusions or taking decisions, an expert shall draw on precise facts and information and his/her own competence.

115. Impartiality principle. In evaluating a study programme, an expert shall act as an independent person, shall not represent any institution or any interests and shall rely on his/her own competence.

116. The principle of respect for the participants of the evaluation. During an evaluation, an expert shall act with good grace, as a professional, shall not abuse his/her functions of an expert and shall not use any financial, psychological or any other pressure. An expert shall treat the participants of the evaluation as persons capable of taking responsibility for their actions therefore, when referring to the strengths and weaknesses of the study programme, an expert shall refrain from advice on what, in his opinion, could lead to the best solutions.

117. Confidentiality principle. All the information relating to the evaluation (issues considered at meetings, opinions offered by other participants of the evaluation, the self-evaluation report and documents provided for evaluation) shall be used strictly for the purposes of the evaluation and may not be divulged for any other purpose.

118. Cooperation principle. As a member of the external evaluation team, an expert shall seek common aims with the other members of the team and shall carry out his/her assignments in a timely manner. In his/her relations with the higher education institution, an expert shall make every effort to help the institution enhance its culture of quality and shall seek to develop mutual understanding.

119. The work of the expert team shall be organised by the leader of the team, who shall chair the meetings of the team, set tasks for the team members and bear the general responsibility for the team's work. During the visit, the team leader shall chair meetings with target groups or appoint another member of the team to chair such meetings.

120. The expert team shall receive the self-evaluation report from the Centre. The Centre shall introduce the expert team to the Methodology and the main legal acts governing studies and their evaluation.

121. In their analysis of the self-evaluation report, the experts shall be guided by the criteria defined in this Methodology and other legal acts governing quality evaluation in higher education. Based on their analysis of the self-evaluation report, the experts shall produce a preliminary report and determine areas and questions to be concentrated upon during the visit.

122. The visit shall be organised by the evaluation coordinator appointed by the Centre, who will coordinate the schedule of the visit with the higher education institution and the expert team.

123. During the visit, the expert team shall meet target groups such as the administration of the higher education institution and its units, the self-evaluation group, providers of the programme, students, alumni and their employers. The expert team shall also see the premises and equipment used

for the implementation of the programme, students' term and final thesis, examination materials and other documents.

124. The aim of the visit is to collect as much information on the programme as possible so as to enable the experts to produce a comprehensive and objective evaluation of the programme.

125. At the end of the visit, the expert team shall discuss the outcomes of the visit among themselves and present their opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme to the institution's community.

## II. EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

126. The expert team shall evaluate the programme according to the areas and criteria defined in this Methodology.

127. After evaluating each area according to the established evaluation criteria, the experts shall identify the strengths and weaknesses of each area and evaluate the institution's efforts to enhance the quality of the programme.

128. In evaluating the programme aims and learning outcomes, the experts shall determine the need for the programme and the validity and suitability of its aims and learning outcomes.

129. In evaluating the curriculum design, the experts shall express their opinion on the study plan and its content.

130. In evaluating the teaching staff, the experts shall evaluate the competence and adequacy of the teaching staff for the successful provision of the programme.

131. In evaluating facilities and learning resources, the experts shall determine the suitability and adequacy of the facilities, equipment and teaching materials for the successful provision of the programme.

132. In evaluating the study process and students' performance assessment, the experts shall determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the admission requirements and selection procedures, assessment of the students' performance, organisation of the studies and student support and the success of the graduates in finding employment in general and in their specialist areas.

133. In evaluating the programme management area, the experts shall establish the adequacy, effectiveness and transparency of the programme management and the internal assurance of the programme quality.

134. All the evaluation areas shall be evaluated according to the grading scale presented in the Evaluation and Accreditation Procedure.

## V. APPEALS PROCEDURE

135. In case it objects to the Centre's decision on evaluation, the higher education institution may lodge a motivated appeal with the Centre within 20 days of the dispatch of the decision.

136. The appeal shall be dealt with within 60 days of its receipt by the Study Programmes' Appeals Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Appeals Committee) on acting according to its regulations approved by the Centre Director's order. The Centre shall notify the higher education institution of the Appeals Committee decision by letter.

## PROCEDURE OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

24 July 2009 No ISAK-1652

Vilnius

**As amended on 05.11.2009; 17.12.2009; 30.09.2010**

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes (hereinafter referred to as 'the Procedure') shall govern the aims, principles and procedures of the external evaluation and accreditation of study programmes provided or to be provided in the Republic of Lithuania, also the procedures of the external evaluation of programmes provided by branches of foreign higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as 'branches') in the Republic of Lithuania.
2. This Procedure has been produced in accordance with the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (*Official Gazette*, 2009, No 54-2140) and *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.
3. For the purposes of this Procedure:  
**External evaluation of a study programme** shall mean an analysis of the quality of a study programme and its provision in the national and international context and recommendations for its improvement.  
**Accreditation of a study programme** shall mean granting recognition that the study programme meets legal requirements. Accreditation is to be conducted according to the procedure for approving the external evaluation and/or confirming the programme's conformity to the general and special requirements for the study programme (in the relevant study field, group of study fields or the relevant study area; if there are no approved descriptions of the relevant study field, group of study fields or study area, the study programme must conform to the special requirements set in the regulations of study fields (hereinafter referred to as 'the requirements for study programmes')).
4. The purposes of the external evaluation of a study programme shall be the following:
  - 4.1. to facilitate the improvement of the study programme and to create a culture of study programme quality assurance;
  - 4.2. to ascertain how the quality of the study programme provision meets the relevant legal requirements (not applicable to branches), the provisions of the European Higher Education Area and the commitments of the higher education institution or the branch.
5. The purpose of the study programme accreditation shall be to ascertain that the study programme meets the relevant legal requirements.
6. The external evaluation of study programmes in higher education shall be conducted by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Centre') or another agency for quality evaluation in higher education which is on the list of the European Register of agencies for quality evaluation in higher education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Agency').
7. After their evaluation by the Board of the Centre and by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Centre shall approve and publish the methodology for study programme self-evaluation, the criteria for



the external evaluation and the procedure for the expert selection and external evaluation. In accordance with the contract signed with a higher education institution, the Agency shall perform external evaluation in line with the criteria and procedures of external evaluation established and published by the Agency.

## **II. ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

8. A higher education institution may provide only accredited study programmes. Study programmes shall be subject to accreditation at least once in 6 years. In case a shorter accreditation period is applicable to a study programme according to the Procedure, it shall be subject to accreditation by the end of that period.
9. New study programmes shall be accredited for three years. Study programmes currently operating shall be accredited for 6 or 3 years.
10. The decision on the accreditation of study programmes shall be taken by the accreditation institution authorised by the Ministry of Education and Science (hereinafter referred to as 'the authorised accreditation body'). The authorised accreditation body shall take one of the decisions defined in Points 21 and 26 of the Procedure.
11. Decisions defined in Points 21.2, 26.2 or 26.3 of the Procedure, must be motivated by the authorised accreditation body.
12. The accreditation of a study programme shall become effective as of the date of the authorised accreditation body's decision or as of the start of the accreditation period specified in the higher education institution's application for accreditation (in cases where the decision is taken prior to the start of the accreditation period requested).
13. A study programme accredited for a definite accreditation period shall be registered with the Register of Study Programmes. After taking a decision on the accreditation of a study programme, the authorised accreditation body shall send the manager of the Study Programme Register data necessary for the registration of the programme within 3 working days of the decision date.
14. If a study programme is not accredited within the set period or if the authorised accreditation body takes a decision not to accredit the study programme, the study programme shall be removed from the list of registered study programmes. If the authorised accreditation body takes a decision not to accredit a study programme, it shall send the relevant data to the manager of the study programme register within 3 working days of the effective date of the decision.
15. If there are students who have not completed studies under the deregistered study programme, the further course of their studies shall be determined by the Minister for Education and Science. The higher education institution shall provide the Ministry of Education and Science with information on the number of students who have not completed studies under the deregistered study programme and suggestions for the further course of their studies within two months of the programme's deregistration date.
16. The authorised accreditation body shall notify the parties concerned of all its decisions and shall also make them publicly available.

## **III. ACCREDITATION OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES**

17. A new study programme of an accredited institution of higher education shall be accredited without an external evaluation. The authorised accreditation body shall take a decision on the accreditation of a new programme after assessing the conformity of the programme's description to the requirements for study programmes. A new study programme of a higher education institution which has not been granted accreditation shall be accredited only after its external evaluation. In such a case, the authorised accreditation body shall take a decision on the accreditation of a new study programme on the basis of the judgement of the external evaluation.
18. A new study programme presented for accreditation must be significantly different (by at least 40% of the elements specified in the descriptions of the study field, group of study fields or study area (if there are no approved descriptions of the relevant study field, group of study fields or study area, the study programme must meet the special requirements defined in the regulations of study fields)) in at least one of its most important components (curriculum design, teaching staff, facilities and learning resources) from the study programme in the same study field which received a negative evaluation and was not accredited or was not presented for accreditation at all in the period of 3 years prior to the application for accreditation of the new study programme. A new study programme significantly similar to the study programme which received a negative evaluation and was not accredited or was not presented for accreditation at all may be accredited only after it has been subjected to an external evaluation.
19. Before introducing a new study programme, the higher education institution shall submit to the authorised accreditation body the following:
  - 19.1. an accreditation application including the desirable start date of the accreditation period;
  - 19.2. a description of the new study programme;
  - 19.3. the judgement of the external evaluation of the study programme performed no more than two years before the start of the desirable accreditation period.
20. Within 45 days of the receipt of the documents referred to in Point 19, the authorised accreditation body shall establish compliance of the study programme description and take one of the decisions referred to in Point 21.
21. The authorised accreditation body shall take one of the following decisions on the new programme:
  - 21.1. to accredit the study programme for 3 years;
  - 21.2. not to accredit the study programme.
22. A decision not to accredit the study programme taken by the authorised accreditation body shall not preclude the higher education institution from applying again for the accreditation of the programme after it has eliminated all the irregularities of the programme. If, within 3 months of the date of the decision referred to in Point 21.2, the higher education institution eliminates all the irregularities in the programme, submits an application referred to in Point 19.1 and a corrected description of the new programme, the authorised accreditation body shall take one of the decisions referred to in Point 21 within 15 days of the application receipt.

#### **IV. ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES CURRENTLY OPERATING**

23. The authorised accreditation body shall take a decision on the accreditation of a study programme which has already been provided on the basis of the judgement of its external evaluation.
24. Six months before the end of the programme's accreditation period and by 1 September at the latest, the higher education institution shall submit to the authorised accreditation body the following;

- 24.1. an application for the accreditation of the programme by indicating the desirable start date of the accreditation period;
- 24.2. the external evaluation report issued no more than two years earlier; in case the provision of the programme is to be terminated, i.e. new students will not be admitted to study according to the programme, and the accreditation period ends before the last student class completes studies according to the programme, the accreditation period may be extended without an external evaluation.
25. Within 45 days of the receipt of the documents referred to in Point 24, the authorised accreditation body shall take a decision on the accreditation of the programme. If the external review is to be conducted by the authorised accreditation body, the application referred to in Point 24.1 may be submitted together with the application for external review. In such a case, the higher education institution shall not be obliged to submit the documents referred to in Point 24.2.
26. The authorised accreditation body shall take one of the following decision on programmes to be continued:
  - 26.1. to accredit the study programme for 6 years;
  - 26.2. to accredit the study programme for 3 years;
  - 26.3. not to accredit the study programme.
27. The decision of the authorised accreditation body referred to in Point 26.3 shall become effective at the end of the current term or on the date when the last student class completes the studies under the programme. In this case, a commission shall be set up by the Minister for Education and Science to produce proposals to the Minister regarding further opportunities for studies.
28. The authorised accreditation body shall take its decisions on the basis of external evaluation report:
  - 28.1. it shall take the decision referred to in Point 26.1 if the evaluation score in the external evaluation report is no less than 18 and not a single area has been evaluated as 'negative' or 'satisfactory' (in accordance with the evaluation areas defined in Annex 1 to the Procedure and the grading scale presented in Annex 2 to the Procedure) and the study programme is in compliance with the requirements for study programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Science;
  - 28.2. it shall take the decision referred to in Point 26.1 if the evaluation score in the external evaluation report is no less than 12 and not a single area has been evaluated as 'negative' (in accordance with the evaluation areas defined in Annex 1 to the Procedure and the grading scale presented in Annex 2 to the Procedure) and the study programme is in compliance with the requirements for study programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Science;
  - 28.3. it shall take the decision referred to in Point 26.3 if the evaluation score in the external evaluation report is less than 12 and at least one area has been evaluated as 'negative' (in accordance with the evaluation areas and the grading scale defined in Annexes 1 and 2 to the Procedure) or the study programme is not in compliance with the requirements for study programmes approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

## **V. EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES**

29. External evaluation shall be required for accredited study programmes to be continued.
30. External evaluation of study programmes shall be conducted in the following stages:
  - 30.1. self-evaluation performed by the higher education institution providing or intending to provide the study programme;
  - 30.2. visit of the expert team at the higher education institution providing or intending to provide the study programme;

- 30.3. production and publication of the external evaluation report;
- 30.4. follow-up activities to assess the measures taken according to the external evaluation recommendations.
31. A higher education institution or branch shall apply to the Centre or the Agency for external evaluation according to the procedures set by the Centre or the Agency and shall notify the authorised accreditation body accordingly.
32. The higher education institution shall create conditions for the external evaluation of its study programmes:
  - 32.1. it shall receive the experts appointed by the Centre or the Agency and organise their meetings with target groups;
  - 32.2. if necessary, it shall provide additional information and documents.
33. The Centre or the Agency shall take the responsibility for the outcomes of the external evaluation presented in the external evaluation report.
34. A study programme shall be evaluated positively if it meets the requirements of Point 28.2 of the Procedure.
35. Within 10 days of the receipt of the evaluation results from the Centre or the Agency, the higher education institution or the branch shall make the outcome of the external evaluation of the study programme publicly available by posting it on its website or by other means.

## **VI. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

36. The higher education institution or the branch shall have a right to lodge an appeal with the Centre or the Agency against the external evaluation report. The appeals shall be dealt with according to the procedure established by the Centre or the Agency.
37. The appeals procedure according to Point 36 shall not affect the right of the higher education institution to dispute the external evaluation report in court.

## **VII. FINAL PROVISIONS**

38. By 31 August 2009, the authorised accreditation body shall grant accreditation to study programmes evaluated, fully accredited and registered with the Register of Study and Training Programmes before the effective date of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania for the accreditation period ending:
  - 38.1. on 31 December 2011 – study programmes accredited by the Education Minister's orders of 2002;
  - 38.2. on 31 December 2012 – study programmes accredited by the Education Minister's orders of 2003 and 2004;
  - 38.3. on 31 December 2013 – study programmes accredited by the Education Minister's orders of 2005 and 2006;
  - 38.4. on 31 December 2014 – study programmes accredited by the Education Minister's orders of 2007 and 2008;
  - 38.5. on 17 August 2015 – study programmes accredited by the Education Minister's orders of 2009.
39. By 31 August 2009, the authorised accreditation body shall grant accreditation to study programmes evaluated, conditionally accredited and registered with the Register of Study and Training Programmes before the effective date of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania for the accreditation period ending on 31 December 2012 at the latest.

40. By 31 August 2009, the authorised accreditation body shall grant accreditation to study programmes which have not been externally evaluated but registered with the Register of Study and Training Programmes before the effective date of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania for the accreditation period ending on 15 July 2011; such study programmes shall be reviewed by 31 December 2010.
41. By 31 August 2009, the authorised accreditation body shall grant accreditation to study programmes that have not been accredited but registered with the Register of Study and Training Programmes before the effective date of the Law on Science and Studies for an accreditation period of no less than three years.

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Annex 1 to  
The Procedure of the External Review and  
Accreditation of Study Programmes

### EVALUATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

No	Evaluation area	Evaluation of the area, points
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	
2	Curriculum design	
3	Teaching staff	
4	Facilities and learning resources (facilities, equipment, learning materials)	
5	Study process and students' performance assessment (student selection, performance assessment, support)	
6	Programme management (administration of the programme, internal quality assurance)	
	<b>Total:</b>	Maximum score: 24

Annex 2 to  
The Procedure of the External Review and  
Accreditation of Study Programmes

**EVALUATION SCALE**

Level/ Score	Evaluation	Description
1	Unsatisfactory	There are essential irregularities to be eliminated
2	Satisfactory	Meets the minimum requirements, requires improvement
3	Good	The area is systemically developed and possesses original features
4	Very good	The area is exceptionally good