

Based on the Accreditation Council Conclusion of 20 June 2017 adopting the Ordinance on Audit of the Quality Assurance System, and pursuant to Article 23, paragraph 2 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (Official Gazette 45/09) and the Statute of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, on June 21, 2017 director of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, Prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD adopted

ORDINANCE

ON 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 audit of quality assurance systems (hereinafter: audit) at higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia.

Article 2

(1) The audit assesses the efficiency and degree of development of the internal quality assurance system (hereinafter: QAS) of a higher education institution in accordance with national, European (*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* or ESG, 2015) and international standards, as well as its continuous improvement of quality culture.

(2) Accreditation Council adopts the criteria for the assessment of the development and efficiency of the internal quality assurance system of the audited higher education institution, which are set out in Annex 1 to this Ordinance and form an integral part thereof.

II. PROCEDURE

Article 3

(1) The Agency for Science and Higher Education (hereinafter: the Agency) carries out an audit in accordance with the annual plan adopted by the Accreditation Council, but can also carry it out upon the suggestion of a higher education institution. The annual plan is published on the Agency's website.

(2) The audit procedure consists of four phases:

a) planning

- b) site visit
- c) report
- d) follow-up.

(3) The audit procedure is based on the following documents:

- a) Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (OG 45/09)
- b) this Ordinance
- d) Audit Manual of the Agency for Science and Higher Education.

Planning

Article 4

In the planning phase, all activities and deadlines of the audit procedure are defined, at the request of the higher education institution an additional audit objective is agreed upon, the members of the expert panel (hereinafter: the panel) are selected and appointed, and an audit plan, audit timeline and the site visit protocol are drafted. The audit timeline and the site visit protocol are delivered to the audited higher education institution.

In the planning phase, the Agency's coordinator is appointed. The Agency's coordinator is an employee of the Agency who provides organizational, administrative and professional support to the panel.

Agency's coordinator

Agency's coordinator is obliged to:

- draft the audit plan and timeline in co-operation/agreement with the coordinator appointed by the higher education institution
- ensure that all the activities of the audit procedure take place taking due account of the defined deadlines
- study the documentation for the audit submitted by the higher education institution, check the validity and completeness of the submitted documentation and, if necessary, request from the higher education institution to provide additional documentation
- familiarize all panel members with their rights and obligations
- attend all panel meetings
- communicate with panel members and higher education institution
- organize and conduct training of panel members
- organize and participate in the site visit to the higher education institution that is the object of evaluation
- ensure that the final report of the panel is ready for the session of the Accreditation Council taking due account of the deadlines set out in the audit timeline and, if necessary, participate in that session of the Accreditation Council
- coordinate the follow-up procedure

- receive the report on the follow-up of the audited higher education institution and submit it to the panel
- attend the meeting with representatives of the higher education institution after the follow-up
- participate in a workshop with representatives of higher education institutions.

In the planning phase, the audited higher education institution appoints a higher education institution's coordinator of the process and, six weeks prior to the visit, submits its documentation, which includes the latest internal audit report on the quality assurance system of the higher education institution. The list of documents to be submitted by the higher education institution is defined in the Audit Manual.

This phase of the procedure also includes the panel's evaluation of the documentation submitted by the higher education institution.

Panel

Article 5

(1) The panel comprises foreign and national experts, representatives of the academic community, students and industry. Chair and panel members are appointed by the Accreditation Council on the Agency's proposal. Panel members select the deputy chair among themselves.

(2) Panel members are selected:

- from the database of audit experts run by the Agency/database of audit experts run by ENQA
- based on the recommendation by other agencies for quality assurance in science and higher education
- based on the recommendation by the *European University Association* (EUA)
- through open invitation to potential candidates.

(3) When selecting panel members, care shall be taken of the profile of the institution of higher education and of each potential candidate, with regard to the criteria referred to in paragraph 5 of this Article.

(4) The panel referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article comprises five (5) members:

- 3 teachers (of which at least one is a foreign expert) in a scientific-teaching or artistic-teaching appointment if the object of the audit is the university or a member of a university, or in a scientific-teaching or artistic-teaching or teaching appointment if the object of the audit is a polytechnic or a college
- 1 representative of the business community
- 1 student representative.

(5) Criteria for the selection of panel members:

General criteria:

- knowledge of higher education, science and quality assurance
- participation in training for audit experts organized by the Agency

- understanding of the national quality assurance system
- knowledge of the audit procedure conducted by the Agency
- knowledge of the ESG and the European dimension of quality assurance
- experience working in the team
- good oral and written communication skills
- good command of English.

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

- a) for representatives of the academic community:
 - experience in internal quality assurance in higher education and science
 - experience in external quality assurance in higher education and science
- b) for representatives of the business sector:
 - expertise in the business sector
 - experience in running, developing or implementing a quality assurance system in the business sector
- c) for student representatives:
 - proof of achieved quality of study (high grade-point average)
 - good knowledge and active participation in the work of national and international student organizations.

Panel members are independent in their work and do not represent their home institutions. When participating in the audit procedure they are guided by the principles of impartiality and objectivity.

(6) After the appointment of the panel and at least two months prior to the visit, the Agency shall submit a Decision on the Appointment of the Panel to the audited higher education institution. The higher education institution can submit its observations on the composition of the panel and submit an objection challenging the composition of the panel within 7 days from the receipt of the Decision. If the higher education institution submits an objection to the composition of the panel and the Accreditation Council finds that the objection is justified, it will appoint other members of the panel within 30 days. Objection to the composition of the panel does not affect the deadline for submitting the documentation for the audit by the audited higher education institution.

(7) The members of the panel are obliged to:

- study all the audit documentation provided by the Agency's coordinator and, one week prior to the visit, submit to the Agency's coordinator the observations and a list of questions for the visit to the audited higher education institution, and (if they consider it necessary), a list of additional documents of the higher education institution that they would like to inspect during the visit
- attend all panel meetings
- participate in the site visit to the higher education institution and talk to stakeholders during the visit

- keep notes during the visit and actively participate in writing the report
- make all assessments by consensus
- adhere to all set deadlines
- study the action plan of the higher education institution for the follow-up phase
- study the higher education institution's report on the follow-up phase
- participate in drafting the panel's conclusion on the effectiveness of the activities carried out during the follow-up phase.

(8) In addition to the abovementioned, the chair of the panel is obliged to:

- coordinate the work of all panel members
- chair meetings of the panel
- chair all meetings with higher education institution stakeholders, in accordance with the site visit protocol
- ensure factual accuracy, validity and consistency of the final report of the panel
- complete the final report of the panel and submit it to the Agency
- upon receipt of the report of the higher education institution on the follow-up phase, coordinate the work of all panel members on drafting the conclusion of the panel on the effectiveness of the activities carried out during the follow-up phase and submit it to the Agency
- personally participate or, in agreement with other panel members, elect a member of the panel who will attend a meeting with the representatives of the higher education institution upon completion of the follow-up phase, where the conclusions of the panel will be presented to the higher education institution– with the possibility of an open discussion.

(9) The deputy chair of the panel shall assume the duties of the chair of the panel in case of justified absence of the chair of the panel during the course of the audit procedure.

(10) Obligations of panel members as a rule * last:

- 1 day for preparation (study of submitted and available documentation of higher education institution, preparation of notes and questions for the visit, meeting of the panel and preparation for the site visit)
- 2 days for the visit and drafting of the report
- 1 day to prepare the final report
- 1 day to prepare the conclusion.

* Deviations are possible depending on the type of audit and/or profile of the audited institution.

In addition, the chair or one of the elected members of the panel shall attend a one-day workshop with representatives of the audited higher education institution at the end of the follow-up phase.

A panel member is entitled to compensation for their work in accordance with the general act of the Agency and to reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses. All other expenses are borne by the panel member.

Conflict of interest

Article 6

Panel members must not be in conflict of interest.

Conflict of interest exists:

- a) if the panel member has an employment contract or other cooperation agreement with the audited higher education institution at the time of the audit or had an employment contract or other cooperation agreement with the audited higher education institution in the last three years;
- b) if the panel member participates in any way in a project carried out by the audited higher education institution or a project in which it participates;
- c) if the panel member participates or has participated in the management, professional or advisory bodies of the audited higher education institution in the last three years;
- d) if the panel member is personally associated with the head of the higher education institution or persons performing management duties;
- e) if a panel member is a student at the higher education institution or has completed a study at the audited higher education institution in the last three years.

There is also a conflict of interest in cases where the relations mentioned above include members of the panel member's immediate family (marital or extramarital, close-blooded relatives, brothers and sisters, or adoptive parents).

Direct communication of the higher education institution with the members of the panel is not allowed before and after the visit to the higher education institution, and the panel members are obliged to notify the Agency's coordinator of possible violations of these provisions. Panel members must guarantee the confidentiality of the information they received during the audit procedure. Due to all of this, panel members sign a *Declaration on confidentiality and the absence of conflict of interest*, which is submitted to the higher education institution.

Prior to, during and after the visit panel members are not allowed to receive gifts from the audited higher education institution.

Site visit

Article 7

This phase of the audit procedure involves the evaluation of the documentation submitted by the higher education institution, a site visit to the higher education institution (including interviews with representatives of all stakeholders and the

realization of all activities planned in the site visit protocol), collection of additional evidence, analysis of collected data and drafting of the report.

In addition to panel members, the Agency's coordinator and, if necessary, an interpreter also participate in the visit to the higher education institution.

The site visit may take 2 to 3 days, and exceptionally even longer, as determined by the Agency in agreement with the audited higher education institution. The visit is carried out according the agreed site visit protocol, which is delivered to the higher education institution and panel members at least 2 weeks prior to the visit.

Panel members send their observations and the list of questions to the Agency's coordinator a week before the site visit to the higher education institution.

The day before the site visit to the higher education institution, the panel meets on the premises designated by the Agency. The Agency's coordinator informs the members of the panel about their duties and responsibilities. The main issues to be considered during the site visit are identified.

A compulsory part of the site visit are meetings with the management, internal and external stakeholders of the higher education institution, tour of the premises and gathering of additional evidence.

The higher education institution must ensure the appropriate premises where all scheduled meetings and internal panel meetings will be held.

The site visit to the higher education institution ends with a meeting with the management of the higher education institution, at which the chair or a member of the panel informs the higher education institution about the main observations of the panel.

Report

Article 8

(1) Within 4 weeks after the site visit to the higher education institution, the panel shall draw up the audit report based on the analysis of the submitted and available documentation of the higher education institution, information collected during the site visit and the draft report. The report shall contain recommendations for improvements for the follow-up phase and the assessment of the development stage and effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system according to the Audit Criteria.

The work of the panel members is coordinated by the chair of the panel, and the final version of the report is agreed upon by the panel electronically.

(2) Not later than 4 weeks after the visit, the chair of the panel shall submit the audit report to the Agency's coordinator. The report is then sent for editing and proofreading and, if necessary, translation. Within 6 weeks after the site visit, the Agency's coordinator shall send the report in electronic format to the higher education institution for consideration and comments. The higher education institution shall provide the Agency's coordinator with the official response within 2 weeks upon receipt of the report. The Agency's coordinator submits higher education institution's official response to the panel for consideration, and the panel submits the final report to the Agency's coordinator. The final report is submitted to the Accreditation Council for

adoption. The adopted final report is published on the Agency's website in Croatian, and—depending on the type of audit and/or profile of the audited higher education institution—a summary of the final report or the complete final report is published in English.

(3) Upon publication of the adopted final report, the Agency shall collect feedback from the higher education institution and panel members. The data is collected for the purpose of improving the work of the Agency.

Certificate

Article 9

(1) If the panel during the audit procedure determines that the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution is at least in the developed phase by all evaluation elements of the Audit Criteria, the Agency shall, upon adoption of the final report, issue a certificate containing the rating of the development of the internal quality assurance system to the higher education institution for the period of 5 years.

The complaints procedure

Article 10

(1) If the higher education institution considers that the panel has not conducted the audit procedure in the manner described in the Audit Manual and the Audit Ordinance, or is not satisfied with the audit outcome, it may lodge a complaint within 15 days of the receipt of the adopted audit report. New facts and new evidence that were not presented during the site visit cannot be presented in the complaint.

(2) The complaint and the complete documentation of the audit procedure shall be considered by the Complaints Committee of the Agency.

(3) The Complaints Committee consists of three (3) members, of which at least one (1) is from the legal profession. Two (2) substitute members are also appointed. The mandate of the members of the Complaints Committee lasts three years. Members of the Complaints Committee shall be appointed by the Management Board of the Agency on the proposal of the Rector's Conference and the Council of Polytechnics and Colleges in accordance with the following conditions:

- experience in internal quality assurance in higher education and science;
- experience in external quality assurance in higher education and science (e.g. as member of the expert panel) and/or experience in the work of the governing bodies in higher education and science;
- experience in higher education and science in the international context (e.g. work on international scientific projects, participation in evaluation procedures abroad, work experience or study abroad);
- excellence in their area of expertise (e.g. publications, awards, participation in governing and representative bodies);
- local recognition for their initiative, ethics and advocacy of academic integrity;

- excellent knowledge of the Croatian and European legal frameworks and the context of quality assurance in higher education and science;
- excellent command of English;
- knowledge of methods for evaluation of work of higher education institutions and scientific organizations.

Experience in co-operation with European representative bodies in higher education (E4 Group), work experience in other complaints committees, or cooperation with them, will be considered an advantage.

Members of the Complaints Committee are independent in their work and do not represent their home institutions. When taking part in decision-making, they are guided by the principles of impartiality and objectivity. Members of the Complaints Committee must not be in conflict of interest and shall sign the Declaration on confidentiality and the absence of conflict of interest.

(4) The composition, mandate, work and decision-making of the Complaints Committee and other matters of relevance to its work shall be detailed in the Rules of Procedure of the Complaints Committee.

(5) The Complaints Committee shall deliver a written opinion within 30 days from the date of receipt of the complaint to the Accreditation Council. The Accreditation Council considers the opinion of the Complaints Committee and makes a decision on the final adoption of the final report.

Follow-up

Article 11

(1) Within one month after the adoption of the final report, the higher education institution shall, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the final audit report, draw up an action plan of improvements for the period of 2 years. The action plan shall be submitted by the higher education institution to the Agency's coordinator, who shall forward it to the panel.

(2) The follow-up phase lasts 6 months from the date of the final adoption of the final report. Upon completion of the planned activities or at the end of the six months following the date of the final adoption of the final report, the higher education institution shall submit to the Agency's coordinator a follow-up report containing a description and evidence of the activities carried out, as well as an analysis of the effectiveness of implemented improvements. The Agency's coordinator submits the said report to the panel, and, within three weeks of receipt of the report, the panel agrees upon and finalizes the conclusion on the effectiveness of the activities carried out during the follow-up phase.

One member of the panel and the Agency's coordinator hold a meeting with representatives of the audited higher education institution, where—with the possibility of an open discussion with the representatives of the higher education institution—the realization of the action plan of the higher education institution and the conclusions of the panel are presented.

(3) Two years from the date of the final adoption of the final report, the higher education institution shall submit to the Agency's coordinator a report on the implementation of the action plan.

*Network of Quality Assurance Units at Croatian Higher Education Institutions
(CroQAnet)*

Article 12

(1) The Agency conducts joint workshops as part of the Network of Quality Assurance Units at Croatian Higher Education Institutions (*CroQAnet*), at which all audited higher education institutions present the results of activities undertaken following the recommendations of the panel.

III. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 13

This Ordinance shall enter into force on the date of its publication on the Agency's notice board, after it has been adopted by the Accreditation Council and published on the Agency's website.

On the date of entry into force of this Ordinance, the Ordinance on Audit of Quality Assurance Systems in the Republic of Croatia of 2 June 2010 (Class: 003-08/10-02/0004, File Number: 355-02-03-10-2) shall expire.

Class: 030-02 / 17-02 / 0012
File Number: 355-02-03-17-0001
Zagreb, 21 June 2017

DIRECTOR OF THE AGENCY

Prof. Jasmina Havranek, PhD

This Ordinance was published on the Agency's notice board on 21 June 2017.

Appendix 1: Audit Criteria

Elements of evaluation	Initial phase	Developed phase	Advanced phase
<p>1. Quality policy</p> <p><i>The basis and the core of the process; general direction and goals related to the quality of all activities and processes whereby HEI mission statement is achieved.</i></p>	<p>Quality policy represents a common understanding of quality at the level of the entire HEI, and a framework for action at the institutional, national and international levels.</p> <p>Quality policy is in line with strategic direction, mission and vision of the HEI, and is achieved in some activities and organizational processes.</p> <p>In creating and adopting developmental policies, HEI uses QAS data to some degree.</p> <p>Internal and external stakeholders are not included, or are insufficiently included in this process.</p>	<p>Quality policy represents a common understanding of quality at the level of the entire HEI; it adequately reflects the general direction and goals related to the quality of all activities and processes, and represents a framework for action at the institutional, national and international levels.</p> <p>Quality policy is in line with strategic direction, mission and vision of the HEI, and is achieved in main activities and organizational processes.</p> <p>In creating and adopting developmental policies, HEI uses relevant QAS data. Internal and external stakeholders are included in this process.</p>	<p>Quality policy represents a common understanding of quality at the level of the entire HEI; it adequately reflects the general direction and goals related to the quality of all activities and processes, values, ethical principles and good practice in quality assurance, and represents a framework for action at the institutional, national and international levels. QAS reflects HEI's strategic direction and relevant and rational goals; there is a clear link between HEI's strategic goals and sustainable development of society as a whole.</p> <p>Quality policy is clearly discernible in all activities and organizational processes.</p> <p>In creating and adopting developmental policies, HEI uses relevant QAS data in order to create a stimulating environment for further development.</p> <p>Internal and external stakeholders are actively involved in this process, and contribute to the development of QAS.</p>
<p>2. Planning and management</p> <p><i>Establishing goals for the purpose of accomplishing HEI's mission; determining processes and resources necessary for achieving these goals; identifying risks and opportunities; managing processes</i></p>	<p>HEI uses QAS data in planning to some degree.</p> <p>The planning process involves defining resources, responsibilities, deadlines, outcomes, performance indicators and methods of reporting on the implementation of plans for some HEI's activities.</p> <p>HEI has some mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to human resources.</p> <p>HEI has some mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to physical resources.</p>	<p>Relevant QAS data is used in planning.</p> <p>The planning process involves defining resources, responsibilities, deadlines, outcomes, performance indicators and methods of reporting on the implementation of plans for core activities of the HEI.</p> <p>HEI has mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to human resources. HEI has mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to physical resources.</p>	<p>Relevant QAS data, including risk assessment results, is used in planning.</p> <p>The planning process involves defining resources, responsibilities, deadlines, outcomes, performance indicators and methods of reporting on the implementation of plans for all activities of the HEI.</p> <p>HEI has efficient mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to human resources.</p> <p>HEI has efficient mechanisms for collecting and evaluating information related to physical resources.</p>
<p>3. Implementation and monitoring</p> <p><i>Implementation of planned processes; monitoring of implementation</i></p>	<p>HEI has a system in place for monitoring the quality of implementation of processes and activities, and whether the defined goals and objectives have been achieved.</p> <p>QA system provides support to monitoring the quality of the implementation of processes and activities, and to the achievement of defined goals and objectives.</p>	<p>HEI has a system in place for monitoring the quality of implementation of processes and activities at individual stages, as well as whether the defined goals and objectives have been achieved.</p> <p>QA system provides support to monitoring the quality of the implementation of processes and activities, and to the achievement of defined goals and objectives. HEI</p>	<p>HEI has an efficient system in place for monitoring the quality of implementation of processes and activities at individual stages, as well as whether the defined goals and objectives have been achieved. HEI ensures the collection, analyses and use of data for managing all institutional activities. QA procedures have a positive effect on the</p>

	<p>HEI collects, analyses, and uses data for managing some of the core institutional activities. QA procedures stimulate the development of quality culture.</p>	<p>ensures the collection, analyses and use of data for managing relevant institutional activities. QA procedures stimulate the development of quality culture and some activities of the HEI.</p>	<p>development of quality culture and all institutional activities (in line with ESG).</p>
<p>4. Evaluation</p> <p><i>Evaluation of planned processes and the results thereof against the defined goals and objectives; analyses and reports on the results of this evaluation</i></p>	<p>QA system occasionally goes through internal and external evaluation procedures. Institutional processes are evaluated during and at the end of a process. The quality of process results is largely based on individual efforts.</p>	<p>QA system periodically goes through internal and external evaluation procedures, and is partially revised based on the results of these procedures. The stakeholders are informed on the outcomes of these procedures in a timely manner. Institutional processes are evaluated during and at the end of a process, and the results of these evaluations are used in planning and decision-making. The quality of process results is mainly based on group efforts at the level of HEI.</p>	<p>QA system is periodically revised and improved on the basis of regular internal and external evaluation procedures in line with the ESG, and the stakeholders are informed on the outcomes of these procedures in a timely manner. Institutional processes are evaluated during and at the end of a process, particularly with regard to their fitness-for-purpose, and the results of these evaluations are systematically used in planning and decision-making. The quality of process results is fully the result of collective efforts at the level of the entire HEI.</p>
<p>5. Improvements, innovations, impact</p> <p><i>Implementation of measures for improvement based on the results of process evaluation; innovation in processes; impact of QA processes on the development of HEI</i></p>	<p>Development and improvement of quality of some HEI activities and processes are based on analyses and data collected through the quality assurance system. There are some activities related to the efficiency assessment of QA system. HEI conducts analyses of internal and external quality assurance processes. Quality assurance system is partially coherent.</p>	<p>Development and improvement of quality of HEI's core activities and processes are based on analyses and data collected through the quality assurance system. The effectiveness of some aspects of the internal QA system is based on evidence. HEI carries out assessments of the impact of internal and external quality assurance processes. Quality assurance system is coherent.</p>	<p>Development and improvement of quality of all institutional activities and processes are based on analyses and data collected through the quality assurance system. The effectiveness of all the aspects of internal QA system is based on evidence. The joint impact of internal and external quality assurance processes on institutional development is analysed and monitored. Quality assurance system is coherent and fit for purpose.</p>