

**Proposal of Principles for registration in the
list of reviewers, exclusion from the list of
reviewers, and creation of working groups of
the Executive Board**

**of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher
Education**

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PRINCIPLES FOR REGISTRATION IN THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, EXCLUSION FROM THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, AND CREATION OF WORKING GROUPS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE SLOVAK ACCREDITATION AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Executive Board" and the "Agency") according to Sec. § 7 para. 10 letter d) point 6 of Act no. 269/2018 Coll. on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and on Amendments to Act No. 343/2015 Coll. on Public Procurement and on Amendments to Certain Acts as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act") approved these **Proposal of the Principles for registration in the list of reviewers, exclusion from this list, and creation of working groups of the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education** (hereinafter referred to as the "Principles").

Part I

Article 1 Subject matter

1. This document sets out the principles and procedure
 - a) and minimum requirements for registration in the list of reviewers,
 - b) when excluding from the list of reviewers,
 - c) in creating of the working groups of the Agency's Executive Board (hereinafter referred to as "working groups").

Part II

Registration in the list of reviewers and exclusion from the list of reviewers

Article 2 General principles for registration in the list of reviewers

1. A person may be registered in the list of reviewers who:
 - a) meets at least one of the minimum requirements laid down in Article 3 para. 1 letter a) to h) of these principles, has the prerequisites to act as an reviewer
 - b) is impacable¹
 - c) is a legally competent in its integrity
 - d) give written consent for registration in the list of reviewers
 - e) has been approved for registration in the list of reviewers by the Executive Board
 - f) speaks the state language or English to the extent necessary for the performance of the duties of reviewer
 - g) and has completed training organized by the Agency for student assessors, if it is a student.
2. A person may be registered in the list of reviewers for 6 years, even repeatedly.
3. A member of the Executive Board, a member of the Board of Appeal, a controller and the Head of the Agency's Office may not be registered in the list of reviewers.
4. The function of the reviewer is incompatible with the function of the rector, vice-rector, dean, vice-dean, quaestor and secretary of the faculty at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic.
5. There is no legal right to be registered in the list of reviewers.

¹ According to Sec. 16 para. 4 of Quality Act 269/2018 Coll.

Article 3

Minimum requirements for the registration in the list of reviewers

1. A list of reviewers may include a person who is qualified to act as a reviewer and who meets at least one of the following minimum requirements:
 - a) has completed the PhD. degree and has been working at least 5 years in the previous 15 years as an associate professor or professor at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic, or
 - b) has completed the master's degree and is an expert in economic or social practice, or
 - c) has completed the PhD. degree and a recognized scientific qualification level I or IIa and has been working at least 5 years in the previous 15 years as an independent researcher or senior researcher in a research institution other than a higher education institution located in the Slovak Republic, or
 - d) has completed the PhD. degree and has been working at least 5 years in the previous 15 years as a professor or associate professor or in another similar position at a higher education institution abroad, or
 - e) has completed the PhD. degree and has been working at least 5 years in the previous 15 years as a researcher at a research institution other than a higher education institution abroad, or
 - f) has completed the master's degree and has demonstrable experience in the previous 15 years with the design, development and implementation of higher education quality systems or quality assurance systems in institutions by their size and complexity similar to higher education institutions; or
 - g) has completed the master's degree and has been working in the field of art at least 5 years in the previous 15 years and whose artistic activity has proven quality and acceptance of an international recognition, or
 - h) is a student at a higher education institution.
2. Prerequisites for acting as an reviewer are, in particular, competencies and demonstrated ability to assess compliance with the relevant parts of the Standards for the internal system, the Standards for the study programme and the Standards for the habilitation procedure and the inaugural procedure.
3. Candidates for registration in the list of reviewer shall prove their preconditions for acting as an reviewer. Appropriate competencies are demonstrated in particular by previous work in reviewing the outputs of creative activities, reviewing research and art projects, guaranteeing study programmes, human resources management and development and other similar functions.

Article 4

Procedure for registration in the list of reviewers

1. The Agency shall publish calls for applications for registration in the list of reviewers on its website. The call shall specify the method and date of submission of the application and its content. The Agency may also issue an open call for an indefinite period. The Agency may also use other communication channels and procedures, in particular to obtain candidates for registration in a list of reviewers from abroad.
2. The Agency shall register the submitted applications and comprehensively assess the fulfillment of the candidates' preconditions to act as a reviewer, the content requirements and the requirements imposed on the candidate for registration in the list of reviewers.
3. The Chairperson of the Executive Board shall propose to the Executive Board that candidates who have the prerequisites to act as a reviewer and have met the requirements and required content of the application be registered in the list of reviewers at its next meeting. The proposal is approved if at least seven members of the Executive Board vote in favor.
4. If the proposal is not approved by the Executive Board, the Agency shall notify the candidate in writing.

5. Candidates approved by the Executive Board for registration in the list of reviewers and who provide written consent for registration in that list shall be entered by the Agency in the list of reviewers without delay.

Article 5

Exclusion of reviewer from the list of reviewers

1. Reviewers shall be excluded from the list by the Executive Board on a proposal from the Chairman of the Executive Board.
2. A reviewer may be excluded from the list of reviewers by:
 - a) if his/her term of office has expired,
 - b) if he/she has lost his integrity,
 - c) if his/her legal capacity has been restricted by a valid court decision,
 - d) if he/she has ceased to be a higher education institution/university student, if he/she is a student,
 - e) if he/she has seriously or repeatedly infringed the regulations and the code of ethics of the Agency,
 - f) if he/she repeatedly fails to meet the set deadlines for delivery of the required evaluations and other relevant materials,
 - g) if he/she seriously fails to fulfill the obligations arising from his membership in the working group,
 - h) if he/she has violated the rules for the prevention of conflicts of interest,
 - i) based on the results of the monitoring of the reviewer's activities,
 - j) if he/she does not participate in or fulfill obligations related to training in the framework of his/her professional development organized by the Agency,
 - k) if he/she has been appointed a member of the Executive Board, a member of the Board of Appeal, the Comptroller, the Head of the Agency's Office or any other function incompatible with that of reviewer,
 - l) based on discussions in the Executive Board and the conclusion that the activities of the reviewer are or have been inconsistent with the Agency's mission.
 - m) Based on his/her own written request sent to the Chairman of the Executive Board,
 - n) in the event of his/her death or if he/she has been declared dead.

Article 6

Procedure for exclusion from the list of reviewers

1. The Agency shall carry out ongoing quality checks on the activities of reviewers.
2. If the interim review reveals facts that justify the exclusion of a reviewer from the list of reviewers within the meaning of Art. 5 para. 2 letter a) to j) of these principles, the Chairman of the Executive Board shall submit to the Executive Board a proposal to exclude the reviewer from the list of reviewers at its next meeting.
3. The Agency shall notify the decision on the exclusion of the reviewers from the list of reviewers in writing.
4. The Agency shall ensure the exclusion of a excluded reviewer from the list of reviewers.

Part III

Principles of creating/creation the working groups

Article 7

General principles for creation of working groups

1. To review a specific application or review an initiative of the Agency, the Executive Board shall set up working groups of persons registered in the list of reviewers, except in the case according to § 24 para. 6 of the Act. The Executive Board may also set up a working group

to verify the measures taken by the higher education institution if they are not sufficient for the Agency's staff to verify them.

2. The Chairman and the members of the working group shall be appointed and excluded by the Chairman of the Executive Board with the prior agreement of the Executive Board.
3. The working group shall have at least three members, including the chairman of the working group.
4. The Chairman of the Executive Board shall appoint at least one student to each working group; this does not apply to the granting or withdrawal of accreditation of the habilitation procedure and the inaugural procedure.
5. When setting up working groups, the Agency shall take into account the type of procedure, the specificities of standards about fields of study and study programmes and the reviewer's profile about the required expertise of working group members in terms of performing their functions under Art. 8 para. 3 of these principles.
6. A member of the working group shall be entitled to remuneration for the preparation of an evaluation report for the Agency's procedures following the Agency's internal rules².
7. A staff member of the Agency shall be seconded to the working group to provide methodological and information-administrative support and coordination to the working group.
8. To monitor compliance with the Agency's internal quality assurance system, an authorized member of the Agency's Executive Board may participate in the monitoring of the working group's activities.
9. The terms of reference of the members of the working group shall end on the date on which the decision or statement of the Agency in the procedures for which the working group was set up enters into force.

Article 8 **Procedure for creation/creating of working groups**

1. The Agency's Office shall, after consulting the Executive Board, prepare a proposal composition of the working group, which it shall submit to the Chairman of the Executive Board. It contains a proposal for the chairman and members of the working group.
2. The proposed composition of the working group shall take into account known facts concerning the potential conflict of interest of the members of the proposed working group.
3. The design of the number and composition of the members of the working group shall take into account the requirements for expertise concerning the function that the reviewer performs within the working group. Only those reviewers from the list of reviewers who have received the relevant professional development training organized by the Agency may be nominated to the working group. The following functions are usually determined within the working group, taking into account the type of procedures: chairman of the working group, member of the working group – a significant expert from practice, member of the working group – student, member of the working group, member of the working group – foreign reviewer:
 - a) **the chairman of the working group** should in particular be able to schedule the working group, coordinate the work of the working group and be responsible for its results, in particular for independent, objective, accurate and timely preparation of the evaluation report to the required extent and structure following the agreed Standards evaluation methodology; must have the capacity to negotiate on behalf of the Agency and the working group with the party's representatives³;
 - b) **member of the working group – a significant expert from practice** should be able to assess in particular whether the study programme and/or the internal quality system of the institution sufficiently guarantees the participation of practice representatives in

² Wage regulation of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education

³ Sec. 21 par. 2 of the Act.

- design, approving, monitoring, regularly evaluating and updating study programmes and the requirements of the internship are sufficiently taken into account in the learning outcomes concerning the applicability of the graduates in practice;
- c) **member of the working group – student** should be able to assess in particular whether the internal quality system of the university sufficiently protects the rights, respects the legitimate requirements and interests of students, whether the participation of students in the creation, approval, monitoring, regular evaluation and updating is sufficiently guaranteed study programs and whether students are sufficiently involved in the creative activities of the university;
 - d) **member of the working group**, in collaboration with other members of the working group, should in particular extract and analyze relevant data and information from the submitted documents and other available sources to prepare a detailed partial working version of the evaluation report documenting the relevant methodology for evaluating standards depending on the type of procedure;
 - e) **member of the working group – foreign reviewer⁴**: a person who has a central work activity abroad and does not work at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic during the registration in the list of reviewers.
4. The proposal for the composition of the members of the working group shall take into account the type of procedure and the specificities of the standards about the fields of study and study programmes:
- a) in the case of a request for a review of the internal quality system of a higher education institution or an extraordinary review of the internal quality system of a higher education institution at the initiative of the Agency, the working group shall be designed to include, in particular, reviewers in those fields of study in which the applicant carries out study programmes and carries out habilitation procedures and inaugural procedures;
 - b) in the case of an application for accreditation of a bachelor's degree programme, a second degree/Master's degree program and a study programme combining first and second degree, the working group shall be designed in such a way that the majority of experts in the field(s) in which the study programme is to be implemented;
 - c) in the case of an application for accreditation of a professionally oriented bachelor's study programme, the working group shall be designed so that it has at least one representative of experts in the study field(s) in which the study programme is to be implemented and at least one representative of reviewers, who are significant practitioners;
 - d) in the case of an application for accreditation of a teacher combination study programme, the working group shall be designed to include at least one expert in the field of pedagogical-psychological and social science basis and at least one expert for each approbation who is an expert in the field of study to which the approval relates;
 - e) in the case of an application for accreditation of a translation combined study programme, the working group shall be designed to include at least one expert on a translation basis and at least one expert for each language in the combination;
 - f) in the case of an application for accreditation of a study programme to be carried out in a field of study requiring an opinion on the presumption of practical applicability of graduates or the accreditation of a study programme leading to higher education required as part of a the exercise of a regulated profession, the working group shall be designed to include at least one expert representing the relevant legal entity, whose written consent is required for the higher education institution to be able to carry out or modify the study programme;
 - g) in the case of an application for accreditation of PhD. study programme, the working group shall be designed in such a way that the majority of experts in the field of study

⁴ According to Sec. 8 par. 3 of the Act.

- in which the study programme is to be conducted is represented, and at least one of them is a foreign reviewer;
- h)** in the case of an application for accreditation of an habilitation procedure and inaugural procedure or a procedure for withdrawal of accreditation of an habilitation procedure and an inaugural procedure, the working group shall be drafted in such a way that experts in the relevant field of study are professors; at least one member is a foreign reviewer; the chairman of the working group shall be nominated by an reviewer with the title of professor or researcher with qualification level I;
 - i)** in the case of an application for state approval, the working group shall be designed to include, in particular, reviewers who are experts in those fields of study in which the applicant intends to carry out the study programmes and at least one reviewer who is an expert in internal quality assurance system.
- 5.** The Chairman of the Executive Board shall submit a proposal for the composition of the working group to the Executive Board for approval. The proposal for the composition of the working group may be approved by the Executive Board at or outside the meeting by a per roll vote.
 - 6.** The Chairman of the Executive Board shall, after approval by the Executive Board, appoint the Chairman and the members of the working group and notify the composition of the working group in writing to the participant.
 - 7.** A group to the procedures may, within five working days of being notified of the composition of the working group, lodge a reasoned objection of bias against a member of the working group; this does not apply if it is an additionally appointed member of the working group according to § 8 para. 2 letter a) of the Act.
 - 8.** A group's objection to bias against a member of a working group shall be considered by the Executive Board. If he considers the objection to be well-founded, the Chairman of the Executive Board shall appoint a new member of the working group instead of the excluded member.
 - 9.** If a member of a working group ceases to be a student and it is a working group to which only this person, the chairman of the Executive Board, was appointed a member as a student
 - a)** appoints another student to the working group without delay,
 - b)** may exclude the member of the working group concerned on a proposal from the chairman of the working group concerned without the agreement of the Executive Board; and
 - c)** announce changes in the composition of the working group according to letter a) and b) to higher education institution.

Part IV

Final provisions

Article 9

- 1.** The Principles approved by the Agency's Executive Board on 22 August 2019 are repealed.
- 2.** These Principles were approved by the Executive Board of the Agency on ... and shall enter into force on the day of their approval.

Bratislava, on ... 2020

prof. Ing. Robert Redhammer, PhD.
Chairman of the Executive Board