

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE REGISTRATION
IN THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, EXCLUSION
FROM THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, AND
CREATION OF THE WORKING GROUPS OF
THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**OF THE SLOVAK ACCREDITATION AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

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The 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 **Principles for the registration in the list of reviewers, exclusion from the list of reviewers, and creation of the 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 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 the 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 a reviewer
 - b) is impacable¹
 - c) is legally competent in its integrity
 - d) give written consent for the registration in the list of reviewers and
 - e) has been approved for the 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 the reviewer
 - g) and has completed training organized by the Agency for the reviewers – students if it is a student.

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

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.

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 Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. degree and a recognized scientific qualification level I or IIa and has been working at least 5 years in the previous 15 years as a researcher in a research institution or at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic, or
 - d) has completed the Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. 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 international recognition, or
 - h) is a student at a higher education institution.
2. The prerequisite for acting as a reviewer is, in particular, competencies and demonstrated skills 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 the registration in the list of reviewers shall prove their prerequisites for acting as a 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 the 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 the registration in a list of reviewers from abroad.
2. The Agency shall register the submitted applications and comprehensively assess the compliance of the candidates' prerequisites to act as a reviewer, the content requirements, and the requirements imposed on the candidate for the registration in the list of reviewers.
3. The Chair 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 the registration in the list of reviewers and who provide written consent for the registration in that list shall be entered by the Agency in the list of reviewers without delay.

Article 5
Exclusion of the reviewer from the list of reviewers

1. Reviewers shall be excluded from the list by the Executive Board on the proposal from the Chair 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 university student, if he/she is a student,
 - e) if he/she has seriously or repeatedly infringed the legal 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 assessments 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 as part 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 a 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 Chair of the Executive Board,
 - n) in the event of his/her death or if he/she has been declared dead.

Article 6
Procedure for the exclusion from the list of reviewers

1. The Agency shall carry out an ongoing quality review 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 Chair 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 an excluded reviewer from the list of reviewers.

Part III
Principles of the creation of the working groups

Article 7
General principles for the creation of the working groups

1. To review a particular application or review an initiative of the Agency, the Executive Board shall set up the working groups from the persons registered in the list of reviewers, except in the case according to Sec. 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 their verification is not sufficient for the Agency's staff.
2. The Chair and the members of the working group shall be appointed and excluded by the Chair of the Executive Board with the prior agreement of the Executive Board.
3. The working group shall have at least three members, including the chair of the working group.
4. The Chair of the Executive Board shall appoint at least one student to each working group; this does not apply for the granting or withdrawal of accreditation of the habilitation procedure and the inaugural procedure.
5. When creating working groups, the Agency shall take into account the type of procedure, the specificities of standards in relation to study fields and study programmes, and the reviewer's profile in relation to 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 assessment report for the purposes of the Agency's procedure following the Agency's internal regulations².
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 the 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.

² Wage regulation of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education

Article 8

Procedure for the creation of the working groups

1. The Agency's Office shall, after consultation with the Executive Board, prepare a proposal for the composition of the working group, which it shall submit to the Chair of the Executive Board. It contains a proposal for the chair 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 the expertise concerning the function that the reviewer performs within the working group. Only those reviewers from the list of reviewers who have completed the relevant training in professional development 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: chair 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 chair of the working group** should in particular be able to set timetable activities of the working group, coordinate the activities of the working group and be responsible for its results, in particular for the independent, objective, precise, and timely processing of the assessment report to the required extent and structure following the approved Methodology for standards evaluation; 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 higher education institution sufficiently ensures the participation of practice representatives in design, approval, monitoring, periodic review, and modifying of the study programmes and the requirements of the practice are sufficiently taken into account in the learning outcomes concerning the applicability of the graduates in practice;
 - c) **member of the working group – a student** should be able to assess in particular whether the internal quality system of the higher education institution sufficiently protects the rights, respects the legitimate requirements and interests of students, whether the participation of students in the design, approval, monitoring, periodic review and modifying of the study programmes is sufficiently ensured and whether students are sufficiently involved in the creative activities of the higher education institution;
 - d) **member of the working group**, should be able to cooperate with other members of the working group, 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 assessment report documenting the relevant facts necessary for the decision-making and with regard to the Methodology for standards evaluation 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 in relation to the fields of study and the 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

³ Sec. 21 para. 2 of the Act.

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

education institution at the initiative of the Agency, the working group shall be proposed to include, in particular, reviewers who are the experts from the internal quality system or fields of study in which the applicant carries out the study programmes and carries out habilitation procedures and inaugural procedures;

- b)** in the case of a request for accreditation of a bachelor's degree programme, a master's degree programme, and a study programme combining first and second degree, the working group shall be proposed in such a way that the majority were the experts in the study field(s) in which the study programme is to be carried out;
 - c)** in the case of a request for accreditation of a professionally oriented bachelor's degree programme, the working group shall be proposed so that it has at least one representative of experts in the study field(s) in which the study programme is to be carried out and at least one representative of reviewers, who are significant experts from practice;
 - d)** in the case of a request for accreditation of a teacher combination study programme, the working group shall be proposed so it includes at least one expert in the field of pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis and at least one expert for each approbation who is an expert in the field of study to which the approbation relates;
 - e)** in the case of a request for accreditation of a translation combined study programme, the working group shall be proposed so it includes at least one expert on a translation basis and at least one expert for each language in the combination;
 - f)** in the case of a request for accreditation of a study programme to be carried out in a field of study requiring an opinion on the presumption of the practical applicability of graduates or the accreditation of a study programme leading to higher education required as part of a professional qualification the exercise of a regulated profession, the working group shall be proposed so that it includes at least one expert representing the relevant legal entity, whose written consent is required in order for the higher education institution to be able to carry out or modify the study programme;
 - g)** in the case of a request for accreditation of Ph.D. study programme, the working group shall be proposed in such a way that the majority were the experts in the field of study in which the study programme is to be carried out, and at least one of them is a foreign reviewer;
 - h)** in the case of a request for the granting of accreditation of habilitation procedure and inaugural procedure or a procedure for the withdrawal of accreditation of habilitation procedure and inaugural procedure, the working group shall be proposed in such a way that experts in the relevant field of study were professors; at least one member is a foreign reviewer; the nominated chair of the working group shall be the reviewer with the title of professor or a researcher with qualification level I;
 - i)** in the case of a request for granting the state consent, the working group shall be proposed 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 on the internal quality assurance system.
- 5.** The Chair 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 Chair of the Executive Board shall, after approval by the Executive Board, appoint the Chair and the members of the working group and shall notify the composition of the working group in writing to the applicant.
 - 7.** The applicant of 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 Sec. 8 para. 2 letter a) of the Act.
 - 8.** The applicant's objection to bias against a member of a working group shall be considered by the Executive Board. If the objection is considered to be well-founded, the Chair 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 within the working group has only this person been appointed as a student member, the Chair of the Executive Board
 - a) appoints another student to the working group without delay,
 - b) may exclude the member of the working group on a proposal from the chair 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 the 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 17 September 2020 and shall enter into force on the day of their approval.

Bratislava, 17 September 2020

prof. Ing. Robert Redhammer, Ph.D.
Chair of the Executive Board