

## Creation of review panels and their work

Since review panels play a crucial role in the evaluation of HEIs, the Agency has a series of regulations concerning the panellists' registration, creation of review panels, procedures of review panels, and their code of ethics.

Let us have a quick look at the most important articles of the regulations. When it comes to registration in a list of reviewers, a successful applicant may be registered if s/he meets at least one of the minimum requirements and is in the position of:

- professor or associate professor,
- researcher,
- artist,
- student,
- professional expert,
- quality assurance specialist.

On top of the minimum requirements, a candidate is also expected to have competencies, skills and experience that will guarantee a professional evaluation of a HEI's research, artistic and other outputs in a relevant field of study, conducting research or evaluating research projects, being responsible for a study programme in a related field of study, etc.

Please also note that it may be some months between your registration and your actual work on a review panel. The Agency's review panels are "tailor made" for proceedings and their composition depends on the one hand on the field of study in question, and on the other hand on the qualifications, experience, and competencies of the panellists. If you have not been selected for proceedings it will most likely imply that your profile has not yet met the particular requirements of particular proceedings.

For more information on the regulations, see them in full:

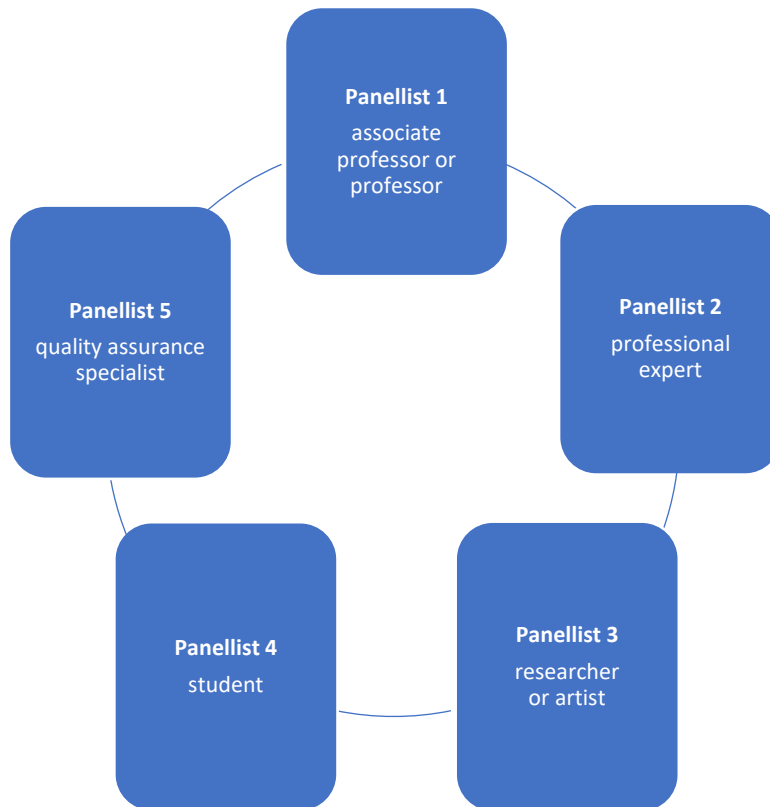
- [Principles for Registration in the List of Reviewers, Removal from the List of Reviewers, and Creation of Review Panels,](#)
- [Rules of Procedure for the Review Panel.](#)

To ensure an objective evaluation of a HEI, panellists are expected to become familiar with the Conflict of Interest Regulation, and the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. The former document regulates the Agency's measures to prevent conflicts of interest in reviewing and decision-making activities. It states the procedures for reviewing and handling conflicts of interest and the duties of the members of authorities, review panels, the Executive Board and the Agency employees upon the occurrence of a conflict of interest. The latter regulation ensures that the Agency authorities, 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 the fact that they are defending the public interest in ensuring the quality of HEIs.

Prior to their work in review panels, panellists submit a declaration of non-conflict of interest and undertake to abide by the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:

- [Conflict of Interest Regulation](#),
- [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#).

A review panel usually consists of **5 panellists** for full proceedings (e.g. accreditation of a new study programme) and of **3 panellists** for partial proceedings (e.g. verification of changes to an existing study programme). See Figure 1 below.

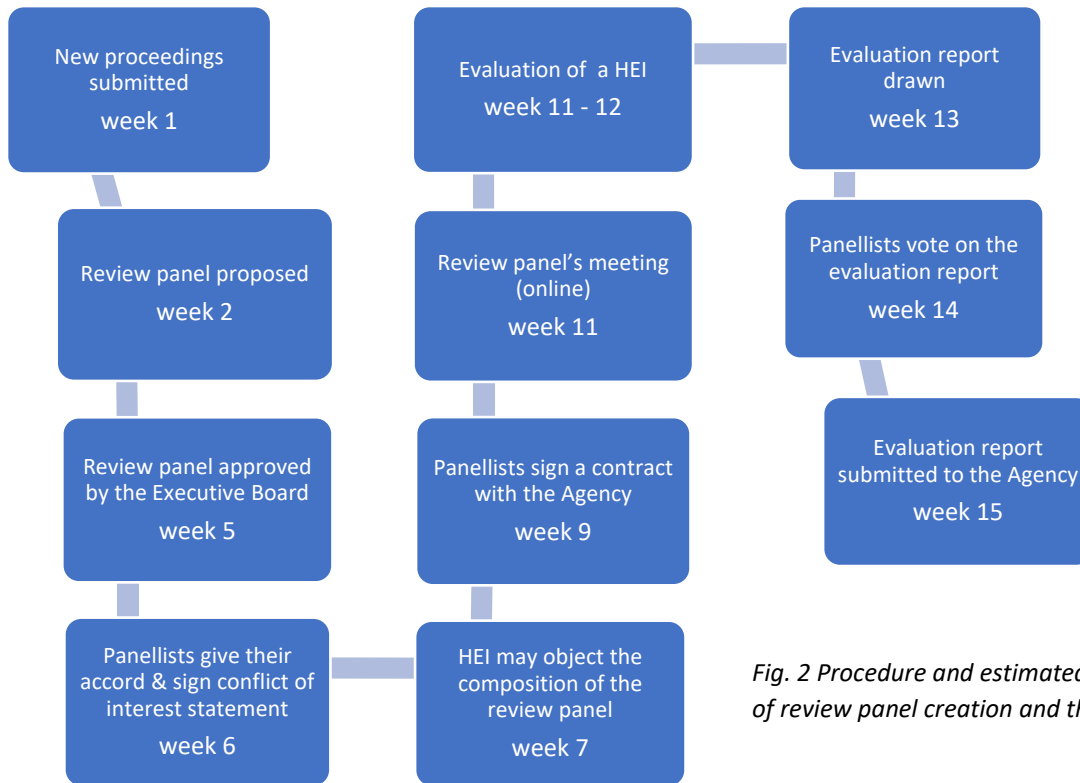


*Fig. 1 Composition of a typical review panel*

Please note that different members of a review panel are expected to examine different aspects of a HEI. An associate professor or professor will, for example, focus more on the teaching staff of the HEI and their research, artistic and other outputs, whereas a student will look into the fulfilment of student-centred teaching and assessment, and into learning resources and support available to the HEI's students. Consequently, different panellists will have a different degree of familiarity with particular standards. At the same time, however, it is important to remember that the evaluation is holistic, and any review panel member may have their say in any of the aspects evaluated.

Each review panel is assigned a coordinator from the Agency's Department of Accreditation Activities. S/he is there to provide methodological, information and administrative support and to coordinate the work of the review panel.

The creation of a review panel and its procedure in proceedings also follows the Agency's regulations. See the step-by-step graph below with the estimated time frame for each step. Please note the time frame may vary depending on the type of proceedings.



*Fig. 2 Procedure and estimated time frame of review panel creation and their work*

Once the evaluation report is uploaded in the Information System and mailed to the Agency, the Executive Board can issue its verdict. The agency then informs the HEI and the public of the verdict.

As shown above, the RP and its evaluation report play a crucial role in the evaluation of Slovak HEIs. On the one hand, the role is demanding and requires a professional, objective and thorough approach. At the same time, it is rewarding in the sense that one has personally contributed to the quality assurance of a HEI.