



CLASS: 602-04/24-02/01

FILE NUMBER: 355-01-01-24-01

Zagreb, 3 January 2024

Pursuant to provisions of Article 8, Paragraph 3 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (the Official Gazette 151/22) and provision of Article 32, Paragraph 1, Items 1 and 2 of the Statute of the Agency for Science and Higher Education (CLASS: 003-05/13-01/0001; FILE NUMBER: 355-01-23-29), at its 8th session held on 14 December 2023 the Accreditation Council adopted the following

Quality Standards in the Procedure of Initial Accreditation of Research Institutes

Article 1

(1) **Quality standards in the procedure of initial accreditation of research institutes** include standards, elements and quality indicators and criteria for initial accreditation of research institutes, against which the level of their fulfilment is determined and a quality assessment is passed.

(2) For the purposes of this document the following expressions shall have the following meaning:

1. A **standard** is a clearly defined level of quality of a particular aspect of quality of a research institute. The quality standards are grouped into units (three assessment areas) which they refer to various aspects of quality evaluation of research institutes.

2. The **criterion** for the initial accreditation of a research institute is related to Article 11 of the Act on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science (OG 151/22), hereinafter referred to as the Act, as well as the condition prescribed by Articles 4 and 5 of the Act. Criteria are stated as part of the elements and indicators of the standards and highlighted red in the text.

3. **Element of the standard** is taken into account when assessing compliance of an aspect of quality of a research institute against a standard.

4. **Indicator** is used to assess the level of compliance of the standards.

5. **Sources for checking the fulfilment of the standards** are documents of the research institute, websites and other materials that serve to check and assess the level of fulfilment of the standards. The sources listed in this document are merely examples that a research institute can use as guidelines in the preparation of the request, as well as help to expert panels in assessing the level of fulfilment of quality standards.

6. **The level of fulfilment of the standards** is a quantitative and a qualitative assessment passed by an expert panel which includes recommendations for quality improvement.

(3) Gendered terms used in this document are used neutrally and refer equally to all genders.

Article 2

In the procedure of initial accreditation of a research institute, the following quality standards grouped into the following three assessment areas shall apply:

I. STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

1.1. The research institute has a clearly defined vision, mission and strategic programme of scientific research and it is committed to its role regarding the fulfilment of national and societal needs.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The strategic plan of the research institute complies with its mission and vision.</p> <p>The research institute defines and fulfils its role in the national system and its institutional and economic environment.</p> <p>The research institute defines and fulfils its role in the state and in society.</p> <p>The research institute defines and fulfils its role in industry.</p> <p>The research institute defines its position in an international environment.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act of establishment and the statute; • Strategic programme of scientific research for a period of several years in the scientific area for which the licence to operate is sought, i.e. within which the research institute operates; • Mission and vision of the research institute; • A feasibility study justifying the need to establish a public research institute / proposal justifying the status changes; • An opinion of the National Council for Higher Education, Science and Technological Development on the need to establish a public research institute. 			

1.2. The research institute has an efficient organizational structure for the implementation of its activities and strategy.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The internal organizational structure of the research institute is determined by the statute. The organization of the research institute as a structure comprising operational units is efficient and adapted to the strategy. The management of the research institute is based on appropriate bodies and decision-making procedures in accordance with the mission and activities carried out by the research institute. The research institute has designed or has a functional and effective way of involving relevant stakeholders in its activities.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act of establishment, statute of the research institute, general act defining internal organizational structure; • Prior approval of the Ministry of Science and Education of the statute and the general act on internal organization of the public research institute; • Organizational structure of the research institute; • Designed procedures and planned decision-making bodies of the research institute; • Mechanisms for monitoring researchers' performance; • Mechanisms for involving stakeholders in the activities of the research institute. 			

1.3. There is an internal quality assurance and enhancement system in place that enables efficient implementation and monitoring of activities.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>There is an internal quality assurance and enhancement system in place that enables efficient implementation and monitoring of activities.</p> <p>The internal quality assurance and enhancement system at the research institute includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the development strategy; • Implementation of internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures; • Monitoring and enhancement of scientific productivity of the research staff; • Monitoring and enhancement of professional activities of the research staff; • Monitoring and enhancement of performance of employees working in professional services; • Monitoring and enhancement of other activities performed by the research institute. <p>The internal quality assurance system enables efficient implementation and monitoring of activities.</p> <p>In order to implement an internal quality assurance and enhancement system, the research institute has established an organisational unit for quality assurance and enhancement.</p> <p>The internal quality assurance and enhancement system is regulated by a general act of the research institute.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statute, general act regulating the internal quality assurance and enhancement system of the research institute; • Internal quality assurance and enhancement system; • Planned performance monitoring procedures and mechanisms; • Designed key performance indicators; • Mechanisms for monitoring researchers' performance in place; • Mechanisms for evaluating and rewarding researchers' performance in place; • Plan of researchers' professional development. 			

1.4. The research institute has a policy of research integrity, ethics and professional conduct in place.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute has planned activities aimed at strengthening research integrity, including activities aimed at raising awareness and prevention and acting in the event of a breach of integrity.</p> <p>The research institute has planned monitoring of the quality of internal mechanisms related to academic integrity in all scientific disciplines and activities.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics of the research institute; • Ordinance on the Disciplinary Responsibility; • General act regulating the work of the Ethics Committee; • Planned activities aimed at raising awareness of scientific integrity, ethics and professional conduct; • Planned internal mechanisms connected to academic integrity; • Documents regulating procedures in the case of unethical and unprofessional behaviour; • Anti-plagiarism software. 			

II. SCIENTIFIC AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

2.1. The research institute has an adequate number of high-quality researchers, young researchers, associates and employees working in professional services necessary to fulfil the research goals stated in the mission and vision.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute employs a minimum of 20 full-time researchers in research positions in the area within which the research institute operates.</p> <p>Lead researchers are grouped according to the topics of the set research goals and are among the most renowned researchers in the research organization with visible indicators of scientific excellence.</p> <p>The research institute has designed a plan for the recruitment of research staff, including young researchers in the appropriate areas and fields with regard to its research goals.</p> <p>The research institute has a sufficient number of employees working in professional service that provide support to the researchers in the fulfilment of their research goals.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment contracts which have been concluded with the research staff; • Employment contracts which have been concluded with employees working in professional services, where applicable; • Research staff recruitment plan. • Table 1. Staff structure • Table 2. Researchers at the research institute; • Researchers' involvement in committees and other bodies related to higher education and science. 			

2.2. The research institute has an appropriate level of quality of scientific productivity in accordance with its strategy.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The institute's research activity is based on original ideas and an original scientific approach.</p> <p>The quality of published research papers is high.</p> <p>The researchers achieve significant results in their scientific area.</p> <p>The research institute has a satisfactory number of research publications published in prestigious primary scientific outlets per researcher in their scientific area and an adequate publication trend, where applicable.</p> <p>The research institute has a satisfactory number of papers presented at prestigious conferences.</p> <p>The research institute has a sufficient number of national and international competitive scientific projects in which it is a lead partner, where applicable.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 5. The research institute's bibliography, where applicable; • Table 6. Highlighted publications of the RI researchers published in the last five years; • Table 8. Projects in the last five calendar years, where applicable; • Table 9. Work on conference organizing committees in the last five calendar years; • Table 10. Editorship in journals in the last five calendar years. 			

2.3. The research institute has a clear employee performance review policy.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute has designed a policy for employee performance review and career development, considering their overall contribution to the mission of the research institute.</p> <p>The research institute has designed a gender equality policy in all its activities and at all stages of career development.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned employee performance review and career development policy; • Mechanisms for monitoring researchers' performance in place; • Mechanisms for evaluating and rewarding researchers' performance in place; • Plan of researchers' professional development in place; • Mechanisms for encouraging researchers to publish papers in the internationally recognized journals in place; • Mechanisms for encouraging researchers to actively participate in international conferences and symposia in place. 			

2.4. The research institute plans to apply the principles of open science in its activities, processes and acts.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute plans to adopt and implement an open science policy fostering the application of open science principles at the institutional level and ensuring open access to scientific and professional publications, educational content and research data of its scientists.</p> <p>The research institute plans to encourage and evaluate the application of the principles of open science through various internal processes and/or evaluation processes at the institution.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned open science policy; Description of the planned evaluation processes and/or procedures which are used to motivate, evaluate and reward researchers' activities connected to open science; Table 7. Open science implementation. 			

2.5. The research institute has designed mechanisms for transferring the results of their scientific research activity to society.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute has established mechanisms for dissemination of information regarding their activities.</p> <p>Employees of the research institute are active in the popularization of science.</p> <p>Researchers employed at the research institute participate in the creation of public policies and are involved in various scientific and/or management bodies.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of researchers' involvement in various scientific and/or management bodies; • Evidence of the organization of various events that promote the popularization of science or the participation of employees of the research institute in these events (open days, public presentation of scientific projects or scientific achievements, exhibitions, lectures for a broader community, participation in radio and television shows, etc.). • Other evidence proving the dissemination of scientific research and results in a broader community. 			

III. RESOURCES

3.1. The research institute has adequate premises and equipment for conducting scientific research.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute has laboratories, i.e. premises where scientific research is conducted, a library, offices for research staff and offices for employees working in professional services.</p> <p>Laboratories are equipped with adequate laboratory equipment necessary for conducting research.</p> <p>Offices of the research staff and offices of employees working in professional services have office equipment and the equipment necessary for the work of the research staff and professional services.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insight into the resources of the research institute: laboratories, i.e. premises for conducting scientific research, a library, offices necessary for the work of professional services and equipment for conducting scientific research. Table 3. Capital equipment. 			

3.2. The research institute has a library and adequate information-communication technology (ICT) equipment.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The literature necessary for scientific and professional work has been ensured. The library is equipped with information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and provides access to library materials in print and/or electronic format.</p> <p>The library premises and resources, including additional resources, serve the institutions' needs in accordance with, among other things, conditions specified in the Standard for Higher Education, University and Scientific Libraries.</p> <p>The research institute has an overall information structure that meets requirements for the management of the institute and its activities, taking into account the information security requirements.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 4. Library premises and resources; • Contract on the use of library resources, where applicable; • Availability of literature in the library; • Available digital literature (e-journals, e-books); • Access to relevant databases; • Information about the space (ownership documents, document proving the right to use the premises). 			

3.3. The research institute's financial plan contains the planned income and expenses to conduct research activity, i.e. artistic and professional activity over a three-year period.	Not fulfilled	Partially fulfilled	Fulfilled
<p>Elements and indicators of the standard:</p> <p>The research institute's financial plan contains the planned income and expenses to conduct research activity, i.e. artistic and professional activity over a three-year period.</p> <p>The research institute ensures appropriate national sources of funding.</p> <p>The research institute ensures appropriate international sources of funding.</p> <p>The research institute ensures appropriate own funding sources through commercial activity.</p> <p>The level of the research institute's reliance on public funding or a competent institution is acceptable.</p> <p>The research institute directs a sufficient part of its funds toward scientific activity.</p> <p>The public research institute has secured funding from the state budget through the programme agreement or temporary financing.</p> <p>Sources for verifying compliance with the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 11. Financial plan; • Programme agreement, if concluded; • Three-year plan of income and expenses of the research institute; • Regulations on the use of funds. 			

Article 3

The Quality Standards shall be published on the website of the Agency for Science and Higher Education and they shall enter into force on the day of their publication.

President of the Accreditation Council



Prof. Mirjana Hruškar, PhD

