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of the Foundation “Academic Information Centre”,
Riga, 30 November 2020

COORDINATED
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Riga, 30 November 2020

APPROVED AMENDMENTS
by Baiba Ramaņa,
Chairperson of the Board
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Riga, 1 August 2024

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Rules of Procedure of the Accreditation Commission for Foreign Study Programmes

I. General Provisions

1. The Rules of Procedure of the Accreditation Commission for Foreign Study Programmes (hereinafter – the Rules of Procedure) prescribe the procedures for establishing the Accreditation Commission for Foreign Study Programmes (hereinafter – the Accreditation Commission) and selecting the applicants, its competence, and the procedures for appealing against the decisions made.

2. The Academic Information Centre (hereinafter – the Centre) shall ensure the updating of the Rules of Procedure and the performance of the organisational activities specified therein.

3. The Rules of Procedure shall be binding on the Accreditation Commission and the Centre.

4. The personal data specified in the documents received or drawn up within the framework of the establishment of the Accreditation Commission, the selection of applicants, and the performance of the activities of the Accreditation Commission shall be processed in order to ensure the establishment of the Accreditation Commission, the process of the tender for the selection of applicants, and the performance of the functions of the Accreditation Commission. The Centre shall act as the personal data controller.

II. Establishment of the Accreditation Commission and the Organisation of the Selection of Applicants

5. The Accreditation Commission for Foreign Study Programmes shall be established for a period of three years and it shall be composed of no less than five members – one representative of employers, one representative of students, and at least three representatives from different groups of scientific fields.

6. The Accreditation Commission shall be established by the order of the Centre, determining that the structural unit of the Centre – the Quality Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter – AIKA) – shall be in charge of ensuring the selection of applicants and the activities of the Accreditation Commission.

7. For the purpose of the selection of the members of the Accreditation Commission, AIKA shall prepare an order for establishing a commission for the selection of applicants (hereinafter – the Commission for the Selection of Applicants) which shall be composed of at least three members. The order shall be signed by the chairperson of the Board of the Centre.

8. The head of AIKA shall, by using an electronic signature, appoint an AIKA official (hereinafter – the official in charge) who shall be in charge of the coordination and performance of the activities for the selection of applicants for the position of a member of the Accreditation Commission, which includes:

8.1. drawing up announcements and publishing them on the website of AIKA at www.aika.lv or on mass and social media, if necessary;

8.2. communicating with persons applying for the position of a member of the Accreditation Commission;

8.3. communicating with the Commission for the Selection of Applicants and ensuring its work;

8.4. organising the documents submitted by the applicants and forwarding them to the Commission for the Selection of Applicants;

8.5. ensuring the work of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants during the selection process.

9. When drawing up an announcement for the applicants for the position of a member of the Accreditation Commission, the following conditions shall be established:

9.1. The applicant shall submit to AIKA an application accompanied by the following documents:

9.1.1. a career summary (CV) in Europass format;

9.1.2. a cover letter;

9.1.3. a confirmation of the conformity with the conditions specified in Chapter IV of the Rules of Procedure, signed by the applicant.

9.2. In the cover letter and career summary, the applicant shall provide grounds for the conformity with the requirements laid down in Chapter IV of the Rules of Procedure.

9.3. The application shall be accompanied by documents certifying that the applicant meets the relevant requirements and conditions, e.g., documents certifying the educational attainment, experience, and language proficiency.

9.4. The application shall be submitted electronically by sending it to the e-mail aika@aic.lv.

10. The official in charge shall, within three working days after his or her appointment, prepare the text of the announcement for the vacant position of the member of the Accreditation Commission in accordance with the requirements laid down in Paragraphs 5 and 9, Chapter IV of these Rules of Procedure and shall coordinate it with the head of AIKA electronically.

11. The official in charge shall, within one day after the coordination of the announcement text, ensure the publishing of the announcement on the website of AIKA at www.aika.lv and also, in accordance with the instructions of the head of AIKA, its publishing on mass or social media.

12. If necessary, the official in charge shall request from the applicant additional information necessary during the evaluation process.

13. The official in charge shall ensure that the member of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants confirms that he or she has taken due notice of the conditions and obligations for the processing of personal data.

III. Procedure of the Selection of Applicants

14. The official in charge shall, within three working days after the expiry of the application deadline, organise the documents submitted by the applicants in alphabetical order by surname and submit them electronically to the Commission for the Selection of Applicants for evaluation, while indicating the time of the meeting of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants.

15. The Commission for the Selection of Applicants shall be authorised to make decisions only if at least half its members, including the chairperson, are present at the meeting. The Commission for the Selection of Applicants shall make the decisions by a majority of the members present at the meeting. If the votes are equally divided, the chairperson of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants shall have a casting vote.

16. The official in charge shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants, indicating the following: the time and place of the meeting; the members present at the meeting; the items on the agenda to be discussed and the procedure of their discussion; the results of the voting by indicating the votes for or against each applicant cast by the Commission for the Selection of Applicants; the decisions made.

17. The minutes of the meetings of the Commission for the Selection of Applicants shall be signed by those members who were present at the meeting, and also by the official in charge who kept the minutes of the meeting.

18. The Commission for the Selection of Applicants shall, in a closed meeting, evaluate the conformity of the applicants with the requirements laid down under section 24, Chapter IV of these Rules of Procedure by proposing the applicants for the position of a chairperson, deputy chairperson, and members of the Accreditation Commission to the chairperson of the Board of the Centre for approval.

19. The chairperson of the Board of the Centre shall, in conformity with the proposal by the Commission for the Selection of Applicants, approve the composition of the Accreditation Commission or, if he or she disagrees with the proposal, partly or fully refuse the applicant proposed by the Commission for the Selection of Applicants, providing grounds for such refusal, and instruct to carry out a re-selection of applicants.

20. The official in charge shall communicate the decision of the chairperson of the Board of the Centre to the selected applicants and:

21. organise the conclusion of the contract with the applicants appointed as the members of the Accreditation Commission if they accept the position;

22. draw up an order for establishing the Accreditation Commission and its composition and submit it to the chairperson of the Board of the Centre for signing.

IV. Requirements and Criteria for the Selection of Applicants

23. The applicants for the position of a member of the Accreditation Commission shall be selected in accordance with the selection requirements and criteria.

24. The applicants must meet the following requirements:

24.1. experience in the quality assessment in higher education;

24.2. experience in the organisation of the study process in higher education;

24.3. experience in the development processes in the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) or other international development processes in higher education;

24.4. experience in organising and promoting scientific research or artistic creation, and the interaction between higher education and the labour market;

24.5. educational attainment which corresponds to at least EQF Level 7 (not applicable to students);

24.6. at least B2 level English and Russian language proficiency in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (the distribution of levels is available at www.europass.lv).

25. Proportion as percentage shall be determined for the requirements and they shall be evaluated against the criteria by awarding a specific number of points for the conformity with each criterion (see Annex 1).

26. The applicant's score for each requirement shall be calculated by multiplying the points awarded for each criterion with the proportion as percentage determined for the relevant requirement. The final score of the applicant shall be calculated by summing the scores obtained for each requirement.

27. The Commission of the Selection of Applicants shall rank the applicants by their scores,

starting from the applicant who has achieved the highest score, and vote for each applicant, proposing their appointment as members of the Accreditation Commission.

V. Competence of the Accreditation Commission

28. The Accreditation Commission shall take a decision on the accreditation of foreign study programmes.

29. The Accreditation Commission shall have the following tasks:

29.1. to examine the report submitted by the experts group;

29.2. to examine the documents submitted by the foreign higher education institution for the accreditation of the study programme;

29.3. to hear the opinion of the foreign higher education institution on the report by the experts group carrying out the assessment;

29.4. to make a decision on granting or refusing the accreditation of the foreign study programme in accordance with the decision-making procedures laid down in Chapter VI of the Rules of Procedure.

30. The Accreditation Commission shall have the following rights:

30.1. to request from the foreign higher education institution or experts additional information necessary to make the decision, if necessary;

30.2. to change the assessment of the requirement, based on objective justification;

30.3. to formulate additional recommendations for the foreign higher education institution;

30.4. to eliminate the recommendations by the experts, if sufficient justification is obtained that the specific recommendation is not relatable;

30.5. to submit electronically any objections or proposals on the draft minutes within three working days after receiving the draft minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Commission for electronic coordination thereof;

30.6. to express individual opinion on the decision to be made by recording it in accordance with the procedures laid down in Chapter VI of the Rules of Procedure.

31. The Accreditation Commission shall fulfil its obligations impartially and independently and assume joint responsibility for the decision made.

VI. Decision-making Procedures

32. The Accreditation Commission shall make the decision on granting or refusing the accreditation of the foreign study programme in a meeting after:

32.1. examining the materials submitted by the foreign higher education institution;

32.2. evaluating the joint report by the experts group carrying out the assessment;

32.3. evaluating the comments by the foreign higher education institution on the factual errors discovered in the joint report by the experts group, if any;

32.4. hearing the explanations of the foreign higher education institution if its representatives are present at the meeting;

32.5. examining the information prepared by AIKA on the foreign higher education institution and its study programme if such information is necessary.

33. The Accreditation Commission shall be authorised to make decisions only if at least three members of the Accreditation Commission are present at the meeting.

34. The Accreditation Commission shall make one of the following decisions:

34.1. on granting the accreditation of the study programme of the foreign higher education institution for a period of six years if the study programme has been assessed as “excellent” or “good” in accordance with the Guidelines for the Assessment of Foreign Study Programmes (see Annex 2);

34.2. on granting the accreditation of the study programme of the foreign higher education institution for a period of two years if no more than two requirements have been assessed as “unsatisfactory” and the identified deficiencies and shortcomings in high-quality implementation of the study programme can be rectified within two years;

34.3. on refusing the accreditation of the study programme of the foreign higher education institution if at least three requirements have been assessed as “unsatisfactory” and the identified shortcomings in high-quality implementation of the study programme cannot be rectified within two years.

34.4. The Accreditation Commission shall make the decision in a meeting by open voting with a simple majority of votes. If the votes are equally divided, the chairperson of the Accreditation Commission shall have a casting vote.

35. In the event of a conflict of interest, a member of the Accreditation Commission shall abstain from making the decision:

35.1. if the member of the Accreditation Commission holds, or over the last two years has held, the position of guest lecturer at the foreign higher education institution which implements the study programme to be accredited;

35.2. if the member of the Accreditation Commission participates, or over the last two years has participated, in a collaboration or scientific project implemented by the foreign higher education institution which implements the study programme to be accredited;

35.3. if the member of the Accreditation Commission has, over the last two years, made any decision regarding the foreign higher education institution which implements the study programme to be accredited.

36. The member of the Accreditation Commission shall inform the chairperson of the Accreditation Commission about the conflict of interest in writing, but in case of a conflict of interest of the chairperson of the Accreditation Commission – the chairperson of the Board of the Centre. The chairperson or the deputy chairperson of the Accreditation Commission shall organise the making of the decision in the absence of the member of the Accreditation Commission who is subject to a conflict of interest.

37. The decision on granting or refusing the accreditation of the study programme of the foreign higher education institution is announced during the Accreditation Commission meeting and shall be included in the minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Commission.

38. AIKA shall, within 10 working days, send to the foreign higher education institution an electronic notification on the decision taken by the Accreditation Commission. In addition, AIKA shall inform the expert group about the decision taken by the Accreditation Commission.

39. AIKA shall, within one month after announcing the decision during the Accreditation Commission meeting, on the basis of the minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Commission, draw up the draft decision of the Centre and the certificate on the accreditation of the study programme of the foreign higher education programme (see Annex 3) which shall be submitted to the chairperson of the Accreditation Commission and the chairperson of the Board of the Centre for signing.

40. The decision by the Accreditation Commission may be appealed before the chairperson of the Board of the Centre within one month after its announcement, and it shall be referred to a established commission which shall review the draft decision in question and operates on the basis of separate rules of procedure.

VII. Organisation of the Work of the Accreditation Commission

41. The meetings of the Accreditation Commission shall be open, unless otherwise established by the chairperson of the Accreditation Commission.

42. The work of the Accreditation Commission shall be organised by the chairperson who shall be elected from among the members of the Accreditation Commission by open voting with a simple majority of votes for the entire period of activity of the Accreditation Commission.

43. The chairperson of the Accreditation Commission shall:

43.1. establish the times and agenda of the meetings of the Accreditation Commission;

43.2. convene the meetings of the Accreditation Commission and notify its members thereof no later than five working days prior to the meeting;

43.3. chair the meetings of the Accreditation Commission;

43.4. organise the making of the decision in accordance with Chapter VI of the Rules of

Procedure;

43.5. fulfil other obligations to ensure the work of the Accreditation Commission.

44. The technical work of the Accreditation Commission, including the preparation of the meeting minutes, the draft decision, and the accreditation sheet, shall be ensured by the secretary of the Accreditation Commission appointed by AIKA.

45. The minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Commission shall specify the date, beginning and end of the meeting, the persons present at the meeting, items of the agenda, main information provided by the foreign higher education institution, main conclusions and recommendations outlined in the joint report by the experts group, the opinion of the members of the Accreditation Commission, the voting results, and the decisions made.

46. The minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Commission shall be signed by the chairperson or, in case of his or her absence, by the deputy chairperson and the secretary of the Accreditation Commission.

47. The Accreditation Commission has the right to request the secretary of the Accreditation Commission to invite to the meeting the experts who have participated in the assessment of the particular study programme on which the decision is being taken.