

2022 WORK AND FINANCIAL PLAN OF THE SLOVENIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Univerza v Novi Gorici | Foto: CasarsaTinta foto studio



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**2022 WORK AND FINANCIAL PLAN OF
THE SLOVENIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE
AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**



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Introduction

In 2021, the Agency started implementing its development strategy, laying the foundations for its future development until 2025. Strategic guidelines and priority areas were incorporated in the Agency's continued professional, analytical and development work.

An overview of the Agency's work, several analyses and reports on various events, feedback from higher education stakeholders and the self-evaluation show that the Agency is achieving the strategic goals set in the new strategic period. While preparing the work report and looking at the Agency's operations in 2021, it was concluded that the majority of tasks from the 2021 work and financial plan were completed.

In 2022, the Agency's work will continue to focus on the adoption of an independent Act. The aim of this Act is to enhance the assessment of content quality in accreditation and evaluation procedures and better regulate appeal procedures accordingly.

The Agency will continue to conduct accreditations and external evaluations of higher education institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges, including university reaccreditations. It will strive to improve assessment according to quality standards and accreditation and evaluation procedures. Special attention will be devoted to the quality assessment of scientific and research work. The guide to assessments will be amended and released in a printed version. In addition to a short presentation of the Agency and its work in 2021 and proceedings of discussions on a selected topic, the annual publication will be dedicated to the presentation of the guide.

Various expert and employee trainings will be organised with a view to exchanging practical experience and working together to develop guidelines for the proper assessment of quality standards in all areas of assessment based on the Accreditation Criteria.

The Agency's tasks in 2022 will focus on in-depth analytical work. A substantive analysis of reports by groups of experts based on sample evaluations, and an international analysis of quality assurance agencies for higher education will be completed in the first half of 2022.

The Agency's self-evaluation is another extensive and important task to be carried out in 2022. Activities will begin for the preparation of a systemic analysis, which will comprise quality, quantity and comparative analyses of the outcomes and characteristics of evaluation practices.

We will continue to establish up-to-date databases on selected activities at higher education institutions, including the upgrading of records on research, employability and library data. The iNakvis internal information system will continue to provide a strong support in the creation of up-to-date databases and internal records of the Agency.

In the international context, we are planning on strengthening international collaboration, both in international working groups (CEENQA, ENQA, ECA, INQAHE, BUFG) and project activities as well as at international meetings and conferences. As part of the presidency of the *Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education* (CEENQA), the Agency will prepare a special publication and organise the annual CEENQA meeting, with a presentation of analysis findings on the independence of international agencies and a special publication.

We will continue to strengthen cooperation with a variety of stakeholders, providing them with current, accurate and useful information about the Slovenian higher and higher vocational education. We will strive to increase the visibility and recognition of the Agency's work through communication with internal and external stakeholders. We will continue to



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shoot presentation videos for higher education institutions, adding higher vocational colleges to the programme this year.

In line with strategic sustainable development goals, distance site visits and teleworking will continue.

The 2022 Annual Work Plan (AWP) follows a standard structure. The introduction is followed by an overview of accreditations and evaluations of higher education institutions, higher vocational colleges and study programmes as at 31 December 2021 and the 2022 plans. Next is the Action Plan prepared on the basis of the Agency's new strategic goals and values and areas of quality assessment according to the Quality Manual. Finally, the AWP concludes with a plan of financial and human resources.

Franci Demšar, Ph.D.
Director

Ljubljana, February 2022



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PRESENTATION OF THE AGENCY AND SELF-EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Republic of Slovenia established the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency) in 2010 as a public body for quality assurance in higher education and for development and advisory work. The Agency is a direct non-governmental budget user. Acting under public authority, it issues general acts for the exercise of public authorities and individual administrative acts. In carrying out its work, the Agency is independent and autonomous and committed to the principles of professionalism, impartiality, legality and political neutrality. The Agency is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA), the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA), the presidency of which it assumed in 2020, and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Its membership in international associations for quality assurance in higher education proves the compliance of its operation with European standards and guidelines.

Mission

The Agency provides for comparability and international recognition of Slovenian higher education area and strives for continuous improvement of its quality. It operates with substantive and formal responsibility, in expert, professional and independent manner, and provides counselling for all stakeholders in tertiary education in accordance with the European and global development orientations.

Vision

By activities in the implementation of processes in the field of assuring and improving quality in higher education, the Agency will change the national and international higher education area.



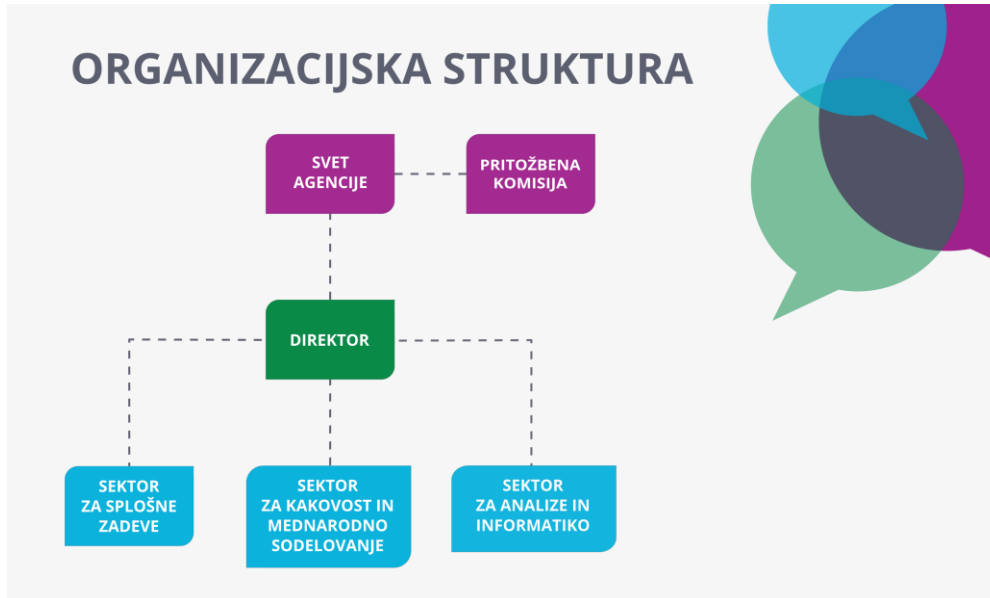
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A) INTERNAL ORGANISATION OF THE AGENCY



In order to improve its work, the Agency has undergone several organisational transformations since 2018. In 2020 and 2021, its operations were divided into four departments: Quality Assurance; Analytics; International Cooperation and Information Technology; and General Affairs. As practice has shown that it would be sensible to reorganise the four departments into three in order to ensure better cohesion of content in individual fields of work, the Agency's operations, starting from the beginning of 2022, will consist of: **the Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department, the Analytics and Information Technology Department and the General Affairs Department.** Each department has its own head.

The tasks carried out by individual departments are intertwined or closely linked. As a result, they must often be performed by professional staff from various departments. The Agency's main activities, accreditation and evaluation procedures, are conducted by staff from both the Quality Assurance Department and the International Cooperation and the Analytics and Information Technology Department.

The main fields of work by department are:

1. Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department:

- criteria and other provisions from the field of quality;
- accreditations and evaluations;
- modifications of study programmes;
- cooperation with stakeholders (institutions/colleges, experts);
- communications and public relations;
- international activities;
- organisation and cooperation in different national and international events (conferences, consultations, training courses, workshops);
- keeping and updating records (on accreditations, evaluations, modifications, VTI ...);
- project collaborations and activities (micro-credentials, European universities, etc.);
- intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, self-evaluation, etc.);
- archiving applications and other documents.



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3. Analytics and Information Technology Department:

- plans and reports (annual work plan and report on the work and operation of the Agency, strategy);
- analyses, documents, publications;
- self-evaluation of the Agency;
- manuals, guides;
- organisation and cooperation in different events (conferences, consultations, training courses, workshops);
- translation.
- eNakvis information system and links with databases (SICRIS, IZUM, etc.);
-
- internal information system iNakvis;
- intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, etc.);
- keeping and updating records (on accreditations, evaluations, modifications, VTI ...);

4. General Affairs Department

- legislation, preparation of internal Agency acts;
- assistance in the implementation of activities from the field of quality assurance;
- work for the Appeals Committee;
- financial affairs (budget implementation);
- human resources affairs;
- access to public information;
- business and administrative tasks (contracts, receiving and sending mail, document records, etc.);
-
- participation in external and internal review procedures;
- intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, self-evaluation, etc.);
- keeping and updating human resource and other records within its powers.

B) FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE AGENCY'S WORK FROM ITS SELF-EVALUATION REPORT FOR 2018 AND 2019 (SER 2018-2019) IN THIS SELF-EVALUATION PERIOD

Recommendations for the preparation of the Action Plan and related annual work plans:

1. assess the Agency's strategic goals until 2020 and prepare a new medium-term strategy until 2025;
2. carry out procedures for the reaccreditation of universities and independent higher education institutions;
3. definition of samples of study programmes, which will enable the system-wide monitoring of the quality of their development (e.g. study programmes in the same field, etc.);
4. establish good practices and approaches to conducting evaluations of samples of study programmes so that the latter fulfil their consultative function;



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5. review the visit protocol for evaluations of samples, make any corrections if needed and present the last version to Agency employees and the Council;
6. prepare detailed consultation programmes, including in cooperation with various stakeholders, i.e. representatives of quality assurance commissions;
7. organise several consultations with stakeholders on the topic of specific recommendations from the stakeholder survey (increase the applicability of study programme contents, strengthen collaboration with foreign agencies, develop more user-friendly application forms, etc.);
8. organise several topic-specific and coordination meetings for experts;
9. achieve greater recognition of the Agency by publishing a call for experts on the ENQA website, sending a call to foreign agencies, directly to foreign higher education institutions and presenting the Agency's work to students at higher education institutions;
10. improve the flow of information between departments and achieve a clear division of tasks among employees (both the Director and the department heads), introduce yearly interviews;
11. find a way to increase the employees' involvement in the adoption of the Agency's policies and take their opinions into account in strategic decision-making;
12. be prudent when changing criteria and forms by coordinating any changes with the stakeholders in advance, taking into account that:
 - some accreditation and evaluation procedures are already underway,
 - changes to the criteria lead to adaptation of electronic forms and other documents (e.g. proposals, guidelines, etc.), which takes time,
 - a method to test the proposals for modifications in practice should be found;
13. finish the preparation of an independent Agency Act or supplement or amend the ZViS in the part pertaining to the Agency, and ensure the adoption of the Act;
14. work together with the relevant ministries on regulated professions to develop clear and publicly available criteria for the approval of study programmes;
15. continue the successful implementation of the eNakvis information system, in particular making tools for systemic and topic-specific analyses and self-evaluation and improving tools for the notification of stakeholders and connection with the IZUM system;
16. continue activities to improve communication between the Agency and stakeholders;
17. publish the experts' frequently asked questions and responses on the website.

In this self-evaluation period, which started in 2020, almost all recommendations of the Agency's self-evaluation group have been implemented.

Notably tasks related to maintaining and improving the professionalism of the Agency's work, improving stakeholder notification, drafting the Act on the Agency or quality in higher and higher vocational education and further improving the Agency's information system; the iNakvis internal system was developed in addition to the eNakvis external system. The



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proposed guide to assessments, which devotes special attention to the development of conceptual starting points for the quality of study programmes, educational work and research and their assessment, was prepared.

A new self-evaluation group, which will start work in 2022, will prepare a draft self-evaluation report and coordinate activities for the visit of the ENQUA expert group envisaged in 2023.

C) THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC GUIDELINES UNTIL 2025

In December 2020, the Agency adopted a new medium-term development strategy until 2025. As a result, this plan takes into account the new strategic goals – *the Strategic Development of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for the 2021–2025 Period (hereinafter: the Strategy)*, adopted at the 157 meeting of the Agency Council on 17 December 2020. Based on a thorough self-evaluation and overview of its work in the 2017–2020 strategic period, it was concluded that the Agency had fulfilled all of the set objectives and that its further development would be planned on these foundations. The Agency connects the strategic orientations for the 2021–2025 period mainly with the further development of analytical and development work; preparation of a special guide to accreditations and evaluations with an emphasis on in-depth substantive assessment according to quality standards; with continuous and more focused training of participants in accreditation and evaluation procedures; with strengthening international activity in current areas; and with proactive communication. In order to facilitate the experts' work, the Agency is planning on establishing up-to-date databases on research and library activities at higher education institutions, their spaces and equipment. The main strategic goal until 2025 is the adoption and entry into force of an independent Agency Act – the Act on Quality in Higher Education.

In the Agency's strategy, its values are divided into three groups, namely **professionalism (P); transparency (T) and development (D), linked to the strategic goals for the 2021–2025 period.**

1. Adoption of the Act on Quality in Higher and Higher Vocational Education (R)

By providing solutions different from those determined for the work of the Agency by the ZViS, the Act on Quality in Higher Education (Quality Act) will enable high-quality and full implementation of the tasks related to strategic orientations. The Act will stipulate that procedures place emphasis on accreditation and evaluation decisions reached on the basis of expert assessments or findings, provide the basis for accreditations and evaluations abroad, rectify inconsistencies in regulations in force and bring together all their provisions in a single document. Other reasons for the adoption of the Act include consolidating and increasing the autonomy of the Agency and the Slovenian higher education and ensuring the proper development and establishment of external quality assessments, thereby earning the Agency greater trust of higher education stakeholders.

2. Improving assessment according to quality standards and accreditation and evaluation procedures (S)

The Agency will strive to further raise the level of expert external assessments that will take into account the specifics of higher education and be related to various cycles and types of study, disciplines in which study programmes are embedded and status and organisational



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differences between higher education institutions. It will therefore focus on improving the assessments of experts and, on their basis, the decisions of the Agency Council. It is planning on organising a lot of education, training and meetings with all major stakeholders in accreditation and evaluation procedures.

A thorough and in-depth substantive assessment will be the basis for decisions on accreditations and evaluations. Therefore, in the draft quality assurance act, the Agency establishes special commissions by fields of study to assist the Agency Council; these commissions will, if necessary, discuss the findings of experts on study programmes.

As there is also room for improvement in the phases of accreditation and evaluation procedures, the Quality Assurance Department is to take on additional staff. In all phases, work with higher education institutions (applicants) as well as Agency experts and members of the Agency Council must be further improved and harmonised. Particularly through ongoing and strengthened education, the Agency will strive to achieve a common understanding of compliance with quality standards and legal provisions to provide proper guidelines for expert assessments.

3. In-depth substantive analytical work in selected areas (S)

In addition to a variety of analyses already in progress, special attention will be devoted to ongoing analyses of accreditation and evaluation reports by groups of experts. They will provide the basis for further guidelines for external assessments which, instead of operations and protocols, will focus more on substantive assessment dilemmas and starting points and a more thorough interpretation of regulations. They will seek greater compliance with various academic standards. The results of these analyses will be included in the guide to assessments, which will replace the manual for experts.

The Agency will work together with external professionals to conduct analyses of specific issues in higher education, which will be presented at national and international consultations and will provide the basis for the Agency's topic-specific contributions to annual publications.

4. Establishing up-to-date databases on selected activities in higher education institutions (T)

The Agency will also develop the eNakvis information system for the creation of various databases and their updates, which will be of even greater help in the work of the Agency Council and the Appeal Committee, experts and Agency staff, e.g.: in collaboration with IZUM, the Agency will establish a database on the research activities of higher education institutions or their higher education teachers and faculty assistants and libraries as well as a database of compulsory components of study programmes. A database on spatial capacities and equipment of higher education institutions will also be established. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, a database on the employability of students by higher education institutions and study programmes is also planned, taking into account the cycle, type or nature of the latter. eNakvis will support the self-evaluation of the Agency and its analytical activities.

The Agency will provide access to a variety of data to the general public, especially students and prospective students.



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5. Pursuing sustainable development goals (R)

Taking into account the sustainable development goals (SDG 2030) adopted at the UN General Assembly in 2015 and amendments made as a result of the epidemiological situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agency's operation will be aimed at improving its internal quality assurance system and activities associated with these aims and at cooperation in harmonising the elements of an external quality assurance system with sustainable development goals in Slovenian higher education. The Agency will continue to ensure a sensible planning of foreign travel; carry out distance accreditations, evaluations, education and consultations, including international meetings.

6. Enhanced international cooperation (S)

In accordance with the adopted plan, international activities will be strengthened further so that the Agency has a broad overview of examples of good practice, policies, analyses and comparisons on the European and global levels and adapt their application in the Slovenian higher education area to its specifics. In addition to maintaining or extending its membership in the ENQA and entry in the EQAR which, if the Agency's operations are sound, can be done every five years, the Agency will, under the CEENQA Presidency, introduce certain changes that will allow all members of this association to prepare contributions in topic-specific fields and present them publicly. The Agency will be involved in education and training and exchanges of experts and employees; after the adoption of the Quality Act, it will also conduct accreditations and evaluations abroad.

The Agency's work related to the establishment and operation of European associations of universities (European universities), the so-called universities of the future, will pose a special challenge.

7. Proactive communication (T)

The Agency wants to provide its stakeholders with the most up-to-date, accurate and diverse information on Slovenian higher and higher vocational education. The aim is to increase the visibility of the website, which will be an information centre for raising awareness of the importance of assessing the quality of higher education. In the coming years, the Agency's website will become the most important information point for students and future students, gathering all information relevant to them and links to other websites in one place. In order to popularise the website, the Agency will further strengthen its cooperation with higher education institutions, higher vocational colleges, secondary school and university student associations, while increasing its presence on social networks.



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WORK PLAN

The 2022 Work Plan (hereinafter: the AWP) has been prepared in accordance with the Quality Manual. It starts with tables about envisaged accreditations and evaluations, followed by an action plan outlining the tasks up to the end of 2022, the plan for the use of available financial resources and the plan for the education and training of human resources.

A) PLANNED ACCREDITATIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES AND HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

Table 1:

NUMBER OF UNRESOLVED APPLICATIONS ON 31 DECEMBER 2021			
Type of procedure	Type of accreditation	Number of unresolved applications	Notes
Higher education institution	Reaccreditation	16	The deadline for the submission of 6 applications was 30 September 2021; 4 applications refer to highly complex procedures at universities.
Higher education institution	Transformation of institution	3	
Higher education institution	Accreditation of location	1	The application was submitted at the end of December 2021.
Higher education institution	Extraordinary evaluation of institution	1	
Study programme	Accreditation	11	6 applications were submitted in the second half of the year, 1 procedure is pending before the Administrative Court.
Study programme	Reaccreditation	1	Administrative Court
Study programme	Evaluation of a sample	4	The application for a sample for 2022 was submitted in 2021.
Study programme	Extraordinary evaluation of programme	1	
Higher vocational college	External evaluation	5	According to the plan, 3 applications were submitted in the second half of the year.



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Notes to the table:

The reasons for a higher number of unresolved applications in the procedures for accreditation of study programmes are the following:

- a) 6 applications were submitted between June and December 2021, so the procedures in accordance with the law and the Accreditation Criteria could not be completed yet and will continue in 2022;
- b) one procedure was extended because of the joinder of several complex procedures;
- c) two procedures were extended because it took a long time for the applicants to supplement their applications;
- d) an action was filed in two procedures, which must be decided by the Administrative Court of the Republic of Slovenia.

In procedures for the reaccreditation of higher education institutions, there are several reasons for the high number of outstanding applications:

- a) the deadline for the submission of 6 applications was 30 September 2021, which means that the mentioned procedures have only just begun;
- b) Due to a constitutional review of Article 52 of the Act Determining the Intervention Measures to Mitigate the Consequences of the Second Wave of COVID-19 Epidemic (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 175/20) in conjunction with Article 38 of the Act Amending the Higher Education Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 76/16), the Administrative Court of the Republic of Slovenia suspended procedures for the reaccreditation of higher education institutions pursuant to Article 51.r of the ZViS and procedures for the extraordinary evaluations of higher education institutions pursuant to Article 51.š of the ZViS, as a result of which the time limits for procedural actions were suspended for a while in 2021. Consequently, the duration of procedures for the reaccreditation of higher education institutions was prolonged;
- c) procedures for the reaccreditation of higher education institutions according to the law and accreditation criteria are longer and more complex. The procedure envisages two evaluation visits and a broader group of (international) experts, particularly in university reaccreditation procedures;
- d) Due to the absence of various stakeholder groups (students, graduates, teachers, employers' representatives, etc.), it is generally not possible to carry out site visits during study holidays, which slightly extends the duration of the procedures.

Table 2:

CONSIDERATION OF ENVISAGED APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED IN 2022						
Type of procedure	Type of accreditation	Envisaged number of applications in 2022	Envisaged number of visits	Envisaged number of processed applications	Envisaged completion of procedures in 2023	
Higher education institution	Initial accreditation	1	1	0	1	
Higher education institution	Reaccreditation	7	2*	0	7	
Higher education institution	Transformation of institution	1	1	0	1	



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CONSIDERATION OF ENVISAGED APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED IN 2022						
Type of procedure	Type of accreditation	of	Envisaged number of applications in 2022	Envisaged number of visits	Envisaged number of processed applications	Envisaged completion of procedures in 2023
Higher education institution	Accreditation of location		2	0	2	0
Higher vocational college	External evaluation		9	8	5	4
Study programme	Accreditation		20	5	10	10
Study programme	Evaluation of a sample		20	20	20	0

Notes to the table:

*Even though 7 higher education institutions must submit a reaccreditation application in 2022 and one of the compulsory components is a visit (generally 2) to the institution, only 2 potential institution visits are envisaged in 2022. The reasons for this are the complexity of these procedures and the fact that applications must be submitted by 30 September 2022. According to the rules of procedure for the reaccreditation of an institution, the procedure leading up to the first visit to the institution takes nearly 4 months.

Table 3:

PLANNED EVALUATIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS IN 2022				
	Existing applications*	Obligations in 2022	Envisaged new applications in 2022**	Total
Institutions	21	7***	3	31
Programmes	15 (1 according to old criteria – appeal)	20****	20	55
Colleges	5	12	/	17
TOTAL	41 (1 according to the old criteria)	39	23	103

Notes to the table:

*"Existing applications" are all applications submitted before 2022.

**These are applications for the accreditation of new higher education institutions (initial accreditation and transformation of a higher education institution) and applications for the accreditation of new study programmes.

*****List of higher education institutions that will submit a reaccreditation application in 2022:**



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- 1) University of Novo mesto;
- 2) College of Construction Engineering Kranj, independent higher education institution, associated faculty of the New University;
- 3) DOBA Business School, Maribor;
- 4) Faculty of Information Studies;
- 5) Faculty of Organisation Studies, Novo mesto;
- 6) IAM Institute and Academy of Multimedia;
- 7) College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Bled.

At its 143th meeting, the Agency Council confirmed the Sample Evaluation Plan for 2022. The plan included doctoral study programmes.



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LIST OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE 2022 EVALUATION OF SAMPLE

University/independent higher education institution	Higher education institution	Study programme	Cycle	Type of programme
Independent higher education institution	Alma Mater Europaea – European Centre, Maribor	Social Gerontology	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	ALMA MATER EUROPAEA – Faculty of Humanities, Institutum studiorum humanitatis, Ljubljana	Humanities	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	Faculty of Information Studies	Information society	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	Faculty of Commercial and Business Sciences	Business Science	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	Faculty of Organisation Studies	Quality Management	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	School of Advanced Social Sciences in Nova Gorica	Sociology	3	Doctoral
Independent higher education institution	Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School	Sensor Technologies	3	Doctoral
New University	Faculty of Government and European Studies	International and Diplomatic Studies	3	Doctoral
University of Ljubljana	Biotechnical Faculty, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Faculty of Medicine, Veterinary Faculty	Biomedicine	3	Doctoral
University of Ljubljana	Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport	Maritime and Transport Science	3	Doctoral
University of Ljubljana	Faculty of Sport	Kinesiology	3	Doctoral
University of Ljubljana	Faculty of Public Administration	Governance and Economics in the Public Sector	3	Doctoral



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University of Maribor	Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science	Computer Science and Informatics	3	Doctoral
University of Maribor	Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	Doctoral School of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering	3	Doctoral
University of Maribor	Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security	Postgraduate Criminal Justice and Security	3	Doctoral
University of Maribor	Faculty of Medicine	Biomedical Technology	3	Doctoral
University of Nova Gorica	Graduate School	Karstology	3	Doctoral
University of Nova Gorica	Graduate School	Environmental Sciences	3	Doctoral
University of Primorska	Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technologies	Computer Science and Informatics	3	Doctoral
University of Primorska	Faculty of Humanities	Language and Interculturality	3	Doctoral

Table 4:

ENVISAGED VISITS IN 2022			
Institute/college	Number of visits*	Number of days**	Notes
University of Ljubljana	4	8	4 sample from 2022
University of Maribor	4	8	4 sample from 2022
University of Primorska	2	4	2 sample from 2022
University of Nova Gorica	2	4	2 sample from 2022
New University	4	12	R from 2019, 4 sample
University of Novo mesto	0	0	<i>As the date of submission of the application was 30 September 2022, the first visit to the University according to the rules of procedure will be in 2023.</i>
Euro-Mediterranean University	0	0	/
Independent higher education institutions	17	34	1 R from 2020, 6 R from 2021, 7 sample from 2022
Colleges	8	16	8 evaluations from 2022
TOTAL	41 visits	86 days	

Notes to the table:

R: reaccreditation of a higher education institution



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*Visits related to all planned evaluations of samples of study programmes, planned evaluations of colleges and the remaining evaluations or accreditations from previous years are taken into account.

**The number of visit days depends on the complexity of the institution/college or the evaluation, modification and implementation of study programmes.



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B) 2022 ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan tasks are set out or determined by taking into consideration:

A) The **Agency's strategic objectives** from 2021 to 2025:

- a) Adoption of the Act on Quality in Higher and Education (R)
- b) Improving assessment according to quality standards and accreditation and evaluation procedures (S)
- c) In-depth substantive analytical work in selected areas (S)
- d) Establishing up-to-date databases on selected activities in higher education institutions (T)
- e) Pursuing sustainable development goals (R)
- f) Enhanced international cooperation (S)
- g) Proactive communication (T)

B) **Areas of assessment** according to the Quality Manual:

- a) accreditations and external evaluations
- b) internal quality assurance system of the Agency
- c) external quality assurance system of the Agency
- d) criteria and other provisions of the Agency
- e) information system and provision of information

C) The **Agency's values**:

- a) professionalism
- b) transparency
- c) development

Table 5:

Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department		
<p><u>Head of the department:</u> Klemen Šubic, alternates: Nataša Kramar and Gregor Rebernik.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Jožica Kramar, Zala Sečnik, Anita Kajtazović and Martina Mravlja.</p>		
<p><u>Department's main fields of work:</u> criteria and other provisions from the field of quality; accreditations and evaluations; modifications of study programmes; cooperation with stakeholders (institutions/colleges, experts); communications and public relations; international cooperation; organisation and cooperation in different national and international events (conferences, consultations, training courses, workshops); keeping and updating records (on accreditations, evaluations, modifications, VTI, etc.); project collaborations and activities (micro-credentials, European universities, etc.); intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, self-evaluation, etc.); and archiving applications and other documents.</p>		
CATEGORY	ACTIVITY	TASK
Criteria and other provisions from the field of quality assurance	Proposing amendments, criteria, forms, templates for writing reports	Updating criteria according to the new Act.
Accreditations and evaluations	Assigning procedures, conducting procedures, reviewing and preparing materials for Council meetings, reviewing and considering initiatives for extraordinary evaluation	Distribution of evaluations of samples, regular preparations for Council meetings.
	Managing iNakvis (rules of procedure)	Collecting proposals for amendments to the rules of procedure.
	Proposing evaluations of the sample of study programmes, publishing the timeline for the evaluation of higher vocational colleges	Proposal of 2023 sample evaluations (content proposal in May, first discussion in June, second discussion in September); preparing the 2023 annual plan of external evaluations of higher vocational colleges, publication on the website and notifying the higher vocational education community and individual higher vocational colleges.
Modifications of study programmes	Modifications of study programmes (review)	Reviewing modifications of study programmes.
Cooperation with stakeholders	Intersectoral cooperation	Guidelines on hybrid learning (study, group formation, preparing guidelines, coordination with stakeholders).



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	Visits to institutions and cooperation with stakeholders	Weekly virtual visits to higher education institutions.
	Following relevant practices and new developments and preparing proposals.	Participation in intersectoral and international groups and associations results in proposals of relevant practices and new developments, presented to employees on monthly employee meetings and other events.
Training courses	Planning and carrying out expert training	Preparing the training programme.
Records	Public records	Preparing updated records for publication on the website; monthly updates to public records following the Council meeting.
	Archiving	Archiving resolved case files, annual training (Archives of the Republic of Slovenia).
	Register of experts	Monthly register updates following the Council meeting; reviewing expired entries, accompanying candidates during visits.
International cooperation	Participation in associations and organisations (ENQA, CEENQA, etc.)	Annual ENQA obligations, providing support for the CEENQA presidency, the ECA working group.
	Project collaboration	Collaboration in applications (as a partner), applying for funding.
	Organising and carrying out the yearly international conference	International conference on the topic of hybrid learning.
Communication and promotion	Communications and public relations	Preparing press releases, answers to journalists' questions and Agency presentation texts, interaction on social media; campaign to promote the website and presentation videos; internal regular notification on the Agency's operation and planned activities.



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	Website and social media management	Preparing and publishing news and other documents on the website, updating the website, publishing key information/other interactive content on social media, preparing and processing various multimedia content.
	E-newsletter	Preparing and sending the e-newsletter; expanding the mailing list – new subscribers – resending the invite to experts, agencies, Council members and other stakeholders.
Analytics and Information Technology Department		
<p><u>Head:</u> Tatjana Debevec, alternates: Maja Milas and Andrej Krček.</p> <p><u>Staff:</u> Jernej Širok, Msc, Matjaž Štuhec, Tatjana Horvat and Tilen Heco.</p>		
<p><u>Department's, main fields of work:</u> plans and reports (annual work plan and report on the work and operation of the Agency, strategy); analyses, documents, publications; self-evaluation of the Agency; manuals, guides; organisation and cooperation in different events (conferences, consultations, training courses, workshops); translation; eNakvis information system and links with databases (SICRIS, IZUM, etc.); internal information system iNakvis; intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, etc.); and keeping and updating records (on accreditations, evaluations, modifications, VTI, etc.).</p>		
CATEGORY	ACTIVITY	TASK
Plans and reports	Report on the work and operation of the Agency in 2021	An inventory of the work of the Agency's Council and its departments, an overview of accreditations and evaluations in 2021, the implementation of the tasks set out in the 2021 action plan with explanatory notes, an overview of the use of financial resources, etc.
	2022 work and financial plan	Envisaged number of accreditations and evaluations, the Agency's action plan with tasks and explanation of tasks, linking it to strategic goals; planning HR and financial resources.



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Analyses, documents and publications	Systemic analysis	Analysis of expert reports, reports by groups of experts and the self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges for the 2017–2021 period.
	Annual publication	Presentation of the Agency, short overview of work in 2021, presentation of the guide to assessment procedures, presentation of hybrid learning.
	Analysing expert reports	Analysing reports on the evaluations of samples of international study programmes or evaluations conducted abroad.
	Analysing agency independence	Analysing the good practices and activities of various European agencies aimed at strengthening their organisational and operational independence.
Self-evaluation of the Agency	Obtaining stakeholder opinions – surveys	Obtaining stakeholder opinions on external quality assessments.
	Analysing stakeholder opinions	Report on the assessment of accreditation and evaluation procedures and their impact on quality in tertiary education.
	Self-evaluation report	Preparing the draft self-evaluation report.
	Preparation for the ENQUA expert group visit.	Coordinating activities for the ENQUA expert group visit.
Manuals, guides	Supplementing the Assessment Guide	Supplementing the version, new chapter on the assessment of quality standards for the initial accreditation of a higher education institution.
	Guide to assessments for print	Designing the guide version for print.



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Consultations	Annual consultation with the Agency's experts	Presenting analysis findings, the final version of the guide to assessments, clarifying open questions regarding accreditations, evaluations or assessments, exchanging good practices.
	Annual consultation with representatives of higher education institutions and colleges	Presenting analysis findings, the final version of the guide to assessments, clarifying open questions regarding accreditations, evaluations or assessments, exchanging good practices.
External databases	Research work of higher education teachers	Databases on scientific research, professional and artistic activities by institution; supplementation based on current developments in bibliometrics.
	Student employability	Databases on employability by higher education institution and study programme
	Higher education libraries	Preparing guidelines for the quality assessment of libraries of higher education institutions based on the rules of the competent body.
Translation	English translation plan for 2022	Plan of the documents to be translated and who will be in charge of the translation.
eNakvis	Maintaining eNakvis	Investment maintenance of the iNakvis information system.
iNakvis	Assistance with systemic analysis	Developing the basic module to support self-evaluation procedures and systemic analyses at the Agency.



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	Attendance records	Digitalising records of working hours.
General Affairs Department		
<u>Head:</u> Barbara Zupančič Kočar, alternates: Mateja Bajuk Malešič and Snežana Mačar.		
<u>Staff:</u> Slađana Tomić, Prudencija Perat.		
<u>Department's main fields of work:</u> legislation, preparation of internal Agency acts; assistance in the implementation of activities from the field of quality assurance; work for the Appeals Committee; financial affairs (budget implementation); HR affairs; access to public information; business and administrative tasks (contracts, receiving and sending mail, document records, etc.); participation in external and internal review procedures; intersectoral cooperation (integrity, promotion of health, self-evaluation, etc.); and keeping and updating HR and other records within its powers.		
CATEGORY	ACTIVITY	TASK
Regulations	Legislation (higher and higher vocational education)	Participation in the working group responsible for the Agency Act; reviewing and examining notes; explaining the Articles of the Act; harmonising the text of the draft Act.
	Preparing internal Agency acts	Updating the human resources development plan; updating the Rules on the Measures to Preserve the Dignity of Employees and Protect the Persons Reporting Instances of Corruption, Illegal or Unethical Behaviour, preparing internal rules from receiving to archiving documents.



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	Personal data management	Counselling and raising awareness among employees about personal data processing; cooperating with the data protection officer; adapting personal data management according to the provisions of the ZVOP-2.
Quality assurance support	Legal support to the Agency Council	Participating in Agency Council meetings; overseeing the legality of Agency Council decisions; reviewing the meeting minutes, help with drafting decisions; calls for the appointment of new members at the end of terms.
	Legal assistance to staff in conducting procedures	Consulting on how to conduct procedures; preparing and updating draft decisions in progress.
	Preparation of legal opinions	Studying the issue and preparing legal opinions on specific dilemmas on the application of legislation.
Appeal Committee	Structure of the Appeal Committee	Administrative tasks in procedures to appoint members and their alternates to Appeal Committees.
	Support to the activities of the Appeal Committee	Preparing materials relating to Appeal Committee meetings, participation in the meetings and taking minutes, correspondence with members.
Human resource affairs	Employment	Director and employee recruitment procedures (publishing the job postings/public calls, ensuring that applications are complete, assisting the examination board or Agency Council in the procedure, preparing documents; reports, appointment decisions), preparing employment contracts and annexes, entering data of new employees in records (Mferac), preparing authorisations.



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	Wages and salaries	Tasks relating to: employee attendance, reports on remote work, increased workload, overtime, performance-related bonus for regular work, promotion, notifications on annual leave, preparing data for payroll; entering payment data into the Mferac system.
	Education	Monitoring education needs and organising education; annual education plan; analysing the needs of and care for a healthy working environment (the group for the promotion of health); Family-Friendly Enterprise; cooperation with health and safety at work officers.
Financial affairs	Copyright contracts for experts	Preparing copyright contracts and annexes for experts; payment claims; preparing and approving orders and NOSDs; planning and monitoring the realisation of financial resources for the payment of expert fees.
	Payments	Entering contracts/order forms into the Mferac system; FeP forms; tasks related to received invoices; preparing data and documents for payments to Council and Appeal Committee members; preparing orders, tasks related to orders (preparation, unblocking, etc.), rejecting inaccurate bookkeeping documents, etc.
	Implementation of the budget	Allocating funds between and within budget items; development programmes plans; liquidity plans; participation in drafting the budget and the report on annual accounts; working with the Budget Directorate; preparing the budget outturn for the previous month; preparing various financial reports, the HR plan, etc.
Public information	Access to public information	Conducting procedures relating to requests for access to public information (preparing and submitting documentation, decisions in the event of a (partial) rejection of a request).
	Catalogue of public information	Updating the Catalogue of public information.



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	Information from the Agency's field of work	Provision of general information from the Agency field of work.
Business and administrative tasks	Contracts	Participating in public procurement below threshold, preparing and reviewing contracts with external providers/suppliers and natural persons, preparing order forms, monitoring the expiration of contracts.
	Mail and document records	Receiving and sending mail and recording documents; managing current records; drafting and completing documents; correspondence.
	Business contacts	Managing the Agency's business contacts.
Monitoring	External control	Preparing documentation, providing explanations; response report for the Court of Auditors; implementing (corrective) measures to improve internal controls, etc. Preparing and submitting data for the audit of reported data on pension bases for 2018 and 2019 (Pension and Disability Institute)
	Internal audit	Selecting an external provider to conduct an internal audit; providing explanations and collecting documentation; collaborating with employees.
Records and documentation	Human resource affairs	Record keeping: employee attendance, medical examinations, employee data (in the Mferac system and personal files).
	Financial affairs	Record keeping: concluded contracts, travel forms, business partners, fixed assets, company phones, payments, refunds, Agency membership fees.
	Records of personal data processing	Managing personal data processing records; list of persons authorised to access personal data.

CLARIFICATIONS OF THE 2022 ACTION PLAN

Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department

The Agency's main activity, associated with quality assurance and accreditation and evaluation procedures, continues to be the main line of development and operation of the entire Agency, not only the Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department. More than half of employees conduct accreditation and evaluation procedures that involve the following ongoing tasks: reviewing applications and various databases, preparing invitations for supplementation, constant communication with investors and experts, appointing groups of experts, preparing reports, preparations for evaluation visits to institutions and colleges, collaboration and providing professional assistance to experts in assessments and guidelines in writing reports, reporting at Council meetings, writing decisions, etc. (participation in potential appeal procedures). In order to ensure high quality and professional services, additional measures will be introduced in 2022 for the standardisation of employees' tasks in conducting procedures and intersectoral cooperation. We are also envisaging a standardisation of employee communications, the preparation of drafts for writing emails and the preparation of presentations to conduct preparatory meetings with groups of experts involved in various accreditation and evaluation procedures.

Regarding criteria and other quality assurance regulations, this year's action plan also envisages a criteria update in accordance with the new Act on Quality in Higher and Higher Vocational Education, which is being harmonised. As the timeline for the adoption of the new regulation is difficult to predict accurately and the adoption of new legislation is not within the Agency's remit, it was difficult to foresee the scope and time plan of tasks in this context at the time of the preparation of the annual work plan.

At the end of last year, the Agency Council determined and adopted the sample of study programmes to be evaluated in 2022. It was decided that the evaluation would focus on third-cycle study programmes. In accordance with the adopted plan and based on the received applications, the staff will be assigned individual procedures at the beginning of the year. Regular preparations for the Council meetings will take place every first Thursday of the month, attended by all staff members conducting the procedures. The aim of these meetings will be to thoroughly review and examine the materials for the Agency Council meetings and resolve any dilemmas or open questions. As regards procedures, the internal information system iNakvis, which is continuously being improved and upgraded, plays an important role. In order to ensure the appropriate transparency and efficiency of procedures, this tool is in consistent and constant use by all staff members. Proposals for amendments to the rules of procedure will be collected next year.

In the first half of 2022, the Agency will also determine the draft study programmes selected for sample evaluations in 2023. The appropriate draft sample to be approved by the Agency Council will take into account accreditation and evaluation analyses or reports by groups of experts and associated findings. The selection criteria and draft study programmes will be communicated to all major stakeholders, including on the Agency's website. The Agency Council will likely approve the sample in September. In accordance with the plan of external evaluations of higher vocational colleges until 2025, adopted by the Agency Council in 2020, the plan of evaluations of higher vocational colleges in 2023 will also be prepared. The Agency Council will likely adopt it in June.

Even though higher education institutions themselves make amendments to their study programmes according to the legislation, the Agency has recently discovered that certain amendments exceed the legislative framework. The Agency regularly reviews all

communicated amendments and determines whether the legislative provisions and quality standards are being complied with. If it discovers that the communicated amendments are incompliant with the relevant legislation or exceed the study programme updates pursuant to the scope and content provided by the legislation, the Agency Council takes appropriate action.

In terms of stakeholder collaboration, intersectoral activities with the aim of developing guidelines on hybrid learning will continue. An external expert was engaged to prepare a study. The study is expected to be completed in 2022. Once the study is completed, a working group will be established to prepare draft guidelines to be coordinated with the stakeholders. This coordination will lead to the final version of the guidelines to be approved by the Agency Council and presented at the annual international quality assurance conference organised by the Agency.

In the following year, the Agency Director and staff will continue to visit higher education institutions suspended by the epidemic in 2020. The aim of weekly informal meetings, which will be held in person, at least for the time being, will be to review and strengthen cooperation between the Agency and individual higher education institutions, and the Director will take the opportunity at individual meetings to present the report on the work of the Agency for the past year and the work plan for the following year.

Training activities for the Agency's higher education and higher vocational education experts will continue as part of the Quality Assurance and International Cooperation Department. The prepared training programme will provide the basis for workshops to be carried out in the first half of the year. The training type, format and content will be determined later based on the analysis and internal coordination carried out by the Agency working group.

The Agency keeps public records on accredited higher education institutions and study programmes, which are available on the website. This year, the records will be updated with new data and will continue to be updated on a monthly basis after each monthly Agency Council meeting. The files of resolved case files are regularly archived, and the Agency staff receives training from the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Agency's register of experts is now integrated in the iNakvis information system and is regularly revised and updated. Candidates for entry in the register regularly accompany groups of experts to visits in accreditation and evaluation procedures to fulfil their register-related obligations. Every month – after the meeting of the Agency Council – the register is revised with new entries of experts who successfully complete their training. The fulfilment of the tasks and duties prescribed by the Criteria for Experts are checked for each expert within the prescribed time limit. Based on this, the expert's entry in the register is either extended or not. This year, the Agency will publish a public invitation to revise the list of foreign experts participating in procedures.

Following the changes to Agency departments, the functions of quality assurance and international cooperation are now combined. In 2022, international cooperation will continue to focus on participation in international associations (annual ENQA obligations, support for the CEENQA presidency), various projects (collaboration in applications as a partner, applying for funding), and working groups (as part of the ECA network) as well as on strengthening international cooperation and partnerships with foreign quality assurance agencies. As mentioned above, the Agency will organise an international conference in 2022 – this year's topic will be hybrid learning.

Significant attention will continue to be devoted to proactive internal and external communications. If relevant issues arise, the Agency will release a public statement and will continue to respond to all journalistic questions regularly and professionally and promote its

image on social networks. The website remains the main information point. It will be upgraded with key information about the Agency's activities and broader higher education topics. As in previous years, the Agency will actively promote itself on various channels, continuing to improve its multimedia content with new collections of presentation videos, which will focus on higher vocational colleges in 2022.

Regular information on current Agency news and events is being supplemented by the monthly e-newsletter; the Agency will strive to enhance its impact further by expanding the mailing list. The Agency will continue to strive to further increase the visibility of its activities at various national and international events. Efforts to improve internal communications will also be related to the development and applicability of the iNakvis internal information system.

Pursuant to Article 51.v of the ZViS, the Agency keeps public records on accreditations of higher education institutions and study programmes, evaluations of higher education institutions, the provision of study programmes and higher vocational colleges, contracts concluded and consents granted concerning transnational education and consents granted for the transformation of higher education institutions and amendments to study programmes. For the purpose of bringing public records into complete compliance with ZviS requirements, the data from the Agency's internal information system (iNakvis) was exported in 2021, harmonising the publication of prescribed data on the Agency's website. In 2022, the records will need to be supplemented with further data obtained after harmonisation with higher education institutions.

Analytics and Information Technology Department

At the beginning of 2022, the department will also take over information technology, which will further strengthen the Agency's analytical activities.

The department's first tasks will be the preparation of the Agency's 2022 work and financial plan and the 2021 report on the work and operation of the Agency. The work is extensive, as it comprises data, plans and reports for all departments that are also involved in their preparation. The work on the report and the plan must be finished in the first half of February so that the two documents can be discussed at the February meeting of the Agency Council.

The assessment guide is finally expected to be finalised this year. It is being prepared based on practical experience with the assessment of quality standards for the accreditations and evaluations of higher education institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges, the work of groups of experts and the Agency in conducting procedures and collaboration between Agency experts and representatives of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges. Its content therefore focuses on the assessment and improvement of the quality of educational, professional, research or artistic work as well as updating, modification and evaluation of study programmes. It also emphasises both internal and external characteristics of assessments and inconsistencies in expert assessments. The guide is regularly supplemented and amended; a new chapter on the assessment of quality standards for the external evaluation of higher vocational colleges was added in 2021. The second online version of the guide, which also included chapters on specifics and the participants' roles in the Agency's procedures and task, was published at the end of 2021. In 2022, we will continue to collect any feedback from stakeholders and prepare a new chapter on the assessment of quality standards for the initial accreditation of a higher education institution. In addition to the final online version of the guide, which will include various links to criteria and other relevant documents on the Agency's website, the

printed version will be prepared by the end of 2022. The printed version of the guide is expected to be published at the beginning of 2023.

In addition to a short presentation of the Agency and its work in 2021 and proceedings of discussions on a selected topic, the main chapter in the annual publication will be dedicated to the presentation of the assessment guide. As the Agency's annual international conference is planned for the first half of 2022, the publication with the proceedings of discussions on a selected topic from the conference will be issued sooner than in previous years. The main topic of the conference will be the development of hybrid learning, which is becoming increasingly relevant in the pandemic period.

In 2022, activities will begin for the preparation of a systemic analysis, which will comprise quality, quantity and comparative analyses of the outcomes and characteristics of evaluation practices. The aim of the systemic analysis is to examine reports by groups of experts and the self-evaluation reports of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges. The systemic analysis will give a general overview of the level of quality in tertiary education and the characteristics of evaluations in the 2017–2021 period.

The Agency's self-evaluation is another extensive and important task to be carried out in 2022. A newly-established self-evaluation group will prepare a draft self-evaluation report and coordinate activities for the visit of the ENQA expert group envisaged in 2023. The draft self-evaluation report will be based on an analysis of action plans, surveys and opinions of various stakeholders and ENQA recommendations. As part of the self-evaluation, the Agency will seek stakeholder opinions on external quality assessments. A report will be prepared in order to provide feedback on the external quality assessment and accreditation and evaluation procedures and their impact on quality in tertiary education.

The department's priority will continue to be the analysis of reports by groups of experts; this year, the focus is on reports on the sample evaluations of international study programmes or evaluations conducted abroad. This means establishing the quality of assessments of study programmes with an international element, e.g. joint study programmes, taking into account the quality standards and applicable assessment provisions. In 2022, we will continue the international analysis of independent quality assurance agencies in higher education, increasing the number of participating agencies in the topic-specific analysis. The purpose of the independence analysis is to compare good practices and activities of various European agencies aimed at strengthening their organisational and operational independence. The findings will be disseminated at various special meetings, including a presentation of the analysis at the General Assembly of the Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) planned for autumn.

In autumn 2022, the department will organise two annual consultations, presenting the analysis findings, the final version of the assessment guide and practical experience and current issues in cooperation with the Quality Assurance Department. The first consultation will be dedicated to Agency experts assessing the quality of higher education institutions, study programmes and higher vocational colleges in accreditation and evaluation proceedings, while the second will mainly be dedicated to institution and college representatives. In addition to the Agency's management and staff, the consultation will also be attended by Agency Council members.

Regular trainings of candidates for Agency experts are no longer in the department's remit; following the reorganisation of work, this task was assumed by the Quality Assurance Department.

One of the key demands of higher education is the quality of scientific or professional work of study programme providers. In 2021, the Agency started linking data on researchers from the national database SICRIS, managed by IZUM, with the eNakvis data on the providers of study programmes. The integration enables a comparative evaluation of research performance by discipline, higher education institution, programme, etc. In the future, we intend to continue doing this and to upgrade the collection and processing of research data and evaluation in line with the latest developments in bibliometrics.

As regards monitoring the employability of graduates in study programmes of Slovenian higher education institutions, we will strive to obtain employability data in a form that will be applicable in accreditation and evaluation procedures. We want to present the analysis findings to higher education institutions as soon as possible, asking them for any explanations and feedback before using them in the Agency's procedures and publications.

In 2022, the department, in cooperation with external providers, will ensure translations of key Agency documents, including regulations, the work report, the annual work and financial plan, the annual publication of the Agency, reports by groups of experts, the assessment guide and other topic-specific reports.

The Agency's main IT activities envisage both the investment maintenance of the eNakvis information system and the further development of the iNakvis internal information system. In 2021, we carried out a public procurement procedure to select an eNakvis maintenance provider, thus securing investment and basic maintenance for a period of five years; for the first time, for the purposes of iNakvis, we also prepared the investment project identification document (DIIP), which ensures the desired funds for its continued development in the Agency's budget.

As part of eNakvis investment maintenance, we will strive to further consolidate data between the eVŠ and eNakvis systems. This year, we will introduce an additional identifier and determine a protocol for the allocation of codes or unique identifiers of study programmes. The operation of eNakvis must be optimised, which can be achieved by improving the version of the Shakespeare process tool and particularly by preparing forms outside the BPM tool. The installation of the new eNakvis 2.0 version in the production environment will eliminate the biggest issue, i.e. the identification of users or their organisations. In 2022, we will continue discussions with all higher education institutions with their own information systems for the management of data on compulsory components of study programmes for a complete integration of data and inter-system exchange processes.

Inakvis is becoming an indispensable tool in the work of Agency employees. We are trying to digitalise every paper task that is later put into digital form (e.g. absence notification). In pursuing this aim, we plan on digitalising work attendance records in 2022. The next major iNakvis goal is to develop the basic module to support the Agency's self-evaluation procedures, which will save time in collecting and compiling data on work processes. In 2022, we also want to prepare iNakvis data exports in MS Excel, the publication of records required by the ZViS and a record of reports by experts in external evaluations and accreditations of study programmes and higher education institutions.

Most department employees will also carry out a variety of tasks related to accreditation and evaluation procedures.

General Affairs Department

The work of the General Affairs Department comprises professional, organisational and technical tasks for the entire Agency. In the following year, the department will therefore continue to carry out a wide range of HR, legal, financial and administrative tasks.

The department's priority in 2022 remains the Act on Quality in Higher and Higher Vocational Education and participation in the process of harmonisation of the draft Act text. The Agency will participate in the work of the working group at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, studying the comments after the public discussion and interministerial coordination and prepare the harmonised text of the draft Act.

The preparation of internal Agency acts and instructions for work, their amendments and supplementations represents a significant part of the department's tasks. The acts concerned are related to HR, finance and labour law, as well as personal data protection and access to public information. In 2021, the Agency discovered that the Rules on the Measures to Preserve the Dignity of Employees and Protect the Persons Reporting Instances of Corruption, Illegal or Unethical Behaviour need to be updated. The rules were drafted in 2014. At the beginning of 2022, there will be an employee seminar on mobbing which will be of use in updating the rules. We also intend to prepare internal rules on receiving to archiving documents, which was not done last year. In order to ensure that the Agency continues to operate in accordance with the law, the numerous changes to acts and other regulations will have to be followed constantly and regularly in 2022.

Counselling and raising awareness among employees about personal data processing will continue, cooperation with the data protection officer being very important in this context. As a new Personal Data Protection Act (ZVOP-2) is expected to be adopted in 2022, the Agency will have to adapt the management of such data accordingly.

The department's permanent task is providing legal support to Agency employees and the Agency Council in accreditation procedures run by the Agency, particularly consultation on the lawful conduct of procedures, the preparation and updating of draft decisions in procedures and reviewing draft decisions and minutes of Council meetings. The department will also provide legal support in the preparation of quality assurance regulations and legal opinions on the application of legislation. As some members of the Agency Council will reach the end of their term in the following year, the appropriate procedures for the appointment of new members will have to be carried out.

The Appeal Committee will continue to need the department's support in its activities and decision-making within its legal powers and mandate to organise and carry out meetings, prepare minutes and coordinate work between members. In 2021, the Appeal Committee again consisted of three members and two alternates; for its full composition, as prescribed by the ZviS, one more alternate is required. A new public invitation to find an alternate was approved in December 2021 and the deadline for application will expire in February 2022. In 2022, the procedure to appoint a missing alternate to this Committee will have to continue.

At the beginning of 2023, the term of the Agency's Director will end, which means that an open competition will have to be published and further procedures related to the appointment of the Director will have to be carried out in 2022 (ensuring the completeness of applications, assisting the competition committee or the Agency Council in the course of the procedure, preparing documents; reports, decision on the appointment).

The department's ongoing HR tasks will focus on tasks related to the exercise of rights arising from the employment relationship and the preparation of data and documents for employee payroll and keeping various records.

The financial affairs which, for the most part, represent ongoing tasks, mainly cover budget preparation and implementation tasks according to regulations and implementing regulations, particularly: determining and harmonising plans for development projects, programmes and measures with the established budget, examining contract drafts, particularly in terms of the compliance of financial provisions with applicable regulations, keeping records of the received accounting documents, preparing bookkeeping documents and orders for the payment of obligations, keeping various records, active cooperation with the appointed inventory committee in harmonising the annual inventory of fixed assets with the accounts (stock taking), etc.

The annual account of the Agency, a detailed report of achieved aims and results of the Agency's work, must be prepared by mid-March 2022.

The HR development plan, which was adopted in 2018 and is one of the key documents forming the basis for the continued professional development of Agency employees, must be updated in 2022. The department's ongoing tasks also include monitoring education needs and organising education, preparing the annual education plan, analysing the needs of and care for a healthy working environment (the group for the promotion of health) and cooperation with health and safety at work officers. After the Agency moved its offices from Slovenska cesta to Miklošičeva cesta in 2021, the necessary steps will have to be taken in 2022 in cooperation with health and safety at work offices to obtain a new risk assessment.

The Agency will continue to monitor the implementation of measures adopted in the procedure of obtaining the basic Family-Friendly Enterprise certificate. The certificate was received at the end of March 2020 for a period of three years. The second annual report on the implementation of measures, which is one of the documents based on which a special review board of the body awarding the certificate will assess at the end of the three-year period whether the set measures were introduced and the aims achieved, will have to be prepared in 2022.

As the Agency is obliged to communicate public information under the Public Information Access Act, the department is responsible for resolving requests for access to public information and regularly updating the catalogue of public information after every change.

As regards recording keeping on HR, finances and personal data processing, the scope of work is expected to remain unchanged in 2022. Some assistance or optimisation of work processes in HR record keeping and related procedures is expected from the upgrading of the iNakvis application.

At the end of 2021, the Court of Audit of the Republic of Slovenia issued a regularity audit report on the Agency in 2020. In 2022, in line with the recommendations made in the audit report, the Agency will study the activities aimed at strengthening internal controls to ensure a correct and timely fulfilment of all obligations.

In accordance with the long-term internal audit plan, the Agency will select an external provider in the second half of 2022 and actively participate in the internal audit procedure.

Data for the audit of reported data on pension bases for 2018 and 2019, developed by the Pension and Disability Institute based on the data reported in withholding tax returns (REK-1 forms), will have to be prepared and submitted by mid-February 2022.

RESOURCES

A) FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Policy: EDUCATION AND SPORT

Programme: Higher and higher vocational education

Subprogramme: Promoting quality in higher education

Under the subprogramme Promoting quality in higher education, funds can be transferred between budget items in accordance with the legislation in force.

EXPENDITURE	ADOPTED BUDGET FOR 2022
WAGES AND SALARIES	814,199.00
MATERIAL COSTS	257,176.00
INVESTMENTS	82,261.00
QUALITY	355,884.51
	1,509,520.51

Explanation of individual types of expenditure on subgroup level

Salaries and other personnel expenditure

The planned expenditure for salaries and other personnel expenditure is EUR 814,199.00.

Material costs – expenditure on goods and services

Planned use of funds for:

- office and general materials and services (internal audit of financial operations, etc.) EUR 41,560.71,
- special materials and services (promotion of health, professional support in reviewing the recovery plan) EUR 9,070.63,
- power, communications, water and public utility services EUR 25,844.18,
- transportation costs and services EUR 362.95,
- business trips EUR 4,976.78,

- regular maintenance (operating expenses) EUR 22,482.13,
- rent for equipment and office space EUR 132,455.74,
- other operating expenses (external consultancy) EUR 20,422.88.

Investments and investment maintenance

Planned use of funds for:

- regular maintenance and upgrading of eNakvis EUR 41,295.00,
- development of iNakvis – the Agency’s internal information system EUR 21,716.00,
- acquisition of computer hardware and intangible property (licenses) EUR 19,250.00.

Quality

Planned use of funds for:

- Agency publications, publishing publications and analyses, translation of documents, publication of criteria in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia ... EUR 77,884.51,
- operating expenses for: costs of remuneration for Council and Appeals Committee members, payments to Agency experts, consultations with experts, services of higher education institutions/colleges, education and training for experts, etc. EUR 278,000.00.

B) HUMAN RESOURCES

In autumn 2018, the Agency adopted the Agency HR development plan. This is the first single document providing for: constant training, the staff’s professional and personal growth, planning their education, study assistance, reward and promotion at work as well as future HR planning and care for a healthy and stimulative working environment.

2022 PLAN OF STAFF EDUCATION

In 2022, the Agency will organise the following seminars or workshops for all employees:

- first aid (spring);
- mobbing in the workplace (February).

Envisaged trainings, education programmes, seminars and events in 2022:

- participation in international seminars and trainings of umbrella European quality assurance associations in higher education, mainly on the fields of work (ENQA, ECA, INQAAHE, ESU);
- 17th european quality assurance forum (November);
- annual NAKVIS international conference (spring);
- trends and developments in higher education, micro-credentials, joint study programmes, etc.
- co-learning trainings and cooperation with stakeholders in higher education;
- course on document graphic and visual design;
- How to manage myself, my team and my organisation (for managers);
- English language course;



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

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Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

- reimbursement of work-related costs and payment of other remuneration from the employment relationship in the public sector (if needed);
- participation in the 2022 Days of Slovenian Lawyers conference (October);
- participation in the Privacy Days conference (autumn);
- Time management and work organisation;
- VAT in the public sector (January);
- new in personal data protection (ZVOP-2) (January);
- finance courses;
- seminar or conference on information technology and analytics;
- teambuilding (May/June).

Employees will also be able to attend seminars and events not listed in the plan if there are sufficient funds.

The Agency will spend approximately EUR 15,000.00 to **finance the continuous education** of its employees. The Agency will conclude a *contract on education* with an employee if the Director and the department head believe that their studies are related to the Agency's work or that the acquired competences will contribute to the employee's work performance. The contract on education will also determine the share of costs funded by the Agency, which depends on the number of employee applications to continue studies in the interest of the Agency and the available funds.