At its 124th session on 15 March 2018, the Council of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education has, based on indent eight of paragraph eleven of Article 51.h of the Higher Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 32/12 – official consolidated text [UPB7], 40/12 – ZUJF, 57/12 – ZPCP-2D, 109/12, 85/14, 75/16, [61/17](http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?sop=2017-01-2917) – ZUPŠ and[65/17](http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?sop=2017-01-3065); hereinafter: the ZViS), determined the following

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

**I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 1**

**(Content and purpose)**

These criteria lay down the conditions for experts of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency). Their purpose is to provide experts qualified for a professional and independent assessment of higher education institutions (hereinafter: institution(s)) and their study programmes, and higher vocational colleges (hereinafter: college(s)) in accreditation and evaluation procedures according to the Agency's quality standards and criteria.

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

**Article 2**

**(Candidates for Agency experts)**

Those who may apply for the position of Agency experts shall be higher education teachers, college lecturers and students.

Other persons who are involved in the quality assessment in higher education and higher vocational education and have completed at least a second-cycle higher education degree may also apply for the position of Agency experts. These candidates may not be appointed experts in the procedures of accreditation or external evaluation of study programmes.

Candidates for the Agency experts (hereinafter: candidates) must meet all general conditions and at least four (4) specific conditions under Articles 4 and 5. Exceptions shall be student candidates and candidates referred to in paragraph two of this Article.

**Article 3**

**(General conditions)**

The candidates must demonstrate the following:

* knowledge of the Slovenian higher and/or higher vocational education (legal regulation, organisation, characteristics and operation);
* knowledge of the accreditation and external evaluation criteria, other criteria and standards of the Agency, and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG (hereinafter: European Standards);
* communicative competence in the Slovenian language;
* knowledge of the English language corresponding to the B2-level, minimum.

**Article 4**

**(Specific conditions for accreditation and external evaluation of institutions/colleges)**

The candidates must demonstrate the following:

* management experience in an institution/college;
* management experience in teaching, scientific, professional, research or artistic work;
* experience in evaluating educational, scientific, professional, research or artistic achievements;
* references of several years as to teaching work in an institution/college;
* professional work (cooperation) in the development, design and preparation of study programmes;
* professional work in the (self-)evaluation of institutions/colleges or study programmes;
* references as to the design and development of quality assurance systems;
* relevant international experience in at least three of the abovementioned areas.

**Article 5**

**(Specific conditions for accreditation and external evaluation of study programmes)**

The candidates must demonstrate the following:

* academic qualifications and scientific, professional, research and/or artistic achievements in the field of the relevant study programme;
* experience in evaluating educational, scientific, professional, research or artistic achievements in the field of the relevant study programme;
* references of several years as to teaching work in an institution/college;
* professional work (cooperation) in the development, design and preparation of study programmes;
* professional work in the (self-)evaluation of study programmes;
* relevant international experience in at least three of the abovementioned areas.

**Article 6**

**(Conditions relating to student candidates)**

Student candidates must meet the general conditions under Article 3 of these Criteria and demonstrate participation in the (self-)evaluation of institutions/colleges and/or study programmes.

**Article 7**

**(Conditions relating to candidates under paragraph two of Article 2 of the Criteria)**

Candidates referred to in paragraph two of Article 2 of the Criteria must meet the general conditions under Article 3 and specific conditions under Article 4 of the Criteria.

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

**Article 8**

**(Public call)**

The Agency shall select candidates on the basis of a public call periodically published on its website, depending on the needs for experts from individual study, scientific, professional, research and/or artistic fields. The decision on the publication of a public call shall be taken by the Agency Council (hereinafter: the Council).

A public call shall, in addition to general information, include the following:

* the subject of the public call containing information on the profile of experts needed by the Agency and the study, scientific, professional, research or artistic fields they should be active in;
* conditions to be met by candidates;
* data on the application to the public call and the application's deadline.

Where candidates who do not meet the conditions set out in the public call apply to the public call, the Commission referred to in Article10 of the Criteria shall not consider their applications.

**Article 9**

**(Application to a public call)**

An application to a public call shall be submitted electronically, i.e. on an electronic form which is attached to the Criteria. If the application is not submitted on this form, it shall not be considered by the Commission referred to in Article 10 of the Criteria.

The application shall be accompanied by the following:

* CV in Slovenian language;
* evidence of professional work (contribution) in the (self-)evaluation of institutions/colleges or study programmes;
* evidence of compliance with specific conditions indicated by the candidate in the application.

**Article 10**

**(Selection of suitable candidates for compulsory practical training)**

The selection of suitable candidates for compulsory practical training (hereinafter: practical training) for the Agency experts shall be carried out by a commission for the assessment of experts (hereinafter: the Commission) consisting of at least three members of the Council.

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

**IV. PRACTICAL TRAINING**

**Article 11**

**(Invitation to practical training)**

The Agency shall invite candidates to practical training in the order of accreditations and/or evaluations of institutions/colleges and study programmes. It shall further inform in writing the candidates about the training in a specific accreditation and/or evaluation procedure.

Where a candidate twice declines an invitation to a practical training, the Agency shall no longer invite them to the aforementioned training.

**Article 12**

**(Preparation for work in a group of experts)**

The preparation of a candidate for work in a group of experts shall begin with a preparatory meeting of the said group. The preparatory meeting shall be mandatory in all procedures in which the candidate participates.

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

**Article 13**

**(Tasks of a candidate in a group of experts)**

A candidate shall, in accordance with the instructions by the chair of the group of experts and staff, perform all tasks of an expert in the group, i.e.:

* participate in the preparation for the assessment of an institution/college or a study programme;
* perform tasks in accreditation and evaluation procedures according to the instructions by the chair of the group and staff.

The tasks and actions performed by a candidate in accreditation and evaluation procedures shall not affect the final assessment and the report submitted by the group of experts.

**Article 14**

**(Candidate evaluation)**

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

Following the completion of the accreditation or evaluation procedure, the group of experts and staff shall draw up a joint written evaluation (hereinafter: evaluation) of the candidate. This evaluation shall include findings on:

* proper application of laws, criteria and other regulations in accreditation and evaluation procedures;
* ability to work in a group of experts;
* quality of the assessment of the actual situation;
* quality of report writing;
* candidate's impartiality and/or independence.

The Agency staff shall not evaluate the candidate's substantive assessment of compliance with the quality standards set out for accreditations and evaluations of institutions/colleges or study programmes.

The final evaluation of the candidate shall be drawn up by the Commission.

**V. REGISTER OF AGENCY EXPERTS**

**Article 15**

**(Register of Agency experts)**

Through the entry in the register of the Agency experts (hereinafter: the Register), the candidate shall become an expert of the Agency. All Slovenian experts must be entered in the Register.

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

**Article 16**

**(Appointment at the Council level)**

The Commission shall submit the final evaluation of a candidate to the Council for further decision-making. The Council shall adopt its decision on the (non-)entry of the candidate in the register and informs the candidate accordingly.

**Article 17**

**(Entry in the register)**

An expert shall be entered in the register of experts for a period of five (5) years. If during this period they fulfilled obligations and tasks referred to in Chapter VII of these Criteria, they shall be re-entered for the same period. The decision on the re-entry shall be adopted by the Council.

**Article 18**

**(Removal from the register)**

An expert shall be removed from the Register if:

* they were not re-entered in the Register in accordance with the preceding Article;
* they did not comply with the provisions of the copyright contract concluded with the Agency.

**VI. COMPOSITION OF GROUPS OF EXPERTS**

**Article 19**

**(Groups of experts)**

The Council must appoint at least three experts to a group of experts, of which one shall be a student and one a foreign expert. The composition of the group of experts shall depend on the size of the institution/college concerned, the type and complexity of the accreditation and/or evaluation procedure, and thus differs both in number and competencies required by experts.

Experts appointed to a group shall not be associated with the institution/college and study programme they are assessing.

**Article 20**

**(Accreditation or external evaluation of institution/college)**

A group of experts must be composed in such a way that:

* at least one of the experts has management experience in an institution/college of at least the same type as the institution/college under the accreditation or evaluation procedure;
* the majority of members of the group of experts have the title of a full or associate professor, where a university or an independent faculty is being accredited;
* at least one member of the group of experts has the title of an assistant professor, where a professional college is being accredited;
* at least one member of the group of experts has the title of lecturer of a higher vocational college, where a higher vocational college is being evaluated.

The group of experts must include:

1. initial accreditation of an institution: experts in the fields of all draft study programmes that the institution intends to deliver;
2. reaccreditation of an institution: experts in the fields of all study programmes assessed as part of the institution's reaccreditation;
3. college evaluation: most experts in the fields of study programmes delivered by the college.

The study, scientific and research fields of an expert must comply with the KLASIUS and Frascati classifications. The suitability of experts for particular fields shall be assessed by the Commission on the basis of bibliographic and biographical references connected with the education level and the scientific, professional, research, artistic and teaching work of the expert.

**Article 21**

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

All members of a group of experts must be from the field of the study programme and be appropriately appointed to the title:

1. professional higher education study programme: in addition to lecturers and senior lecturers, at least one associate professor or assistant professor;
2. university study programme, second-cycle study programme and third-cycle study programme: full and associate professors and assistant professors.

**Article 22**

**(Chair of a group of experts)**

The chair of a group of experts must be a higher education teacher or college lecturer and must, in terms of the relevant field, correspond to the dominant or at least one of the fields of the study programme or institution/college, typically according to the first two digits of the Klasius-P-16 classification.

If the Slovenian experts in the Register suitable for the chair of the group do not include an expert meeting the condition referred to in paragraph one of this Article, this condition must be met by a foreign expert. The foreign expert shall participate in the assessment as member of the group, whereas the presidency is entrusted to an expert from the register.

If a study programme is interdisciplinary and the condition from paragraph one is met, the foreign expert should be from one of the remaining fields according to the two-digit Klasius-P-16 classification.

If none of the experts complies with the condition referred to in paragraph one, the Agency may exceptionally find a suitable expert for the relevant field and enter them in the register of experts at the Council's invitation. In the assessment, such expert shall participate as member of the group, whereas the chairmanship shall be entrusted to an expert from the register whose competences are as related to the relevant field as possible.

**Article 23**

**(Student experts)**

Student experts must, as a rule, be enrolled in a study programme of at least the same cycle as the study programme being assessed by them. The study programme in which they are enrolled or the study programme they have previously completed must, as a rule, be as related to the relevant field as possible.

If a student expert's status of a student expires during the assessment, they must perform the work in accordance with the copyright contract pending the finality of the decision on accreditation and/or evaluation.

**VII. OBLIGATIONS AND TASKS OF EXPERTS**

**Article 24**

**(Continuous education)**

The obligation of the Agency's experts shall be:

* to follow changes in legislation and regulations in higher vocational and higher education;
* to take into account in their work any change in the Criteria and other regulations of the Agency;
* to regularly attend trainings or consultations of experts organised by the Agency.

**Article 25**

**(Specific training for chairs of groups of experts)**

The Agency shall, if necessary, organise specific training for chairs of groups of experts.

**Article 26**

**(Tasks of experts)**

Experts shall sign a contract with the Agency stipulating their tasks. In accreditation and evaluation procedures they shall, as a rule, perform a tour or a visit of an institution/college (hereinafter: visit) which shall take place in accordance with the ZViS, the criteria for accreditation and external evaluation and the protocol of the visit determined by the Agency. The work of the group of experts shall be monitored by the Agency staff.

**Article 27**

**(Reports by a group of experts)**

The chair of a group of experts shall be responsible for drawing up joint reports set out in the criteria for accreditation and external evaluation. All experts must participate in the drawing up (determination of content) of these reports.

The reports must be linguistically appropriate, completeded by deadlines and written according to instructions and on forms determined by the Agency. If the reports are not appropriate, the Agency staff shall return them to the chair of the group of experts and set a deadline for their correction. Noncompliance with the Agency's instructions and deadlines shall affect the remuneration under the contract.

**VIII. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 28**

**(Candidates registered prior to the entry into force of the Criteria)**

Candidates registered prior to the entry into force of these Criteria shall be trained and appointed as experts under these Criteria.

**Article 29**

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

Experts who have been entered in the register according to the hitherto applicable criteria for the entry in the register of experts shall be subject to the provisions of the Criteria in the event of the re-entry in and removal from the register.

**Article 30**

**(End of validity of previous criteria)**

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

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

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Date: 15 March 2018

Franc Čuš, Ph.D.

President of the Council

of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency

for Higher Education