

## **EXPERTS SELECTION PROCEDURE**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) shall regulate the principles and process for selection of Lithuanian and foreign experts to be invited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the Centre) to perform institutional review, to evaluate the new study programmes, the study fields, the applications of higher education institutions and branches to obtain authorisation to conduct studies and related activities, to submit proposals and/or recommendations, opinions, conclusions on qualifications related to higher education and acquired under educational programmes of foreign states and international organisations (hereinafter referred to as the Foreign Qualifications), academic recognition and/or establishment of grades transfer and comparison of subjects, and other issues related to creation of the conditions for free mobility of persons, as well as to develop and evaluate the analytical or other studies, insights, research, methodological advice, reviews, training programmes, draft legal acts and similar and to perform other activities pertaining to the functions of the Centre or delegated to it.

### **CHAPTER 2 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORY OF EXPERTS**

2. The Centre shall select experts on the basis of the directory of experts that is consistently updated and revised in the electronic information system of the Centre (hereinafter referred to as the Directory).

3. The Directory shall be compiled in observance of public information and proposals that may be made by:

3.1. higher education and research institutions, the Research Council of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the Lithuanian Students Union, students' representations of higher education institutions and the European Students' Union;

3.2. professional and creative associations and organisations;

3.3. ministries and other state institutions or bodies;

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

3.5. other Lithuanian and foreign expert institutions;

3.6. researchers, experts experienced in evaluation;

3.7. persons wishing to be included in the Directory.

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

5. When entering persons into the Directory, their competence, objectivity, integrity, innovation, responsibility and/or the provided recommendations shall be taken into account.

6. Experts, with the exception of students' representatives and social partners, must meet at least one of the following requirements:

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

6.2. they must be familiar with the legal regulation, problems of Lithuanian education and studies and/or with the characteristics of one of the study or research field(s) abroad;

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

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

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

6.6. have experience in carrying out, administration or management of the assessment and/or recognition of acquired foreign qualifications and the establishment of grades transfer or comparison of subjects;

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

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

7. Students' representatives shall be selected to the Directory of experts from the students' representations of the national higher education institutions, from the list of persons delegated by the Lithuanian Union/Unions of Student Representations, and/or the European Students' Union, other organisations representing students' interests or from the persons proposed by experts or teachers of higher education institutions. Their performance results have to be good, they must be interested in the quality assurance of higher education and be students not lower than the second year of the first cycle studies or of integrated study programmes, or the second, third cycle or non-degree programmes, or graduates of any cycle or non-degree study programme who have graduated not later than one year before they are called to participate in the review.

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

9. The decision regarding the inclusion of an expert to the Directory shall be adopted by the Standing Commission on Evaluation of Suitability of Experts formed by the order of the Director of the Centre.

### **CHAPTER III GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF EXPERTS**

10. Experts to perform a particular task shall be selected from the Directory under the procedure established in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Public Procurement, the Procedure for Small-Value Public Procurement approved by the order of the Director of the Public Procurement Office and the Rules of Organisation of Small-Value Public Procurement in the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education approved by the order of the Director of the Centre.

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

12. The Centre, having regard to the task content, its complexity or any other relevant circumstances and acting pursuant to the provisions established herein, shall decide how many experts have to be selected to every expert team to complete the task.

13. Proposals regarding the composition of the expert team to complete a specific task shall be submitted and considered under the procedure established in the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Commission on Evaluation of Suitability of Experts. Experts for the consideration of the Standing Commission on Evaluation of Suitability of Experts shall be nominated by a civil servant or an employee of the Centre, who has been delegated to organise the evaluation by offering at least 3 candidates for each position, except for the cases when there are no objective possibilities to offer the specified number of candidates.

14. During the selection of experts to perform a particular task in Lithuania, the following persons shall not be invited:

14.1. acting heads (rectors, directors) of higher education institutions and their deputies (vice-rectors);

14.2. politicians, civil servants of political (personal) confidence, members of municipal councils;

14.3. members of the Board, employees and civil servants of the Centre;

14.4. Employees and civil servants of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, except for cases when the object of assessment is related to teacher training;

14.5. lobbyists registered in Lithuania.

15. The Centre shall inform the higher education institution or a branch via email of the composition of the expert team formed to perform the task under the terms and conditions defined in the particular evaluation methodologies approved by the orders of the Director of the Centre. The higher education institution or a branch may reasonably request to replace (a) member(s) of the prospective expert team within the established time limits as of the receipt of the notification of its intended composition.

16. The Centre shall consider the submitted comments regarding the composition of the expert team within the standing commission set up by the order of the Director of the Centre, and shall inform the higher education institution of its decision. If the higher education institution has not submitted a reasoned request to change the composition of the expert team within the time limits specified in the methodology of a particular evaluation, the higher education institution shall be deemed to have approved the composition of the expert team.

## **CHAPTER IV SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTION OF EXPERTS**

### **FIRST SECTION SELECTION OF EXPERTS FOR EVALUATION OF NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES AND STUDY FIELDS**

17. To evaluate the studies, the expert team shall consist of at least three experts.

18. To conduct an additional evaluation of studies, only one expert may be selected.

19. If the expert team consists of four experts, the selection of more than two persons working in the same institution is not allowed. If the expert team consists of three experts, all of them must come from different institutions. At least half of the experts in the expert team should be from higher education and research institutions.

20. Experts-academicians included into the expert team must teach subjects in the field under assessment and/or related fields and perform active scientific activities in this field and/or related fields.

21. The expert team may include a social partner.

22. The expert team evaluating studies must include at least one student.

23. Experts for evaluation of studies shall be selected from Lithuania and/or abroad.

### **SECOND SECTION SELECTION OF EXPERTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW**

24. The expert team shall consist of not less than four experts.

25. The expert team shall consist of experts from different institutions and/or having no work and other connections with higher education institutions and their academic units under review.

26. At least two experts shall have working experience in higher education and research institutions and/or the quality evaluation of higher education.

27. The expert team shall include:

27.1. at least one social partner;

27.2. at least one member experienced in higher education administration and management;

27.3. at least one student.

28. Performing an institutional review of a higher education institution in exile, the expert team shall include at least one specialist in the field of political sciences or human rights.

### **THIRD SECTION**

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

29. The expert team shall consist of at least three experts.

30. The expert team to perform the planned study evaluation shall be composed under the procedure established in the First Section herein.

31. If the expert team consists of four or more experts, the selection of more than two persons working in the same institution is not allowed. If the expert team consists of three experts, all of them must come from different institutions.

32. The expert team shall include:

32.1. at least one member experienced in the area of higher education management;

32.2. at least one member proficient in the study or education field to which at least one new study programme is related;

32.3. at least one member who is an expert in law, management, finance or economics.

33. The expert group may include one student.

### **FORTH SECTION**

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

34. The expert team shall consist of at least three experts.

35. At least half of the expert team members must have experience in creation and/or delivery or administration and expert evaluation of the secondary education programmes and/or the performance assessment system (in case of secondary education qualifications) or a certain type, field and cycle of study programmes (in case of higher education qualifications).

36. If the expert team consists of more than three experts, the selection of more than two persons working in the same institution is not allowed. If the expert team consists of three experts, all of them must come from different institutions.

### **CHAPTER V**

#### **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND COMMITMENT NOT TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION**

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

38. A conflict of interests may be considered if:

38.1. the expert or someone among the expert's relatives (spouse, cohabiting partner, the partner where partnership is registered in the manner established by laws as well as their parents (adoptive parents), children (adopted children), brothers (step brothers), sisters (step sisters), grandparents, grandchildren and their spouses, cohabitants or partners (hereinafter referred to as relatives) during the last 5 years worked in the institution under review or in the institution where the issues of qualifications are being considered;

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

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

38.4. the expert or someone among the expert's relatives during the last 2 years participated in the institution's he/she works for joint project or another joint activity with the institution under review or the institution, the issues of qualifications of which are being examined;

38.5. other circumstances which are not specified herein and are related to the expert or his/her relatives and which may hinder the expert's impartiality (i.e., he/she has expressed publicly a negative attitude towards the institution under review or the institution the issues of qualifications of which are being examined; in the event of a conflict has terminated the employment relationship with the institution under review or the institution the issues of qualifications of which are being examined or similar).

39. If the expert declares a potential conflict of interests in the Declaration, the Centre shall consider the circumstances specified in the Declaration within the Standing Commission on Evaluation of Suitability of Experts and shall take one of the following decisions:

39.1. to remove the expert and replace him/her with another expert;

39.2. to remove the expert from carrying out the part of the task regarding which the expert has declared a potential conflict of interests, retaining the possibility to participate in the part of the task as an observer;

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

40. If it turns out that the expert has incompletely declared his/her interests or in the event of emergence of new circumstances which may lead to a conflict of interests, the expert shall immediately, not later than within 5 working days of the emergence of these circumstances, inform the Centre thereof and abstain from further evaluation. In the event the expert has not abstained from further evaluation, the Centre shall adopt one of the decisions specified in Item 38 herein.

41. Experts who do not comply with the requirements of the task, with the principles of good behaviour and ethics, and whose action or inaction discredits the Centre shall be excluded from the evaluation and their agreements on public procurement services against remuneration concluded with the Centre shall be terminated.

42. In the event of circumstances described in Items 38, 39 and 40 herein, the experts may participate in other calls for experts only under the decision of the Centre, and these circumstances shall be indicated in the Directory.

## **CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS**

43. In other cases not specified herein the Centre shall select experts having regard to the complexity of the task, its implementation time and determining the required qualifications of education, research (artistic), pedagogical or other professional experience. In some cases, only one expert may be invited to perform the evaluation.

44. If the expert is unable to fulfil functions of the member of the expert team due to relevant reasons, the Centre shall select another expert to replace him/her or his/her functions shall be taken over by other members of the expert team as specified in Chapter III herein.