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APPROVED BY
Order No. V- 32 of
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the Centre for Quality Assessment
in Higher Education

METHODOLOGY FOR CONDUCTING INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Methodology for Conducting Institutional Review of a Higher Education Institution (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Methodology’) shall regulate the requirements to be followed in producing a self-evaluation report (hereinafter referred to as ‘the self-evaluation report’) of a higher education institution or a branch of a foreign higher education institution except for higher education institutions in exile (hereinafter referred to as ‘the higher education institution’), the principles and criteria for the external review of higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as ‘the external evaluation’) organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Centre’), the process of the external review, the adoption of decisions on external evaluation and accreditation, and follow-up activities.

2. The Methodology has been developed in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Law’), the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Branches of Foreign Higher Education Institutions, Evaluation Areas and Indicators approved by Order No. V-1529 of 19 December 2019 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Procedure’), and the provisions and guidelines for quality assurance in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and other legal acts governing the operation and external evaluation of higher education institutions.

3. For the purposes of the Methodology, the definitions set out below shall have the following meanings:

3.1. **Stakeholders** shall mean persons, groups of persons or organisations concerned with the performance results of a higher education institution 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, graduates, employers, representatives of professional associations, public institutions, trade unions, etc.).

3.2. **Social Partners** shall mean representatives of employers, professional associations or similar organisations who cooperate with the higher education institution and are interested in the performance results of the higher education institution.

3.3. **Evaluation Coordinator** shall mean a civil servant or employee of the Centre responsible for the organisation of the external review of a specific higher education institution.

3.4. **Self-Evaluation Report** shall mean an analytical document that demonstrates the ability of the higher education institution to critically evaluate its performance and to provide a prospect for its improvement.

4. Other definitions used in the Methodology shall correspond to those defined in the Law, the Procedure and other legal acts establishing requirements for the activities and / or external review of higher education institutions.

CHAPTER II

PREPARATION OF A SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

5. A higher education institution shall carry out a self-evaluation under its own procedure (involving students) and shall prepare a Self-Evaluation Report in accordance with the requirements set out in the Procedure and the Methodology.

6. The Centre shall advise the higher education institution on the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report.

7. The Self-Evaluation Report shall demonstrate the analysis of the main activities of the higher education institution and the prospects for their improvement. The statements in the Self-Evaluation Report must be based on factual data and documents.

8. The Self-Evaluation Report must provide information necessary for the implementation of the external review.

9. The Self-Evaluation Report shall provide data for the last 5 years. Where there is a repeated external review organised, the Self-Evaluation Report shall analyse the data for the last 2 years. If the higher education institution operates for a shorter period of time, the data of the entire higher education institution's activity period shall be analysed.

10. The Self-Evaluation Report with annexes and the request of the higher education institution to evaluate and accredit the activities of the higher education institution shall be submitted only in a digital form to the Centre at ivs@skvc.lt or through the system "E-Pristatymas". These documents shall be submitted to the Centre signed by a qualified electronic signature.

11. The general part of the Self-Evaluation Report should be in docx or pdf format. The Self-Evaluation Report shall be submitted in Lithuanian and English.

12. The Self-Evaluation Report shall have the following parts: the introduction, analysis of the performance of the higher education institution according to the evaluation areas and indicators, and annexes.

13. The introduction of the Self-Evaluation Report shall provide basic and concise information about the higher education institution.

14. The analysis part of the Self-Evaluation Report shall identify and analyse all the evaluation areas and indicators set out in Annex 1 of the Procedure, presenting factual data and their analysis according to the criteria provided in Annex 1 of the Methodology. At the end of each evaluation area the strengths and aspects for improvement shall be listed.

15. The following annexes shall be attached to the Self-Evaluation Report:

15.1. a scheme of the institution's structure;

15.2. a strategic plan;

15.3. the Statute (statutes, regulations);

15.4. a summary of the institution's activity report for the last year;

15.5. the income and expenses for the last 3 years;

15.6. a quality manual or any other document regulating the quality assurance system;

15.7. a list of the most significant research, projects and other activities related to regional development;

15.8. an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (if not included in Self-Evaluation Report or another annex).

16. The Centre shall assess whether the Self-Evaluation Report provided by the higher education institution has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the

Methodology and shall, within 5 working days as of receipt of the Self-Evaluation Report, inform the higher education institution about the necessary amendments.

17. The higher education institution shall, within 15 working days as of receipt of the information about then non-compliances, submit a revised Self-Evaluation Report to the Centre.

18. The higher education institution may provide information on major changes in the higher education institution following the submission of the Self-Evaluation Report to the Centre at the latest 1 month prior to the visit at the higher education institution.

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

19. The external review shall be based on the following principles:

19.1. quality of performance and its assurance shall be the responsibility of the higher education institution;

19.2. the autonomy and identity of the higher education institution shall be recognized and respected;

19.3. stakeholders of the higher education institution shall be involved in the external review process.

20. The external review shall encompass the activities of the higher education institution in accordance with the evaluation areas and indicators set out in Annex 1 of the Procedure and the criteria set out in Annex 1 of the Methodology, and shall analyse and evaluate the links and coherence with the information provided.

CHAPTER IV

PROCESS OF EXTERNAL REVIEW

21. The Centre shall conduct the external review in accordance with the plan of external review of higher education institutions approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. The Centre shall announce the terms for submission of the Self-Evaluation Report to the Centre on its website.

22. The external review at the Centre shall commence only upon receipt of the higher education institution's Self-Evaluation Report together with the application for evaluation and accreditation of the higher education institution.

23. The Centre shall organise the external review with the assistance of experts. The experts for the external review shall be selected and the expert panel shall be formed in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Experts Selection Procedure approved by the Director of the Centre.

24. The principles and procedure for the organisation of the experts' work shall be set out in the Procedure of Organisation of Experts' Work approved by the Director of the Centre.

25. The Centre shall inform the higher education institution of the intended composition of the expert panel at least 2 months before the start of the visit at the higher education institution. Within 5 working days as of receipt of the notification of the composition of the expert panel, the higher education institution may reasonably propose to replace (a) member (s) of the planned expert panel. The Centre shall consider any comments it has received concerning the composition of the expert panel within the Standing Commission for Examining Requests of Higher Education Institutions to Replace Experts, 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 request to change the composition of the expert panel within the time limit specified in this

paragraph, the higher education institution shall be deemed to have approved the composition of the expert panel.

26. The Centre shall provide the experts with the Self-Evaluation Report at least one month before the visit at the higher education institution. Together with the Self-Evaluation Report, the Centre shall provide the experts with the results of the latest comparative expert assessment of research and development activities and / or annual formal evaluation of research and experimental development activities and art activities for 3 years, the results of the evaluation of the ongoing study fields, the conclusions of the previous external review and the data about the progress and results of the implementation of the recommendations, the annual number of students by study fields and cycles during the evaluation period, the number of teachers, research and administrative staff, positions occupied during the evaluation period and other information necessary for the review.

27. Where, for reasons beyond the Centre's control, part of the expert panel changes and it is objectively impossible to submit the information to the new members of the expert panel within the time limits provided for in paragraph 26, the information shall be provided immediately after the new experts are included into the expert panel.

28. The visit of the expert panel to the higher education institution shall be organised by the Evaluation Coordinator appointed by the Centre.

29. The visit shall last for 2 – 4 days. The duration of the visit shall be established by the Centre with regard to the size of the higher education institution and the scope of its activities.

30. The visit shall follow the visit agenda established by the Centre in agreement with the experts and the higher education institution. Information about the upcoming visit shall also be forwarded to the students' representation of the higher education institution. The higher education institution shall announce the date and agenda of the visit on its website.

31. During the visit, the higher education institution shall provide suitable premises and equipment for the meetings and the work of the expert panel.

32. The higher education institution, as far as possible, shall provide a possibility for all interested community members to meet the expert panel.

33. Except in cases agreed in advance with the Evaluation Coordinator, one member of the higher education institution community may attend only one meeting with the expert panel.

34. During the visit, meetings are held with the administration of the higher education institution, the authors of the Self-Evaluation Report, the teaching staff, the researchers, the students, the graduates and social partners, and the infrastructure of the higher education institution is inspected. If necessary, the experts shall acquaint themselves with the additional documents submitted.

35. Persons studying and / or working at that higher education institution may not attend meetings with graduates and social partners.

36. Where the external review is performed by an international expert panel, the meetings usually take place in English. During the meetings, if necessary, the higher education institution shall provide quality independent interpretation services. The interpreter shall participate in student meetings only with the agreement of the Evaluation Coordinator.

Amendments to sub-paragraph:

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37. The expert panel shall prepare a draft of the external review report and submit it by email to the Centre usually not later than within 2 months after the end of the visit to the higher education institution. In the external review report, the expert panel shall present an analysis of the activities of the higher education institution according to each of the evaluation areas specified in paragraph 13 of the Procedure, the indicators and criteria specified in the Methodology and the summary evaluation according to the evaluation scale provided in paragraph 17 of the Procedure. The expert panel shall submit to the higher education institution proposals and recommendations for

performance improvement and a summary evaluation of the external review of the higher education institution. The Centre shall review the draft external review report and forward it to the higher education institution via email.

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38. Within 10 working days of the date of dispatch of the draft external review report, the higher education institution may submit comments to the Centre on factual errors in the draft external review report and the evaluations based thereon. Comments on factual errors and evaluations based thereon shall be in Lithuanian and English.

39. The Centre shall forward to the expert panel the higher education institution's comments on factual errors and evaluations based thereon within one working day.

40. Within 10 working days of the receipt of the comments, and if necessary, the experts who have analysed the comments of the higher education institution on the factual errors and the evaluations based thereon shall revise the draft report and submit it to Centre.

41. The draft external review report shall be considered by the Commission of Higher Education Institutions' Review (hereinafter referred to as the 'Commission') set up by the order of the Director of the Centre, which shall advise the Centre on the objectivity, completeness and validity of the external review report.

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42. Having examined the external review report and heard the arguments of the participants of the meeting, the Commission shall adopt one of the proposals provided for in the regulations of the Commission approved by the order of the Director of the Centre.

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43. Experts can also submit recommendations and observations to institutions that shape and implement science and studies policies.

CHAPTER V

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS ON EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION

44. The Centre shall decide on the external evaluation of the higher education institution in accordance with the external review report and taking into account the proposal of the Commission.

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45. The Centre shall send the decision on the evaluation of the higher education institution to the higher education institution and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as 'the Ministry') within 3 working days after the decision is adopted. Together with the decision, the Centre shall submit the final external review report together with a translation into Lithuanian to the higher education institution and the Ministry.

46. The Centre shall decide on the accreditation of a higher education institution in accordance with the procedure established in the Procedure. The Centre shall publicly announce the decision on the accreditation of a higher education institution in the Register of Legal Acts.

47. If the activities of a higher education institution are evaluated negatively and it is accredited for a term of 3 years, a new external review shall be initiated in accordance with the procedure established in paragraph 25 of the Procedure. The repeated external review shall be based on the new Self-Evaluation Report, which shall include a progress report on the measures

implemented and / or planned to be taken to remedy shortcomings identified during the self-evaluation and / or previous external review and to improve the operation of the higher education institution.

48. Under the procedure specified in the Procedure, the Centre and the higher education institution shall make publicly announce on their websites the decision regarding the external review of the higher education institution together with the external review report and the decision regarding the accreditation of the higher education institution.

CHAPTER VI FOLLOW-UP

49. Follow-up activities shall be the responsibility of the higher education institution.

50. Follow-up shall be carried out in the following stages:

50.1. provision of performance improvement measures. After the external review, the higher education institution shall provide means to eliminate the shortcomings identified during the self-evaluation and external review, and to improve the performance of the higher education institution. The higher education institution must announce these means not later than within 6 months as of the date of entry into force of the decision on the accreditation of the higher education institution and inform the Centre thereof.

50.2. implementation of planned means. The higher education institution shall implement the planned means for improvement of activities by preparing a progress report on implementation of external review recommendations (hereinafter referred to as 'the Progress Report'), announcing it on the website of the higher education institution and submitting it to the Centre. The Centre shall make the Progress Report publicly available on its website, together with the external review report. The example of a Progress Report is provided in Annex 2 to the Methodology:

50.2.1. In case during the external review at least one of the evaluation areas was assessed by the experts with 1 point, the higher education institution shall submit the Progress Report to the Centre within 1 year from the evaluation of the higher education institution's action plan by a commission set up by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, in accordance with the Procedure and comments on the adequacy of the action plan to reinforce performance measures;

50.2.2. In case during the external review at least two of the evaluation areas were assessed by the experts with 2 points, the higher education institution shall submit a Progress Report to the Centre within 2 years from the date on which the performance improvement measures were published;

50.2.3. In case during the external review at least one of the evaluation areas was assessed by the experts with 2 points and others with 3 points and/or higher score, the Higher Education Institution shall submit a Progress Report to the Centre within 3 years from the date on which the performance improvement measures were published;

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50.3. monitoring of the implementation of the measures envisaged – the Centre shall monitor the implementation of the measures to improve the performance of the action plan at least once during the established accreditation period of the higher education institution. Progress reports submitted to the Centre shall be considered by the Commission. The Commission shall provide the Centre with feedback to higher education institutions. Meetings between representatives of the Centre and the Higher Education Institution may be organized to discuss the Progress Report.

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51. The Centre shall inform the higher education institution and the Ministry of Education,

Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania about the results of the consideration of the Progress Report, the feedback and/or recommendations provided by the Commission.

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EVALUATION AREAS, INDICATORS AND CRITERIA

EVALUATION AREA	INDICATOR	CRITERIA
1. Management	1.1. Compliance of the higher education institution's strategic action plan with the mission, assurance of its implementation	<p>1.1.1. The strategic action plan is consistent with the mission of the higher education institution, legal acts regulating research and study activities and it takes into account the provisions of the national research and study policy, the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area</p> <p>1.1.2. The parts of the strategic action plan (analysis of the current situation, priorities and aims, objectives of the activities, implementation means, resources, planned performance indicators) are appropriate and justified</p> <p>1.1.3. Regular monitoring of the implementation of the strategic action plan is carried out and the results are used to improve performance management</p>
	1.2. Effectiveness of process management of the higher education institution	<p>1.2.1. A clear structure for governance, decision making and distribution of responsibilities is defined</p> <p>1.2.2. Regular process management analysis is performed, preconditions for process improvement and risk management are planned</p> <p>1.2.3. Stakeholders are involved in the management process at an adequate level</p>
	1.3. Publicity of information on the performance of the higher education institution and its management effectiveness	<p>1.3.1. Systematic collection and analysis of the performance data, results (including student employment and graduate career monitoring) is in place, data is used for the improvement of performance of the higher education institution</p> <p>1.3.2. Information on the performance of the higher education institution is clear, accurate and accessible to the academic community and the public, and is provided regularly to the founders and members of the legal entity</p>
	1.4. Effectiveness of human resource management	<p>1.4.1. Clear and transparent principles and procedures for the formation, management, evaluation of academic and non-academic staff are established and applied</p> <p>1.4.2. The higher education institution has sufficient academic (in-house academic</p>

		<p>staff) and non-academic staff to meet its operational objectives</p> <p>1.4.3. The qualifications of the academic and non-academic staff are appropriate for the purposes of the higher education institution</p> <p>1.4.4. Conditions are created for the academic staff to improve the knowledge and skills required for teaching and research activities</p> <p>1.4.5. Conditions are created for non-academic staff to develop competencies</p>
	1.5. Efficiency of financial and learning resource management	<p>1.5.1. Financial resources are planned, allocated and used rationally</p> <p>1.5.2. Various financial resources for the implementation of higher education activities are attracted</p> <p>1.5.3. Learning resources for provision of studies and research (art) activities are planned and used rationally</p> <p>1.5.4. Learning resources for conducting studies and research (art) activities are appropriate, sufficient and available</p>
2. Quality assurance	2.1. Implementation and effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system	<p>2.1.1. The higher education institution has approved and made publicly available internal quality assurance documents that are consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area</p> <p>2.1.2. Internal quality assurance measures of planning, implementation and improvement are appropriate, applied periodically and ensure the involvement of the whole institution and stakeholders</p> <p>2.1.3. Processes for planning, implementation, monitoring, periodic evaluation and development of activities are specified</p> <p>2.1.4. Students and academic and non-academic staff of the institution receive effective support</p> <p>2.1.5. Provisions and procedures for academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination, appeal and ethics are specified and applied</p> <p>2.1.6. The results of the external review are used to improve the performance of the higher education institution</p>
3. Study and research (art)	3.1. The level of research (art) , compatibility of studies and research (art) and its compliance with the strategic aims of activities	<p>3.1.1. The study and research (art) activities carried out and their results are consistent with the mission and strategic aims of the higher education institution</p> <p>3.1.2. The level of research (art) activities is sufficient for the ongoing studies of the higher education institution</p> <p>3.1.3. Studies are based on research (art)</p>

		3.1.4. Consistent recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning is performed
	3.2. Internationality of studies, research (art)	3.2.1. The higher education institution has a strategy for internationalisation of research (art) and study activities (including indicators of internationalisation), means for its implementation, and measurements of the effectiveness of these activities are performed (not applicable to colleges unless provided for in its strategic documents) 3.2.2 The higher education institution integrates aspects of internationalisation into the content of studies and research (art) activities
4. Impact on regional and national development	4.1. Effectiveness of the impact on regional and national development	4.1.1. The higher education institution carries out an analysis of national and (or) regional demands, identifies the needs to be met and foresees the potential impact on national and (or) regional development 4.1.2. The monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures on national and (or) regional development are performed
	4.2. Assurance of conditions for lifelong learning	4.2.1. The higher education institution monitors and analyses the need for lifelong learning 4.2.2. The higher education institution anticipates the diversity of forms and conditions of lifelong learning and ensures their implementation 4.2.3. The higher education institution performs the evaluation of assurance of conditions for lifelong learning

Amendments to annex:

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PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Planned actions of the higher education institution for the implementation of the recommendations	Responsible divisions/persons	Actions performed	Results (describing the results reflecting the effectiveness of the actions performed)
Recommendations of experts in the Management area				
Recommendations of experts in the Quality assurance area				
Recommendations of experts in the Study and research (art) area				
Recommendations of experts in the Impact on the regional and national development area				

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