

Pursuant to Article 23, paragraph 2 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and Statute of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on 2 June 2010 director of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency), Prof. Jasmina Havranek, Ph.D. adopted

ORDINANCE

ON EXTERNAL AUDIT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

This Ordinance regulates the procedure of external audit of quality assurance systems (hereinafter: audit) at higher education institutions (hereinafter: object of evaluation) in the Republic of Croatia.

Article 2

(1) External audit of quality assurance system is used for assessing the level of development and efficiency of object of evaluation's quality assurance system, in accordance with national, European ("Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area", ESG) and international standards, as well as object of evaluation's continuous improvement of quality culture.

(2) Accreditation Council of the Agency adopts criteria and indicators for the assessment of quality of the object of evaluation's quality assurance system.

II. PROCEDURE

Article 3

(1) The Agency organises audit of object of evaluation's quality assurance system in accordance with the annual plan, adopted by the Accreditation Council and approved by the Management Board. The adopted annual plan is published on Agency web-site and forwarded to Rectors' Conference and Council of Universities and University Colleges of Applied Sciences.

(2) The procedure of quality assurance system audit consists of 4 stages:

- a) planning
- b) audit
- c) report
- d) follow-up.

Planning

Article 4

In planning stage all the activities of audit procedure are defined. The type of audit and the manner of conduct are arranged, members of audit committee (hereinafter: Committee) are selected and appointed, the role of Committee in audit procedure is defined and an audit implementation plan is drafted.

Article 5

(1) Audit procedure is carried out by the Committee that consist of foreign and domestic experts, representatives of academic community, students, business sector and the Agency. Members of Committee are appointed by the Accreditation Council upon their selection from the database of audit experts.

(2) In selecting the candidates for Audit Committee members, the type of audit and characteristics of individual candidates (profession, regional affiliation and sex) are all taken into consideration, pursuant to paragraph 4 of this Article.

(3) The Committee from paragraph 1 of this Article comprises:

- 2 representatives of HEIs or scientific organizations, 1 of which is a foreign expert
- 1 representative of the business community
- 1 student representative
- 1 representative of the Agency.

(4) Criteria for the selection of the members of the Committee:

General criteria:

- good knowledge of higher education, science and quality assurance
- good knowledge of quality assurance systems
- participation in seminars for audit experts organised by the Agency
- successful completion of seminar for audit experts/certificate; database of audit experts
- participation in additional trainings for audit experts
- experience in audit.

Additional criteria for the selection of Committee members for individual groups:

- a) for representatives of higher education institutions and scientific organisations:
 - experience in various evaluation procedures of higher education institutions or scientific organisations
 - active involvement in development of quality culture at their parent institution
- b) for representatives of the business community:
 - renowned business expert
 - expertise and experience in implementation of various systems of quality assessment
- c) for student representatives:
 - proof of quality in their own study (grade average of 3.5 or higher)
 - good knowledge and active participation in the work of national and international student organisations
- d) for representatives of the Agency:
 - following international trends in quality assurance
 - transfer of knowledge in quality assurance on national and international level
 - improving and developing quality culture in the Republic of Croatia.

Audit

Article 6

Audit consists of the assessment of quality assurance system documentation, visit to the object of evaluation, meetings with all the stakeholders, implementation of all the activities set by the programme of visit, analysis of data gathered and drafting of the report outline.

Report

Article 7

- (1) The Committee drafts a report on the basis of report outline, as well as the analysis of documentation submitted and available, information gathered during the visit to the institution (attending classroom lectures, visiting laboratories, library, student administration office, restaurant, campus, etc.) and through meetings carried out at the higher education institution
- (2) The report is submitted to the Accreditation Council no later than 30 days after the visit to object of evaluation. Adopted report is submitted to object of evaluation. Within 30 days after receiving the report, object of evaluation submits its official response and plan of activities for the follow-up phase.

Appeal procedure

Article 8

- (1) If object of evaluation finds that Audit Committee did not carry out the audit procedure in accordance with Manual for Audit of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Croatia, or is not satisfied with audit results, it can file an appeal to the Agency within 15 days after receiving the Audit Report.
- (2) Appeal is submitted to all the members of Audit Committee. The Audit Committee issues an official response to the appeal within 15 days.
- (3) Object of evaluation's appeal and Audit Committee's official response are submitted to the Accreditation Council. After reviewing the submitted documents, the Accreditation Council decides on whether the appeal procedure is to be initiated or the appeal rejected.
- (4) If it decides to initiate the appeal procedure, the Accreditation Council shall appoint Appeal Committee from the audit expert database. The Appeal Committee shall review all the documents pertaining to the aforementioned audit and make a final evaluation within 30 days. The Appeal Committee comprises 3 experts, 1 of whom is a student.
- (5) On the basis of Appeal Committee's evaluation, the Accreditation Council reaches a final decision that cannot be appealed. This decision is then submitted to the HEI and the Audit Committee.

Follow-up

Article 9

- (1) Within 30 days after receiving the audit report, the object of evaluation submits its official response and a plan of activities for the follow-up phase. The follow-up shall last no longer than 6 months after receiving official response from the object of evaluation. After the completion of planned activities, the object of evaluation submits a report with the analysis of their effectiveness.
- (2) On the basis of this report and within the period of 30 days, the Committee drafts a final report. The final report contains final rating of the level of development and efficiency of object of evaluation's quality assurance system, and indicates a date of a new audit, a re-audit within a period no longer than 18 months, or a re-accreditation.

- (3) The final report is submitted to the Accreditation Council for adoption.
- (4) The adopted final report is published on ASHE web-site.

Issuing certificate

Article 10

If the Committee determines that object of evaluation's quality assurance system is effective, with regard to the criteria adopted by the Accreditation Council, the Agency issues a certificate containing the rating of quality assurance system's level of development and efficiency.

III. FINAL PROVISION

Article 11

This Ordinance shall enter into force on the day of its publishing on the Agency notice board, after it has been adopted by the Accreditation Council. The Ordinance shall also be published on the Agency web-site.

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Zagreb, 2 June 2010



Director of the Agency

Prof. Jasmina Havranek, Ph.D.

This Ordinance was adopted at the 6th session of Accreditation Council held on 1 June 2010, and published on the Agency notice board on 7 June 2010.