

## **Conclusions from the first accreditations of study programmes**

**Analysis of the findings of the evaluation reports of  
the review panels in the evaluation of applications  
for accreditation of the study programme**

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## Introduction

This report provides an analytical overview on the proceedings of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the Agency) in relation to applications from higher education institutions for the accreditation of new study programmes (initial programme accreditation) pursuant to Act 269/2018 Coll., implemented in the years 2021-2022. This is the first group of applications that have been evaluated according to the [Standards for Study Programmes](#) issued by the Agency in order to comply with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

On 1 November 2018, the new Act No. 269/2018 on quality assurance of higher education and amending Act No 343/2015 on public procurement and amending certain acts, as amended (the [Quality Assurance Act](#)), replaced the original parts of Act No. 131/2002 on higher education institutions governing accreditation. The main objective of the adopted Quality Assurance Act was to establish a legislative framework for quality assurance of higher education fully consistent with the European principles governing the aforementioned ESG 2015 Standards and Guidelines.

This thematic report focuses on the analysis of the evaluation reports of the review panels and the subsequent decisions of the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education with regard to the most frequent findings, shortcomings and examples of good practice in assessing higher education institutions' applications for accreditation of new study programmes submitted in 2021.

The thematic report is prepared in accordance with the provisions of Section 4(2)(g)(2) of the Quality Assurance Act and Article 3.4 of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG 2015).

## 1. The legislative framework

The Act on Quality Assurance has established an independent agency, which has the necessary competences in the field of quality assurance of higher education. These include, in particular, the evaluation of the internal quality assurance system of the HEI and its implementation, the accreditation of study programmes and the accreditation of habilitation and inauguration proceedings. The Act imposed on the Agency, inter alia, the development of standards for the accreditation of the study programme, standards for the internal quality assurance system and standards for habilitation and inauguration proceedings. The Act also obliges the Agency to apply for membership of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter ENQA) and to register with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter EQAR) in 2022.

The Quality Assurance Act sets out in detail the Agency's scope of activities. Its fundamental competence is, to decide on:

- compliance of the internal system and its implementation with the standards for the internal system;
- granting or non-granting of accreditation of a study programme;
- granting of the accreditation of the habilitation and/or inauguration proceeding, its non-granting or its withdrawal,
- the imposition of a corrective measure;
- applications for state approval to operate as a private higher education institution.

The new legislative framework on quality assurance in higher education also imposes new tasks and procedures on higher education institutions themselves. The higher education institution is primarily responsible for ensuring the quality of education through its internal quality assurance system, its implementation and continuous enhancement. The internal system must meet the standards issued by the Agency and lay down the policies for the establishment, approval, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and modification of study programmes, the procedure for verifying the implementation of the latest knowledge and trends in the content of study programmes, the method of involving representatives of students and other interested parties in the establishment and modification of study programmes, the linking of the study programme to the relevant level of the national qualification framework, the rules for the assessment of students' creative activities, the rules for examining students' initiatives and the procedures for verifying sufficient spatial, material, technical, information and personnel provision of study programmes.

Under the Quality Assurance Act, each higher education institution established in the Slovak Republic is obliged to ask the Agency to assess its internal system and its implementation in the specified cycle, for the first time by the end of 2022. If the Agency decides that the internal system and its implementation comply with the standards for the internal system, this means the institutional accreditation of a higher education institution in the fields of study and cycles and thus the higher education institution is authorised to independently establish and modify study programs in the relevant fields of study and cycles. The applications for the new study programmes will be

reserved for the study fields and cycles in which the HEI has not yet accredited a study programme.

At the programme level, the core activity of the Agency is the accreditation of the study programme. This type of procedure is further specified in Section 30 of the Quality Assurance Act. It is a procedure conducted at the request of a higher education institution that does not yet have an accredited study programme in the relevant field of study and cycle — this is the initial accreditation of the study programme, which is carried out on the basis of the assessment of compliance with the standards for the study programme. After the expiry of two years from the date of proper completion of the studies of the first student of the relevant study programme, but not earlier than after the expiry of the standard length of study of that study programme from the finality of the decision granting accreditation of the study programme, the Agency shall assess the compliance of the implementation of the relevant study programme with the standards for the study programme. If it confirms compliance, it will lift restrictions on establishing and modifying study programmes in the relevant field of study and cycle.

However, in the transitional period, the Act allowed higher education institutions to apply for accreditation of a new study programme in the field of study and cycle at which the HEI already provides study programmes. This transitional period for applications for accreditation of these study programmes was laid down by the Act until 31 March 2021. In 2021-2022, the Agency evaluated and decided on 177 applications for accreditation of a study programme.

Based on a review of the documentation from the institution and a site visit, the review panel elaborates an evaluation report on the basis of which the Executive Board makes its decision. The evaluation report contains basic identification data about the institution and the study program, information about the proceeding, evaluation procedures, reviewed documents, participating persons, the names of the review panel members, evaluation of the fulfilment of individual standards, the recommendations for the institution, and examples of good practice or identified shortcomings.

## 2. How the Agency works

The Agency shall carry out assessment and accreditation at the request of a higher education institution. The procedure begins on the basis of the submission of a complete application from a HEI for accreditation of a new study programme. The Agency shall verify the completeness of the application and invite the HEI to complete the application if needed. Part of the application for accreditation is also a self-evaluation report of the HEI to the submitted study programme.

The Agency shall set up the review panels of the Executive Board for the expert evaluation of the application from external experts in the relevant field who are included in the list of reviewers. In doing so, it takes into account the type of application submitted and the field of study. The HEI has the opportunity to comment on the review panel.

In addition to the examination of the application submitted, the description of the study programme and the self-evaluation report, a visit to a higher education institution by a review panel is part of the procedure. It is organized in cooperation with the higher education institution and usually takes 1.5 days for the accreditation of new study programmes. The review panel elaborates an evaluation report summarizing the findings and proposing a decision to the Executive Board. The evaluation report is then provided to the higher education institution for commenting.

The decision of the Agency on the application shall take place at a meeting of the Executive Board of the Agency. The decision-making process is based on a request from a HEI with annexes, in particular a description of the proposed study programme, the evaluation report of the review panel and a statement from the HEI on the evaluation report of the review panel.

The Executive Board shall adopt conclusions in a form of resolution. The adoption of the resolution requires the approval of seven of the nine members of the Executive Board. In the event of a positive decision, accreditation is granted, which implies the right to carry out a study programme. Otherwise, the Agency rejects the application and a formal decision is sent to the HEI with justification and instruction.

The higher education institution has the opportunity to object to the Agency's decision. In such a case, the objection is forwarded directly to the Board of Appeal which is acting on the matter. After the evaluation, it may refer back to the request for re-execution or confirm the Agency's decision.

### 3. Analysis of submitted applications for accreditation of a study programme

Sixteen out of thirty-three higher education institutions in Slovakia used the opportunity to apply for accreditation of the study programme in the transitional period until 31 March 2021. A total of 177 applications were submitted to the Agency (2 applications were submitted for the accreditation of a joint first and second level of study programmes). After considering these requests, the Agency's Executive Board decided to grant 160 accreditations of the study programme and rejected 17 applications because the participant did not meet the standards for the study programme.

The evaluation reports on these applications served as a basis for drawing up a thematic report on the findings of the evaluation reports for applications for accreditation for new study programmes.

In evaluating submitted applications for accreditation of a study programme, the members of the review panels followed the standards for the study programme and the methodology for evaluation of standards as amended on 18 February 2021. According to Article 9 of the Methodology, on the basis of the evaluation of the application and the on-site visit, the individual criteria for the evaluation of the standards for the study programme (SP criteria, Art. 13) were evaluated using a scale to determine the level of compliance with the standards for the study programme, which may reach levels A to C or NA:

A) level A – in the submitted application and the examination of the applicant's prerequisites, compliance with the given criterion of the standard was found, which is an example of good practice for other higher education institutions;

B) level B – in the submitted application and examination of the applicant's prerequisites, compliance with the given criterion of the standard was found;

C) level C – the application submitted and the examination of the applicant's prerequisites revealed non-compliance with the standard criterion

D) NA level – the given criterion is not evaluated in the conditions of the study programme.

In order to propose the accreditation of a study programme, each criterion was evaluated at level A or B. The review panel suggested rejecting the application if any of the criteria were evaluated by C score.

In the evaluation of these rejected applications, the review panels used a total of 170 C ratings for some of the criteria in their evaluation reports. In the two worst-rated reports, the number of C ratings were 24 and 25. An overview of the C scores broken down by article can be found in Table 1.

*Table 1 - C ratings by Articles of Standards for Study Programme*

článok štandardov	článok 2	článok 3	článok 4	článok 5	článok 6	článok 7	článok 8	článok 9	článok 10	článok 11	celkovo
počet hodnotení C	95	6	16	4	25	8	4	4	2	6	170

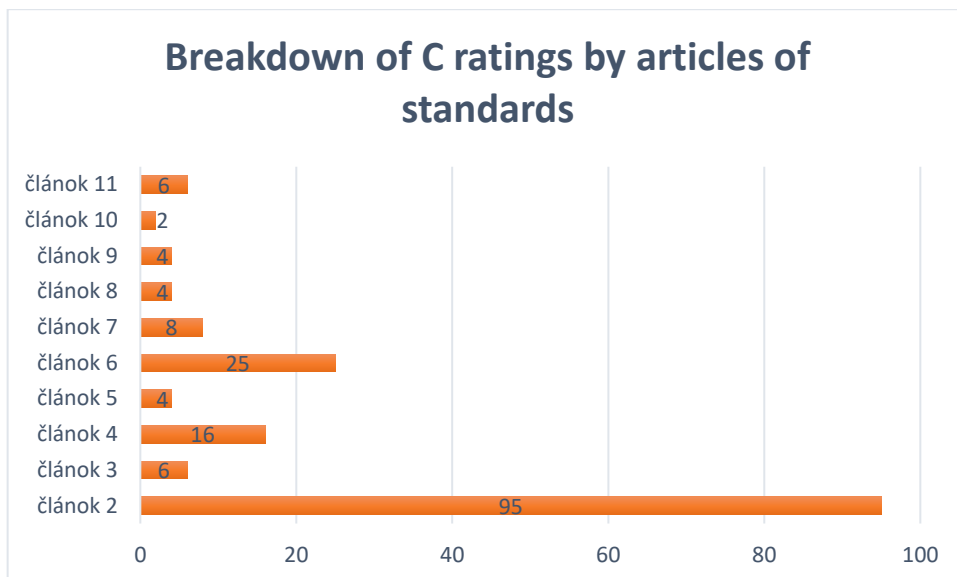


Figure 1 - Distribution of C ratings by articles of standards

In the following, we analyse the shortcomings identified in the evaluation reports of the review panels (level of compliance with C standards) and their verbal justifications according to the individual articles of the standards for the study programme. The number of applications submitted in different fields was different, some fields of study were not represented at all. Applications were submitted in 24 out of a total of 48 fields of study. Most applications were submitted in the study field of economics and management (26 applications), teaching and pedagogical sciences (25 applications), art (19 requests), Earth science (13 requests) and general medicine (12 applications).

Applications for accreditation of new study programmes were submitted in all three cycles of higher education. At most (81) applications were submitted in third cycle, 50 applications were submitted in first cycle, 46 applications were submitted in second cycle and 2 applications were submitted in joint first and second cycle of higher education.

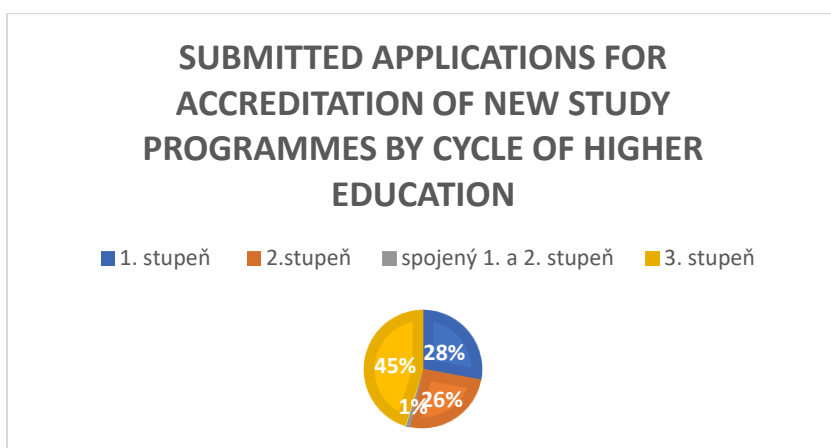


Figure 2 - Applications submitted for accreditation of new study programme by cycle of higher education



Six applications were submitted for accreditation for a professionally oriented study programme of the first level, 18 applications were submitted for accreditation by a study programme aimed at the exercise of a regulated profession. Based on the form of implementation of the study program, 119 applications were a full-time study programme and 58 were part-time study programmes.

## 4. Compliance with standards — analysis of the findings of review panels by each standard

The most common article of standards with identified shortcomings was Article 2 Proposal for a new study programme and a proposal for modification of the study programme. Of all 170 C scores awarded (failure to meet the criterion of the standard), up to 95 C scores were awarded in the evaluation of this article, representing almost 56 %.

### 4.1 Findings concerning the establishment of a new study programme

#### 4.1.1 Findings on graduate profile, learning outcomes and level of qualification framework

The learning outcomes are specified in the description of the study programme in the section required by Act No 131/2002 Coll. “graduate profile”. These should correspond to the requirements for the appropriate level of qualification framework and also to the content expected by the professional public that the graduate will know, understand and demonstrate compliance with the requirements.

Under Article 2, the most critical parts concerning graduate profile and learning outcomes (24 C ratings) have been evaluated, i.e., non-compliance with the section of the standard article which states that *“The study programme clearly defines the graduate’s profile. Within its framework, the descriptors define learning outcomes that are verifiable and correspond to the institution’s mission, the relevant level of the qualification framework and the subject field according to the relevant field of study or a combination of study fields in which their graduates obtain a higher education degree.”*

The review panels mentioned as the most common problems in this area an incorrect or too general graduate profile or the fact that the graduate profile did not correspond to the relevant level of the qualification framework. The graduate profile also states that the description of the graduates did not clearly define the specific objectives of the education or the link between the general objectives and outcomes of the education of individual subjects of the study programme and the subsequent verification of their achievement was not demonstrable. C ratings shall also indicate incorrect or insufficiently described learning outcomes; miscategorized learning outcomes — not distinguishing between knowledge, abilities and competences; or they were absent from the description of the study programme.

#### 4.1.2 Findings on learning outcomes in relation to sector-specific professional expectations

Another problematic point in this article was the indication of professions (20 C ratings). This was inconsistency with the part of Article 2, which states that *“The learning outcomes and qualifications obtained by completing the study programme meet the sector-specific professional*

*expectations for the pursuit of the profession. The study programme indicates the professions for which the acquired qualification is necessary. This is confirmed by the statements of relevant external stakeholders or by the agreement of the legal entity indicated in the description of the relevant field of study, if required by the description, or by a favourable opinion of the relevant ministry for the delivery of the study programme, in the case of a state higher education institution or in the case of a qualification for the performance of regulated professions.*

In many cases, higher education institutions reported a disproportionate number of professions that a graduate would be qualified to pursue. However, according to the Review Panel, the reality did not correspond to this. This was the result of an overly generalized profile of a graduate or the fact that the declared learning outcomes did not guarantee the acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary to perform the indicated professions, or that neither of the professions listed in the graduate profile was suitable for the graduate.

When making decisions, the Executive Board agreed that it is important to indicate only those professions for which the graduate of the study programme reliably obtains qualifications. This applies in particular to regulated professions.

#### 4.1.3 Findings on the content of education

The review panels also identified shortcomings in the content, structure and sequence of profile subjects (20 C evaluations), non-compliance with Article 2(9) *“The professional content, structure and sequence of the profile courses and other educational activities of the study programme and the conditions for successful completion of study enables the learning outcomes specified in the graduate profile to be achieved and guarantee access to the latest knowledge, skills and competencies, including transferable skills that affect their personal development and that can be used in their future careers and the lives of active citizens in democratic societies.”*

The design of the content, structure and sequence of subjects for some study programmes did not guarantee access to the knowledge, skills and competences indicated in the graduate profile and in the description of the field of study or did not allow the learning outcomes to be fully achieved. Some of the curriculum proposals lacked key subjects related to the content of the relevant field of study in the context of the graduate profile. In the recommended literature, the review panels identified the low representation of foreign titles, the titles of the new edition as well as the up-to-dateness of some titles. The evaluation reports state that the content of certain subjects of the study programme was only marginally devoted to the knowledge required for the exercise of the indicated profession. Another shortcoming was that the submitted content of the state examination did not correspond to the compulsory subjects of study or the profile of the graduate.

According to the opinion of the Executive Board, the content of the education specified in the graduate profile of the study programme must be obtained by completing compulsory or optional subjects in order to meet the expectations of the professional public.

#### 4.1.4 Findings related to professional experience

Another problematic area of this standard was professional experience, where there were shortcomings in complying with part of the standards (Art. 2 (11)), where in the case of professionally oriented bachelor study programmes *“part of their content is compulsory professional experience of students in a contracted organisation for a total of at least one semester, the purpose of which is to develop practical professional skills”*. *Professional experience enables the student to carry out activities through which he or she acquires work practices typical for the relevant level of qualification and the relevant field of study, has the opportunity to participate in professional processes, projects and, through specific tasks, acquires knowledge, skills and competences relevant to the pursuit of the professions concerned. Professional experience may be carried out as continuous or divided into several shorter periods following the needs of the relevant study programme and the conditions of the contracted organisation in which the professional experience takes place.*

The review panels found that the practice proposed did not provide sufficient guarantees for the adoption of the working procedures necessary for the relevant level of qualification and knowledge, skills and competences relevant to the exercise of the indicated professions. According to the findings of the members of the review panels, several teachers of profile courses did not have experience in the performance of the study programme in practice or the professional experience of the students was not carried out in the establishments where the indicated profession is pursued. For some study programmes, neither the mechanism of completion of the practice nor its place in the curriculum was clearly described.

#### 4.1.5 Other shortcomings related to the establishment of the new study programme

Among the less frequent shortcomings was the incorrect assignment of the study programme to the field of study, where, for example, despite the emphasized interdisciplinarity, the study programme was assigned to only one field of study and did not have a justified extent of consistency of its content with the given fields of study. This finding is inconsistent with the standards (Art. 2(5)) which states that: *“The study programme is assigned to a field of study and the extent of consistency of its content with the given field of study is justified. In the case of study programmes combining two fields of study or interdisciplinary studies, each study programme is assigned to the relevant field of study and the degree of consistency of its content with the relevant fields of study is justified.”*

The review panels also identified errors in the part of Article 2(10) relating to length of study and the determination of workload (total 7 C ratings), which states that *“A study programme must include a standard length of study, a specified workload for each course expressed in ECTS credits and the number of face-to-face teaching hours, except where the nature of the educational activity does not require it. The standard length of study, workload and number of face-to-face teaching hours allow learning outcomes to be achieved while corresponding to the form of the study programme.”*

The failure to distinguish the standard length of study between full-time and part-time form of study was mentioned one time as a shortcoming and three times was mentioned the excess credit burden in some courses, while the content and outputs achieved according to the annotations did not correspond to their extent. For some programmes, the number of credits related to the final thesis accounted for up to 30 % of the student’s total workload and the distribution of the credit

burden was contrary to the legislation in force. Neither the information sheets nor the annexes to the application show the link between the credits awarded, the difficulty of learning outcomes achieved and the student's workload in hours, nor was the relationship between the credits assigned and the workload in the scientific and pedagogical part of the third-cycle study programme clear.

The least frequent indicator is that the evaluation reports of the review panels show a lack of curriculum processing in line with the strategic objectives of the higher education institution or the fact that the establishment of the study programme is inconsistent with the internal quality assurance system; that not all stakeholders were involved in the process of the establishment of the study programme.

#### 4.1.6 Strengths related to the proposal for a new study programme

In Article 2 of the standards on the proposal of the new study programme the review panels also mentioned the strengths of the study programmes, among which they mentioned that higher education institutions have established a system of cooperation with employers, who clearly declare the demand for graduates of the study programme and actively participate in the implementation of the study programme.

The strength of the study programmes was also that the structure of the individual key subjects reflects very well the need to develop the scientific and research knowledge of students and their better understanding of the methodology of scientific work. The review panel appreciated the shift of the programme from the general theoretical superstructure of economic subjects to a specific methodology of scientific work and research within specific disciplines.

In the evaluation report, the Review Panel stated that the HEI has a superior system of internal approval of the study programme, which creates an independent and transparent evaluation of the study programme by the institution's internal bodies. Several evaluation reports described the significant involvement of professional experts (from major professional workplaces) and students in establishing the study programme and linking study programmes to practice. The effective design of student experience systems in their own or partner purpose facilities, as well as framework contracts with relevant institutions, where students are given sufficient space for experience and training, were highlighted. The strength of several study programmes was the composition of courses, which meets the expectations of practice and potential employers.

#### 4.2 Deficiencies related to the approval of the study programme

Shortcomings related to the non-fulfilment of Article 3 of the standards concerning the approval of the study programme were identified by only two review panels. This type of shortcomings was related to the unclear distinction between students who participated in the preparation of the study programme and those who participated in the evaluation of the study programme. One review panel described that a professionally sound and transparent evaluation and approval of the study programme was not guaranteed because it was not carried out by persons who are experts in the field and representatives of students. For another study programme, a specific description of the submission, assessment, approval process was missing and its results were not accessible in any publicly available minutes of the responsible authorities.

### 4.3 Deficiencies in student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Deficiencies related to the non-compliance of Article 4 of the standards for a study programme focusing on student-centred learning, teaching and assessment have been identified by two review panels. The main shortcomings were mentioned in poorly described forms of learning; in vague and concisely defined learning outcomes in some courses and without sufficient information for students and other stakeholders. The problem was identified in the unclear system of linking learning objectives of the curriculum, outputs and learning methods; formally listed learning outcomes, methods and assessment criteria in some courses or parts of the study. There was no specification of the methods of education used which corresponded to the relevant level of education.

Another deficiency was the way students engage in creative activities and their problem to establish themselves in scientific circles. In some cases, third-cycle students were not led to independent scientific work at the appropriate level; nor were they allowed to independently publish articles in relevant (scientific) journals.

The review panels also identified weaknesses in the way and criteria for the interim assessment, its frequency during the year, the absence of interim assessment during the semester and the weighting of the individual elements in the assessment on the basis of the factsheets. The higher education institution did not have clear rules or a defined way of educating teachers in reliable assessment and verification of learning outcomes.

The review panel identified problems in the assessment of the rate of delivery of learning outcomes which did not provide reliable feedback to students due to the unclear/inappropriate determination of learning outcomes in the fact sheets.

### 4.4 Deficiencies related to admission procedures, course of study, recognition and awarding of academic degrees

Deficiencies related to non-compliance of Article 5 were identified by only one review panel, which stated in the evaluation report that the requirements for candidates for the study programme submitted, the admission criteria and the admission procedure system were not sufficiently described. Basic information on admission conditions was given at institution level, but the specifics for entering the Master's programme of the submitted new second-cycle study programme were not specified in any way. The submitted selection procedure was not based on appropriate methods for assessing their eligibility for studies; in particular, for applicants from other higher education institutions, the application did not specify the procedure and methods of admission.

### 4.5 Deficiencies related to teaching staff

Within the framework of Article 6, which is dedicated to teachers of the study programme, the most common problem (10 C ratings) was the lack of teachers and other persons providing

profile courses that would guarantee the adequacy and sustainability of the staffing of the study programme (outputs of creative activity documenting professional competence, age structure of the five teachers providing the study programme). These deficiencies were not in line with the wording of the article, which states that “the *institution has a sufficient number of teaching staff with the required qualifications, workload allocation, research, artistic and other activities, practical skills, teaching skills and transferable skills that enable them to achieve learning outcomes, and whose language competencies correspond to the language requirements of the study programme.*”

The qualifications of some teachers providing courses did not correspond to the required learning outcomes. The lack of work capacity of the person responsible for the study programme — e.g., full-time job or permanent presence at a foreign higher education institution — has proven to be a problem on several occasions. For some study programmes, teachers provided a disproportionately high number of courses, at the same time they also provided courses at different cycles of study and other supportive activities, which may be problematic due to workload layout. In one case related to teaching study programme it lacked the involvement of teachers providing pedagogical-psychological courses, who were not involved in the conduct of the final thesis or in the state examinations.

#### 4.6 Deficiencies related to research, artistic and other activities of a higher education institution

The most common failure to comply with Article 7, which governs the research, artistic and other activities of the higher education institution, was in particular the fact that teachers providing profile courses do not demonstrate the results of creative activity in a field of study in which the programme of study takes place or does not demonstrate them at the required level of creative activities for a given level of higher education. One of the applicants did not demonstrate sufficient continuous research activity on the subject of the present programme.

The Executive Board supports the idea that a university teacher demonstrates his/her expertise to provide higher education also through outputs of his own creative activity at the appropriate level.

#### 4.7 Findings on learning resources and student support

Deficiencies related to the non-fulfilment of Article 8 of standards for the study programme were related to the absence of specific didactic aids for external teaching and listing of outdated and old-fashioned literature in the information sheets. In another case, in the study programme in English language, all sources were mentioned only in Slovak language and Czech language, and references to publications issued abroad were missing, although this field of study requires it and PhD students should already actively work with foreign literature.

#### 4.8 Findings relating to the collection and processing of study programme information

Deficiencies related to the non-compliance of Article 9 of the standards for study programme were identified by only one review panel. The lack of clarity was the way in which the data was collected and the responsibility for implementing study programme data collection, as well as the lack of indication of the specific data that will be collected and how students, teachers and other stakeholders will be involved in the collection.

#### 4.9 Findings related to the publication of study programme information

Deficiencies related to the non-compliance of Article 10 of the standards for study programme were also identified by only one review panel. In particular, the absence of a version of the faculty website or subpage for the needs of candidates and students with specific needs, as well as the fact that the documentation did not include a coordinator for students with specific needs.

#### 4.10 Findings related to continuous monitoring, periodic evaluation and periodic approval of the study programme

Deficiencies related to the non-compliance of Article 11 of the standards for study programme were identified equally by only one review panel, the same as for Articles 5 and 9. In the evaluation report, it stated that neither the application nor its annexes provided a description of the way in which continuous monitoring, periodic evaluation and modification of the study programme would ensure that the educational objectives and outcomes achieved are consistent with the needs of students, employers and other stakeholders. In the evaluation report, the review panel noted that the development of the evaluation and monitoring system of the study programme did not include relevant stakeholders; there was also unclear how the stakeholders were involved in the evaluation of the study programme. The periodic approval rules have not been sufficiently described in the application or in the annexes to the application.



## 5. Conclusion

This report provides an analysis of the findings contained in the evaluation reports prepared by the review panels of the Agency's Executive Board when evaluating applications for accreditation of new study programmes submitted by 31 March 2021. Its aim was to summarise the most common findings from the first applications for accreditation of new study programmes, which were evaluated according to the new standards for the study programme.

The content of the analysis shows that higher education institutions had the most problems with compliance with the standards in Article 2 — Proposal for a new study programme and a proposal for modification of the study programme. This is understandable as it was the accreditation of the establishment of new study programmes.

For the sake of objectivity, it should also be noted that at the time of application, the majority of higher education institutions did not yet have an internal quality assurance system in place. This could cause complications in meeting some of the requirements of the standards.

The purpose of this analysis is to provide higher education institutions with information in order to avoid any identified shortcomings in the future. It can also serve as a basis for the Agency to clarify and interpret the meaning of the articles of the standards for which institutions had the most shortcomings.

It is important to mention that applications submitted do not represent a statistically significant sample of the total number of registered study programmes. The decision for which study programmes and in which fields of study will apply for accreditation was made only at the HEIs themselves. It is also possible that institutions submitted applications in those fields of study in which they were furthest in compliance with standards.

## 6. Literature

Standards for the Study Programme

Methodology for evaluation of standards as amended on 18.2.2021

Act No 269/2018 on quality assurance of higher education and amending Act No 343/2015 on public procurement and amending certain acts

Decree No. 244/2019 Coll. on the system of study fields of the Slovak Republic

Evaluation reports of the review panels on the evaluation of applications for accreditation of study programmes submitted by 31 March 2022

Thematic report - Changes in higher education due to the implementation of quality assurance systems 2019-2021

Self-evaluation report of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education 2022

**Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education**

Thematic report was approved by Executive Board of SAAHE on December 8, 2022

This report is available on SAAHE's website