

**PRINCIPLES FOR REGISTRATION  
IN THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, REMOVAL  
FROM THE LIST OF REVIEWERS AND  
THE CREATION OF EXECUTIVE BOARD  
REVIEW PANELS**

**SLOVAK ACCREDITATION AGENCY  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

# **PRINCIPLES FOR REGISTRATION IN THE LIST OF REVIEWERS, REMOVAL FROM THE LIST OF REVIEWERS AND THE CREATION OF EXECUTIVE BOARD REVIEW PANELS**

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

Pursuant to § 7 (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"), the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Executive Board" and the "Agency") approved these **Principles for Registration in the List of Reviewers, Removal from the List of Reviewers and the Creation of Executive Board Review Panels** (hereinafter referred to as the "Principles").

### **Part I**

#### **Article 1**

##### **Subject**

1. This document sets out the principles and procedures
  - a) and minimum requirements for registration in the list of reviewers;
  - b) for removal from the list of reviewers; and
  - c) for the creation of the Agency's Executive Board review panels (hereinafter referred to as "review panels").

### **Part II**

#### **Registration in the list of reviewers and removal 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 if s/he:
  - a) meets at least one of the minimum requirements laid down in Art. 3 (1) letters a) to h) of these Principles and is qualified to act as a reviewer,
  - b) is of irreproachable character;<sup>1</sup>
  - c) has full legal capacity;
  - d) consents to her/his 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 a reviewer; and
  - g) in the case of student reviewers, has completed training for reviewers organized by the Agency.

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<sup>1</sup> According to § 16 (4) of the Act.

2. A person may be registered in the list of reviewers for a period of 6 years, and such registration may be renewed.
3. Members of the Executive Board, and the Board of Appeals, the Controller and the Head of the Agency's Office may not be registered in the list of reviewers.
4. A person may not simultaneously serve as a reviewer and a rector, vice-rector, dean, vice-dean, bursar or secretary of the faculty of a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic.
5. Registration in the list of reviewers is not a legal right.

### **Article 3**

#### **Minimum requirements for registration in the list of reviewers**

1. A person may be registered in the list of reviewers if s/he meets at least one of the following minimum requirements:
  - a) has obtained a doctorate and has been working for at least 5 of the previous 15 years as an associate professor or professor at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic;
  - b) has obtained a master's degree and is an expert from economic or social practice;
  - c) has obtained a doctorate, has been awarded the I or IIa degree scientific qualification and has been working for at least 5 of the previous 15 years as a researcher in a research institution or at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic;
  - d) has obtained a doctorate and has been working for at least 5 of the previous 15 years as a professor or associate professor or in another similar position at a higher education institution abroad;
  - e) has obtained a doctorate and has been working abroad for at least 5 of the previous 15 years as a researcher at a research institution other than a higher education institution;
  - f) has obtained a master's degree and has demonstrable experience in the previous 15 years with the design, development and implementation of higher education quality assurance systems or quality assurance systems in institutions similar in size and complexity to higher education institutions;
  - g) has obtained a master's degree, has been working in the field of art for at least 5 of the previous 15 years and his/her artistic activities are of demonstrable quality and internationally recognized, or
  - h) is a student at a higher education institution.
2. The qualifications required for acting as a reviewer include competencies and demonstrated skills needed for evaluating the fulfilment of the relevant parts of the Standards for the Internal System, the Standards for Study Programmes and the Standards for Habilitation Proceedings and Inauguration Proceedings.
3. Candidates for registration in the list of reviewers must prove their qualifications required for acting as a reviewer. Appropriate competencies are demonstrated by the candidate's previous involvement in reviewing research, artistic and other outputs, reviewing research and artistic projects, guaranteeing study programmes, managing and developing human resources or holding other similar positions.

### **Article 4**

#### **Procedure for registration in the list of reviewers**

1. The Agency publishes calls for applications for registration in the list of reviewers on its website. The call specifies the method and deadline for the content and submission of the application. The Agency may also issue an open call for an indefinite period or use other

communication channels and procedures in order to recruit candidates for registration in the list of reviewers, in particular, from abroad.

2. The Agency registers the submitted applications and comprehensively evaluates the fulfilment of the candidates' qualifications required for acting as a reviewer, the content requirements and the demands for candidates.
3. At the next meeting, the Chair of the Executive Board presents the Executive Board with a list of candidates who have the qualifications required for acting as a reviewer and who have met the demands and content requirements of the application. A candidate shall be approved if at least seven members of the Executive Board vote in favour of it.
4. The Agency shall notify the candidate in writing if s/he is not approved by the Executive Board.
5. Candidates approved by the Executive Board for registration in the list of reviewers and who provide their written consent to the registration shall be entered by the Agency in the list of reviewers without delay.

### **Article 5**

#### **Removal of a reviewer from the list of reviewers**

1. A reviewer shall be removed from the list by the Executive Board based on a proposal from the Chair of the Executive Board.
2. A reviewer may be removed from the list of reviewers:
  - a) if her/his term of office has expired;
  - b) if s/he is no longer of irreproachable character;
  - c) if her/his legal capacity has been restricted by a valid court decision;
  - d) in the case of students, if s/he is no longer a student at a higher education institution;
  - e) if s/he has seriously or repeatedly violated the regulations and code of ethics of the Agency;
  - f) if he/she has repeatedly failed to meet the deadlines for the delivery of the required evaluations and other relevant materials;
  - g) if s/he seriously fails to fulfil the duties resulting from her/his membership in the review panel;
  - h) if s/he 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 s/he does not participate in or fulfil the duties related to training as a part of his/ her professional development organized by the Agency;
  - k) if s/he has been appointed as a member of the Executive Board, a member of the Board of Appeals, the Controller, the Head of the Agency's Office or any other position incompatible with that of a reviewer;
  - l) based on discussions in the Executive Board and the conclusion that the reviewer's activities are not or have not been consistent with the Agency's mission;
  - m) based on her/his own written request addressed to the Chair of the Executive Board, or
  - n) in the event of her/his death or the declaration of her/his death.

### **Article 6**

#### **Procedure for removal from the list of reviewers**

1. The Agency shall carry out ongoing quality monitoring of the reviewer's activities.
2. If the monitoring reveals facts that justify the removal of a reviewer from the list of reviewers pursuant to Art. 5 (2) letters a) to j) of these Principles, the Chair of the Executive Board shall submit a proposal to the Executive Board on the removal of the

- reviewer from the list of reviewers at its next meeting.
3. The Agency shall notify the reviewer of the decision on her/his removal from the list of reviewers in writing.
  4. The Agency shall process the removal of the reviewer from the list of reviewers.

## **Part III**

### **Principles for the creation of review panels**

#### **Article 7**

#### **General principles for the creation of review panels**

1. In order to review a particular application or suggestion at the Agency's behest, the Executive Board shall create review panels from the persons registered in the list of reviewers, except in the case according to § 24 (6) of the Act. The Executive Board may also form a review panel to verify the measures taken by a higher education institution if their verification by the Agency's staff is not sufficient.
2. The chair and the members of the review panel are appointed and removed by the Chair of the Executive Board with the prior agreement of the Executive Board.
3. The review panel shall be comprised of at least three members, including the chair of the review panel.
4. The Chair of the Executive Board shall appoint at least one student to each review panel; however, this does not apply to the granting or revocation of accreditation of habilitation proceedings or inauguration proceedings.
5. When creating review panels, the Agency shall take into account the type of proceedings, the specificities of the standards in relation to the study fields and study programmes and the reviewer's profile in relation to the required expertise of the review panel members with regard to their position pursuant to Art. 8 (3) of these Principles.
6. A review panel member shall be entitled to a remuneration for the preparation of an evaluation report for the purposes of the Agency's proceedings according to the internal regulation of the Agency.<sup>2</sup>
7. A staff member of the Agency shall be assigned to the review panel to ensure coordination and to provide methodological and information-administrative support.
8. An authorized member of the Agency's Executive Board may participate in the monitoring of the review panel's activities in order to ensure compliance with the Agency's internal quality assurance system,
9. The authority of the review panel members shall end on the date on which the decision or statement of the Agency within the proceedings for which the review panel was established enters into force.

#### **Article 8**

#### **Procedure for the creation of review panels**

1. In consultation and cooperation with the Executive Board, the Agency's Office shall prepare a proposal for the composition of the review panel, which shall then be submitted to the Chair of the Executive Board. It must contain a proposal for the chair and members of the review panel.

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<sup>2</sup> Wage Regulation of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.

2. The composition of the review panel must take into account any known facts concerning potential conflicts of interest of the proposed review panel members.
3. The proposed number and composition of the review panel members shall take into account the requirements for expertise concerning the position that the reviewer should perform within the review panel. Only those reviewers from the list of reviewers who have completed the relevant professional development training organized by the Agency may be nominated to the review panel. The following positions are usually determined within the review panel, taking into consideration the type of proceedings: chair of the review panel, member of the review panel – significant professional expert, member of the review panel – student, member of the review panel, member of the review panel – foreign reviewer:
  - a) **the chair of the review panel** should be able to set a timetable for the activities of the review panel, coordinate the activities of the review panel and be responsible for its results, in particular, for the independent, objective, precise and timely processing of the evaluation report to the required extent and structure following the approved Methodology for Standards Evaluation; s/he must have the ability to negotiate with the party's representatives on behalf of the Agency and the review panel;<sup>3</sup>
  - b) **a member of the review panel – significant professional expert** should be able to evaluate whether the study programme and/or the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution sufficiently ensures the participation of the representatives of professionals in the design, approval, monitoring, periodic review and modification of the study programme and whether the practice-related requirements are sufficiently taken into account within the learning outcomes concerning the employability of the graduates;
  - c) **a member of the review panel – student** should be able to evaluate whether the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution sufficiently protects the rights and respects the legitimate requirements and interests of students, whether the participation of students in the design, approval, monitoring, periodic review and modification of the study programme is sufficiently ensured and whether students are sufficiently involved in the research, artistic and other activities of the higher education institution;
  - d) **a member of the review panel** should be able to cooperate with other members of the review panel in obtaining and analysing relevant data and information from the submitted documents and other available sources in order to prepare a partial working version of the evaluation report, documenting the relevant facts necessary for decision-making with regard to the Methodology for Standards Evaluation depending on the type of proceedings;
  - e) **a member of the review panel – foreign reviewer<sup>4</sup>** is employed abroad on a full-time basis and is not employed at a higher education institution in the Slovak Republic at the time of his/her registration in the list of reviewers.
4. The proposed composition of the review panel members shall take into account the type of proceedings and the specificities of the standards in relation to fields of study and study programmes:
  - a) in the case of an application for a review of the internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution or in the case of an extraordinary review of the internal quality assurance system of a higher education institution at the Agency's behest, the proposed review panel shall include reviewers who are experts on the internal quality assurance system or the fields of study in which the applicant provides study programmes and habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings;
  - b) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a bachelor's degree programme, a master's degree programme or a study programme combining bachelor's and master's degrees, the majority of the proposed review panel shall include experts in

<sup>3</sup> According to § 21 (2) of the Act.

<sup>4</sup> According to § 8 (3) of the Act.

- the field(s) of study in which the given study programme is to be delivered;
- c) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a professionally oriented bachelor's degree programme, the proposed review panel shall include at least one expert in the field(s) of study in which the study programme is to be delivered and at least one professional expert;
  - d) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a teacher training combination study programme, the proposed review panel shall include at least one expert on the foundations of pedagogical-psychological and social sciences and at least one expert for each specialization who is an expert in the field of study to which the given specialization relates;
  - e) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a translation combination study programme, the proposed review panel shall include at least one expert on the foundations of translation studies and at least one expert for each language in the combination;
  - f) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a study programme that is provided in a field of study requiring an opinion on the presumption of the practical employability of graduates or in the case of an application for the accreditation of a study programme leading to higher education required as a part of professional qualifications for the performance of a regulated profession, the proposed review panel shall include at least one expert representing the relevant legal entity, whose written consent is required for the higher education institution to be able to provide or modify the study programme;
  - g) in the case of an application for the accreditation of a doctoral study programme, the majority of the members of the proposed review panel shall include experts in the field of study in which the study programme is to be provided, and at least one of them shall be a foreign reviewer;
  - h) in the case of an application for the accreditation of habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings or for revoking the accreditation of habilitation proceedings and inauguration proceedings, the majority of members of the proposed review panel shall include experts in the relevant field of study who hold the title of professor; at least one member shall be a foreign reviewer; the proposed chair shall have the title of professor or a researcher with a level I qualification;
  - i) in the case of an application for the granting of state approval, the proposed review panel shall include reviewers who are experts in those fields of study in which the applicant intends to provide 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 the proposed composition of the review panel to the Executive Board for approval. The proposed composition of the review panel may be approved by the Executive Board at the meeting or outside the meeting by a *per rollam* vote.
  6. After approval by the Executive Board, the Chair of the Executive Board shall appoint the Chair and the members of the review panel and shall notify the given party to the accreditation proceedings in writing of the composition of the review panel .
  7. Within five working days of being notified of the composition of the review panel, the party to the accreditation proceedings may lodge a reasoned objection of bias against any member of the review panel; this does not apply in the case of an additionally appointed member of the review panel according to § 8 (2) letter a) of the Act.
  8. The objection of bias against a member of the review panel shall be considered by the Executive Board. If the objection is considered to be well-founded, the Chair of the Executive Board shall remove such member and appoint a new review panel member.
  9. If a member of the review panel ceases to be a student and was the only student member the review panel, the Chair of the Executive Board
    - a) shall appoint another student to the review panel without delay,

- b) may remove the member of the review panel based on a proposal of the chair of the review panel without the agreement of the Executive Board; and
- c) shall inform the higher education institution of the changes in the composition of the review panel pursuant to letters a) and b).

## **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 Agency's Executive Board on 17 September 2020 and shall enter into force on the date of their approval.

Bratislava, 17 September 2020

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