



**CENTER FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
DIRECTOR**

**ORDER**

**ON THE APPROVAL OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR THE  
EXAMINATION OF COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS ON THE QUALITY OF STUDIES  
AT THE CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

2021 July 5 No. V-42

Vilnius

I a p p r o v e the description of the procedure for the examination of complaints and reports on the quality of studies at the Centre for Quality Assessment of Higher Education (attached).

Director

Almantas Šerpatauskas

APPROVED

by the Director of the Centre for Quality  
Assessment of Higher Education  
2021 m. July 5 d. order Nr. V-42

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND  
REPORTS ON THE QUALITY OF STUDIES AT THE CENTRE FOR QUALITY  
ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**I CHAPTER  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Description of the Procedure for the Examination of Complaints and Reports on the Quality of Studies at the Centre for Quality Assessment of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Procedure Description") regulates the submission of complaints and reports on the quality of studies to the Centre for Quality Assessment of Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Centre"), their registration and preparation for examination at the Standing Committee for the Examination of Complaints and Reports (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee"), the procedure of the establishment of the Committee, and the organisation of the work of the Committee, as well as the procedure of the examination of complaints and reports before the Committee.

2. The Rules of Procedure have been drawn up in accordance with the Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the "LPA"), the Rules on the Examination of Requests and Complaints and the Servicing of Persons in Public Administration Bodies, approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania Resolution No. 875 dated 22 August 2007 (hereinafter referred to as the "Rules").

3. The Centre shall, within its competence, investigate complaints and reports submitted by individuals and/or groups of individuals regarding the quality of studies (hereinafter referred to as "complaints and reports") in higher education institutions in Lithuania, in branches of foreign higher education institutions in the Republic of Lithuania, and in higher education institutions operating in the conditions of exile.

4. The Centre does not deal with complaints and notifications concerning:

- 4.1. the admission of students and listeners;
- 4.2. tuition fees, financing and other mutual obligations as defined in the contract between the student and the higher education institution;
- 4.3. intellectual property created by students;
- 4.4. the procedure for the evaluation of individual student performance and its application;
- 4.5. academic ethics and procedures;
- 4.6. other matters not related to the quality of studies.

5. The Centre shall be guided in its handling of complaints and reports by the principles of respect for the self-government and academic autonomy of higher education institutions, the principle of student-centred studies, the principle of cooperation between members of the academic community, and the principles of openness and accountability to the public.

**II CHAPTER  
SUBMITTING, REGISTERING AND PREPARING COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE  
QUALITY OF STUDIES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE**

6. Individuals and/or groups of individuals may submit complaints and notifications in writing:

- 6.1. by filling in a form on the Centre's website;

6.2. by e-mail;

6.3. by post or courier.

7. Complaints and reports to the Centre shall be submitted in Lithuanian or English.

8. Complaints and notifications shall comply with the requirements of Article 11 of the LPA and Chapter II of the Rules.

9. Upon receipt of a complaint or report, the Centre shall assign it to a civil servant or employee of the Centre for preparation for examination by the Committee, who shall:

9.1. register it in the Centre's document management system (hereinafter referred to as "DMS");

9.2. if the person so requests, reply to the sender of the complaint or communication within 3 working days that the complaint or communication has been received and registered;

9.3. determine whether the complaint or notification submitted complies with the requirements of point 7 of the Procedure Description, Article 11 of the LAP and Chapter II of the Rules;

9.4. determine whether the information submitted is a matter within the competence of the Centre. If the information submitted is within the competence of another institution, the complaint or notification shall be forwarded to the competent institution within 5 working days at the latest;

9.5. determine whether the sender of the complaint or report has contacted the higher education institution and/or the students' representative body about the matter set out in the complaint or report, and the outcome of that contact. In the event that it is established that the person has not contacted the higher education institution or the students' representation, the person shall be informed of this possibility and the complaint or report shall not be further investigated;

9.6. determine whether all the information in support of the complaint or report has been provided. In the event that it is established that there is insufficient information to assess the circumstances set out in the complaint or report, the person shall be informed and asked to provide additional information.

10. The DMS does not record complaints and notifications that:

10.1. are illegibly written;

10.2. written in a language other than the language set out in point 7 of the Procedure Description or without a translation into the language set out in point 7 of the Procedure Description;

10.3. submitted as electronic documents which cannot be opened and read.

11. A registered complaint or communication shall not be considered if:

11.1. the Centre is not competent to examine it;

11.2. it is anonymous, unless the Director of the Centre decides to examine such a complaint or communication;

11.3. it is based on facts which are manifestly untrue or if its content is unspecific or unclear and, as a result, it is not possible to deal with the complaint or communication;

11.4. it appears that the Centre or another competent authority has already responded to the same matter and the person and/or group of persons does not provide any new information which would call into question the validity of the previous response or challenge the decision taken by the public administration body;

11.5. it appears that more than one academic year has elapsed between the date on which the possible irregularities referred to in the complaint or notification became apparent to the person and/or group of persons and the date on which the complaint or notification was submitted, unless the Director of the Centre decides to deal with such complaint or notification.

12. The designated civil servant or employee of the Centre shall, after having carried out the steps referred to in point 9 of the Procedure Description and having determined that the information provided is sufficient for a full investigation of the complaint or report, forward all the material collected to the Committee for examination.

### **III CHAPTER PROCEDURES FOR SETTING UP AND ORGANISING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

13. The Committee shall be established and its composition amended by order of the Director of the Centre.

14. The Committee shall consist of at least 6 members.

15. The activities of the Committee shall be managed by a Chairperson appointed by order of the Director of the Centre for the purpose of examining complaints and reports.

16. The meetings of the Committee and the decisions taken by it shall be lawful when at least 4 members of the Committee are present. The Committee shall take its decisions at the meeting by a simple majority of the votes cast in an open roll-call vote. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson of the Committee shall have the casting vote.

17. The decisions of the Committee shall be recorded in the minutes. The minutes shall be agreed and approved by all members of the Committee and shall be recorded and stored in the DVS system. The minutes shall be drawn up by the Secretary of the Committee or another member of the Committee designated by the Chairperson.

18. The Committee shall be accountable to the Director of the Centre.

19. Each member of the Committee shall be liable for his/her actions in accordance with the procedure established by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

### **IV CHAPTER THE PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND REPORTS CONCERNING THE QUALITY OF STUDIES BEFORE THE COMMITTEE**

20. The Committee shall be guided by the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Higher Education, the European Quality Assurance Framework and Guidelines for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "ESG"), the Centre's Regulations, the Rules, and the present Procedure Description when investigating complaints and reports submitted to the Centre.

21. Upon receipt of the complaint or report and additional information collected by a civil servant or employee appointed by the Centre, the Committee shall determine whether it is sufficient to fully examine the circumstances set out in the complaint or report. The staff member of the Centre who prepared the complaint or report for consideration by the Committee shall be present at the meeting of the Committee.

22. In the event that the material submitted is found to be insufficient, the Committee shall instruct a civil servant or staff member appointed by the Centre to collect it.

23. Upon receipt of all the necessary information, the Committee shall assess whether it is appropriate to contact the higher education institution, its student representation or other persons involved in the circumstances set out in the complaint or report for clarification and/or explanation.

24. The Committee, when examining a complaint or report, shall have the right to:

24.1. initiate meetings with all interested parties in order to fully assess the circumstances set out in the complaint or report;

24.2. write to the institution complained against to request clarification of the circumstances set out in the complaint or report;

24.3. invite experts or other persons who are not members of the Committee to attend meetings of the Committee. Such persons shall comply with the confidentiality and personal data protection requirements of the Centre. Persons invited shall give their opinion or recommendation, but the Committee shall take the final decision;

24.4. take any other action necessary for a full investigation of the complaint or report.

25. After examining the complaint or report, the Committee shall submit one of its proposals to the Director of the Centre no later than 20 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint or report and of all the relevant documents:

25.1. request the higher education institution to draw up an action plan with specific deadlines to address the circumstances raised in the complaint or report and to inform the Centre about its implementation;

25.2. make recommendations to the higher education institution and request it to inform the Centre of their implementation;

25.3. in the event of reasonable suspicion of non-compliance with the requirements of legal acts, to forward the information provided in the complaint or report to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, proposing to initiate an extraordinary evaluation of the field of study.

26. The final decision on the circumstances set out in the complaint or report shall be taken by the Director of the Centre.

## **V CHAPTER FINAL PROVISIONS**

27. The decision of the Centre shall be communicated within 3 working days to the persons and/or groups of persons who lodged the complaint or report. In case the decision of the Centre is of importance for the education system or may have an impact on the formulation of education policy, a copy of the decision shall be provided to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and other interested parties.

28. The reply to the complaint or notification shall be submitted to the e-mail address indicated by the person, or, where no e-mail address is indicated, to the postal address indicated by the person. A reply to an electronic enquiry shall be made to the e-mail address provided by the person.

29. The summary information on the circumstances established in the complaint or notification and the decision of the Director of the Centre shall be forwarded to the external evaluation experts who will carry out the next evaluation of the field of study or the performance of the higher education institution.

30. Decisions taken by the Centre on complaints or reports shall be of a recommendatory nature and shall not have the force of an administrative decision.

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