

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

**SLOVAK ACCREDITATION AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education

Pursuant to Art. 9, para. 1 letter i) of the Statute of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education, the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the “Executive Board”) **approved** this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the “Code of Ethics”).

1. The Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the “Agency”), which was established by Act No. 269/2018 Coll., provides external quality assurance activities in higher education in the Slovak Republic. Thus, it contributes to serving the public interest in providing and improving the quality of higher education institutions.
2. The Agency respects the mission and status of higher education institutions defined in Act No. 131/2002 Coll. as top-level institutions for education, independent scientific research and other activities, as key elements in the social and economic development of the country through a wide range of ways of accomplishing their mission. As a result, the Agency emphasises the maximum possible adherence to ethical and moral standards by its employees, the members of its authorities, reviewers and review panel members.
3. The Code of Ethics sets the ethical standards, moral principles and rules of conduct of the Agency’s authorities, reviewers, review panel members, and employees for their activities, opinions in evaluation processes and decision making.
4. In compliance with the Code of Ethics, the members of the Agency authorities, reviewers, review panel members, and the employees shall perform their tasks honestly, conscientiously, professionally and always in compliance with the highest ethical standards and moral principles while recognizing that fact that they are defending the public interest in ensuring the quality of higher education institutions. They shall:
 - a) act in the Agency’s interest;
 - b) adhere to the general binding regulations and internal regulations;
 - c) perform their tasks in person, properly and on time;
 - d) participate in the Agency authorities’ meetings as members or guests;
 - e) adhere to the fair treatment principle, make decisions in compliance with the principle of legitimate expectations and ensure that similar cases do not feature unjustified differences in procedure and decisions;
 - f) refrain from conduct that could jeopardise trust in the independence, impartiality and objectivity of their performance and/or which could harm the Agency’s reputation;
 - g) maintain their personal integrity;

- h)** not succumb to direct or indirect efforts to influence their work regardless of the source, motives or causes;
- i)** not use their position or rank within the Agency for their personal and/or economic benefit or for the benefit of a third-party;
- j)** not demand or accept gifts, advantages, or concessions in any form for the purpose of influencing their decision making and evaluation;
- k)** refrain from conduct that could lead to a direct or indirect conflict of interest;
- l)** behave professionally, politely, and patiently to the involved parties¹ and other people they meet when performing their work duties;
- m)** disapprove of discrimination on the basis of racial or ethnic origin, nationality, ideology, religion or faith, disability, age, gender, or sexual orientation while respecting socio-cultural differences;
- n)** not provide any information obtained in the course of their work for their own benefit or the benefit of others;
- o)** not provide any information related to opinions and stances of members of Agency authorities, review panel members or employees; and
- p)** not give public statements which could have an impact on the outcome of pending cases to ensure that the public or the academic community do not have the impression of bias and a lack of objectivity. This does not apply to closed cases.

5. This Code of Ethics comes into force on 12 July 2019.

¹ § 21 (2) Act No. 269/2018 Coll.