

# **Standards for Study Programmes**

**Bratislava, 25 July 2024**

## Article 1

### Introductory provisions and scope of the standards

1. The *Standards for Study Programmes* (the “Standards”) are a set of requirements whose fulfilment is a condition for obtaining the accreditation of a study programme<sup>1</sup> and for the Agency's decision to authorise a higher education institution to design, deliver and modify study programmes in a given field and level of study<sup>2</sup>. These requirements are set in Articles 2 – 10 herein. The Standards also serve to evaluate the compliance of an institution's internal system with the Standards for the Higher Education Internal Quality Assurance System<sup>3</sup>.
2. The set of procedures, criteria and indicators for benchmarking through which the review panels of the Agency's Executive Board (“the review panel”) and the Agency's staff evaluate the fulfilment of standards and measures to ensure the compliance of a study programme with the Standards is stated in the Methodology for Standards Evaluation issued by the Agency.
3. The set of procedures, criteria and indicators for benchmarking through which the review panels evaluate the level of research, artistic and other activities of a higher education institution is stated in the Methodology for the Evaluation of Research, Artistic and Other Activities issued by the Agency.
4. The Standards use defined terms whose interpretations are stated in Article 12 herein. The defined terms are given in italics when they first appear in the text.
5. The Standards are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for the Higher Education Area<sup>4</sup> (ESG 2015) and take into account generally binding regulations.
6. The Standards regulate the requirements for the evaluation of study programmes of higher education institutions based in the Slovak Republic. They relate to the evaluation of study programmes of applicants for state approval<sup>5</sup> and to the evaluation of study programmes of higher education institutions based abroad, with an emphasis on the evaluation of compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area<sup>6</sup> from 2015.

## Article 2

### Proposals and modifications

1. The proposal of a new study programme or the *modification of a study programme* is elaborated and submitted in accordance with the formalized processes of the higher education internal quality assurance system (“*the internal system*”). If the institution does

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<sup>1</sup>According to § 30 of the Quality Assurance Act.

<sup>2</sup>According to Article 3 point 10 of the Standards for the Internal System issued by the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.

<sup>3</sup>According to Article 3 point 4 of the Standards for the Internal System issued by the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.

<sup>4</sup>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG 2015.

<sup>5</sup>According to § 33 of the Quality Assurance Act.

<sup>6</sup>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG 2015.

not have an approved internal system, the quality assurance rules are stated directly in the proposal of the programmes.

2. A study programme is elaborated in compliance with the institution's mission and strategic goals, which are determined in the institution's long-term plan<sup>7</sup>.
3. Designated persons are responsible for the delivery, development and quality assurance of the study programme.
4. Students, employers and other stakeholders are involved in the preparation of the study programme.
5. A study programme is assigned to a field of study<sup>8</sup> 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.
6. The study programme clearly defines and communicates the level of qualification that students will acquire upon their successful completion of the programme. The qualification corresponds to the appropriate level of education under *the qualifications framework*.
7. The study programme clearly defines a graduate's profile. Within its framework, the descriptors<sup>9</sup> define learning outcomes that are verifiable and appropriate to the institution's mission, the given level of the qualifications framework and the subject field according to the relevant field of study or a combination of fields of study in which graduates obtain their higher education degree.
8. 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<sup>10</sup>, 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.
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 enable 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. Within this framework, students are guided towards values, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, social and civil responsibility and building an identity towards the Slovak Republic and the European Union, while in teacher study programmes these values are adequately incorporated into the content of subjects or educational areas. In the case of professionally oriented

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<sup>7</sup> The strategic objectives shall take into account the needs for the preparation of human resources in the public interest.

<sup>8</sup> The fields of study in which higher education institutions in the Slovak Republic may provide higher education and their descriptions are set out in the Decree of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic No. 244/2019 Coll. on the system of fields of study in the Slovak Republic.

<sup>9</sup> Dublin descriptors are recommended.

<sup>10</sup> Descriptions of the fields of study are listed in the Decree No. 244/2019 Coll. of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic on the system of study fields in the Slovak Republic as amended by Decree No. 26/2023 Coll.

bachelor's degree programmes, the content of the study programme is designed to enable the achievement of employers' expected learning outcomes with an emphasis on the development of practical professional skills in the relevant sector of the economy or social practice.

10. A study programme must include a standard length of study, a specified workload for each course expressed in ECTS<sup>11</sup> 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.
11. In the case of professionally oriented bachelor's degree programmes, their content includes compulsory professional practice in a contracted organization for at least one term.<sup>12</sup> The practice is designed to develop of practical professional skills and enables students to undertake activities through which they acquire work procedures typical for the relevant level of qualification and field of study. It allows students to participate in professional processes and projects, and by engaging them in specific tasks they acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies. The professional practice may be carried out in one longer period or divided into several shorter periods, depending on the needs of the study programme and the conditions of the cooperating organization in which the professional practice takes place.
12. The study programme has a clearly defined level and nature of research, artistic and other activities required for successful completion, especially concerning the final thesis.

### **Article 3**

#### **Approval of the study programme**

1. A study programme is approved in accordance with the formalized processes of the internal system. The review and approval of a study programme involving students, employers and other stakeholders are guaranteed to be independent, unbiased, objective, professional, transparent and fair. The persons reviewing and approving the study programme must be different from the persons preparing the study programme proposal.

### **Article 4**

#### **Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**

1. The rules, forms and methods of teaching, learning and student assessment within a study programme enable the achievement of learning outcomes while respecting the diversity of the students and their needs.
2. There is a flexibility in learning paths and in the achievement of learning outcomes. The study programme allows for adequate education outside the university in domestic and foreign institutions, particularly through mobility support. The results of this education are recognized by the institution.

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<sup>11</sup> ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

<sup>12</sup> A student's workload of at least 30 ECTS credits.

3. The variety of forms and methods used in teaching, learning and assessing learning outcomes stimulates students to take an active role in the process of learning and developing their academic careers. Students in higher education institutions are appropriately involved in *creative activities* in relation to the learning outcomes and level of the qualifications framework of the study programme.
4. A sense of autonomy, independence and self-evaluation is reinforced within a study programme, while providing adequate guidance and support by teachers based on mutual respect.
5. A study programme is delivered in a way that reinforces the internal motivation of students to continuously improve, leading to the observance of the principles of the academic ethics or professional ethics in the case of a professionally oriented bachelor's degree programme.
6. A study programme has prescribed rules, criteria and methods for the assessment of learning outcomes that are available to the public in advance. The assessment results must be recorded, documented and archived.
7. Assessment methods and criteria are known in advance and accessible to the students; they are included in the different parts/courses/modules of the programme, and they are suitable for a fair, consistent and transparent verification of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies.
8. The assessment provides students with reliable feedback on the degree of fulfilment of learning outcomes, with advice on learning progression where appropriate.
9. If circumstances allow the assessment of students in a study programme is carried out by several teachers.
10. Students can appeal against their assessment results and shall be assured that their appeal will be handled fairly.

## **Article 5**

### **Student admission, progression, recognition and awarding of academic degrees**

1. A study programme is delivered according to pre-defined and easily accessible rules of study at all stages of the study cycle, e.g. student admission, progression and assessment, recognition of education, certification, awarding of academic degrees, diplomas and any other evidence of formal qualifications. The specificities of special needs of students are taken into consideration.
2. A study programme specifies the requirements for applicants and the selection process; the requirements correspond to the level of the qualifications framework. The admission procedure is reliable, fair and transparent. The criteria and requirements for applicants are published in advance and are easily accessible. The admission procedure is inclusive and ensures equal opportunities for every applicant demonstrating feasibility for completion. The selection process of applicants is based on appropriate methods of assessing their eligibility for the study.
3. The rules for the delivery of a study programme regulate and facilitate the recognition of the study and parts of the study by the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications

concerning Higher Education in the European Region<sup>13</sup> to ensure the promotion of domestic and foreign student mobility.

4. An effective use of tools ensuring *research integrity* prevention and dealing with plagiarism and other *academic fraud* is guaranteed in the delivery of the study programme.
5. Students of a study programme have effective mechanisms for examining claims seeking the protection of their rights or legally protected interests which they believe have been violated. Students can also point to specific deficiencies in the action or inaction of a higher education institution. The examination of claims is transparent and takes place with the participation of student representatives. The complainants are provided with feedback on the results of their examination and of the measures taken<sup>14</sup>.
6. The successful completion of a study programme is confirmed by the institution by the awarding of an academic title, by the issuance of a university diploma and by the issuance of further documentation (diploma supplement) explaining the qualifications obtained. These documents comply with the applicable regulations.

## Article 6 Teaching staff

1. 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.
2. The qualifications of teachers involved in a study programme are at least one degree higher than the qualifications achieved by its completion. This requirement may be waived in justified cases, such as foreign language lecturers, in-service teachers, specialists and doctoral candidates.
3. Profile courses are normally provided by staff members in the functional position of professor or the functional position of associate professor, employed at the university in the *relevant field* of study or in a related field for fixed weekly working hours<sup>15</sup>. In vocational education programmes, profile study courses are also provided by university teachers who are experienced professionals from the relevant economic or social fields and who work at the institution for a fixed weekly or part-time period. The sustainability of the teaching staff in profile courses of the programme is guaranteed in terms of the age of the teachers.
4. Pursuant to Art. 6 (7 to 11) of the Standards, the institution has a designated staff member who has the necessary competencies to guarantee responsibility for the delivery, development and quality assurance of the study programme or an otherwise defined integral part of the study programme and who is also responsible for a profile course. This person is in the position of a professor employed in the relevant field of study for fixed weekly working hours; in the case of a bachelor's degree programme, he/she is a professor or associate professor employed in the relevant field of study for fixed weekly working hours. This person cannot also be responsible for the delivery, development and quality

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<sup>13</sup> Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon 1997.

<sup>14</sup> According to § 3 (3) letter g) of the Quality Assurance Act.

<sup>15</sup> In the case of healthcare employees, members of the armed forces and active artists, the condition of weekly working time shall apply appropriately.

assurance of a study programme at another university in the Slovak Republic. The same person may have primary responsibility for the delivery, development and quality assurance of up to three study programmes. This does not include cases of concurrence according to Art. 7 (3), letter b) to h) of the Standards.

5. The staff supervising *final theses* are active in research, artistic and other activities or in a professional practice at the level corresponding to the degree of the study programme in the field of the professional and thematic scope of the supervised theses. Dissertation supervisors are staff members in the position of professors or associate professors or teachers in another similar position in a contracted research institution cooperating with a higher education institution in the delivery of a third-level study programme<sup>16</sup>.
6. The teaching staff develop their professional, language, pedagogical, digital and transferable skills.
7. In the case of teacher study programmes with a focus on acquiring the ability to teach the relevant educational field or the relevant teaching subject or relevant teaching subjects, the institution guarantees teachers according to paragraphs 1 to 6 working in the field of study teaching and pedagogical sciences and teachers working in the fields of study on which is based the relevant educational field or the relevant teaching subject. The institution chooses the ratio between the mentioned groups of teachers depending on the profile of the teacher's study programme, while the connection of professional content with the didactics of the relevant educational field or subject is guaranteed. In the case of teacher study programmes with a focus on acquiring the ability to teach all educational fields for pre-primary and primary education, it is sufficient if the institution guarantees teachers according to paragraphs 1 to 6 working in the field of study teaching and pedagogical sciences.
8. In the case of translation and interpretation combined study programmes, the institution engages teachers according to Art. 6 (1 to 6) of the Standards separately for each *specialization* of the combination in compliance with the language relevance, and separately for *translation studies foundations*.
9. In the case of programmes combining two fields of study or two first-level study programmes delivered as interdisciplinary studies, the institution engages teachers according to Art. 6 (1 to 6) of the Standards for each field of study in which its graduates receive a higher education degree.
10. In the case of joint study programmes, the institution engages teachers according to Art. 6 (1 to 6) of the Standards for that part of the study programme which the institution provides.
11. In the event that an institution delivers study programmes in a given field of study at several faculties or at several addresses, it engages teachers according to paragraphs 1 to 6 of the Standards separately for each faculty and separately for each address where the study programme is delivered as a whole. This requirement does not apply to teacher study programmes with a focus on acquiring the ability to teach the relevant educational field, teaching subject or relevant teaching subjects, which are carried out together at several faculties within one institution.

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<sup>16</sup> The staff of research institutions are senior scientists with a qualification degree I and independent researchers with a qualification degree IIa.

## **Article 7**

### **Creative activity of a higher education institution**

1. Teachers providing profile courses within a study programme demonstrate the outputs of their research, artistic and other activities in the relevant field(s) of study in which the study programme is delivered at the required level, depending on the given level of study:
  - a) at least at an internationally significant level in the case of a third-level study programme;
  - b) at least at an internationally recognized level in the case of a second-level study programme or a study programme combining the first and second levels; and
  - c) at least at a nationally recognized level in the case of a first-level study programme.
2. The higher education institution demonstrates the creative activity by the most significant outputs of creative activity of teachers providing profile subjects of the study programme, while:
  - a) the institution selects the teachers and their outputs by submitting 5 outputs per teacher, at least 2 of them from the latest 6 years prior to the application submission;
  - b) the institution ensures the availability of records of submitted outputs and responses to such outputs in bibliometric and citation databases, registries of records of publishing and artistic activities or in other search systems that are accepted as relevant in the relevant field of study;
  - c) the institution submits a total of 25 outputs in the case of a study programme, or 15 outputs if it's a separate assessment of the approval of a translational combined study programme<sup>16a</sup>, translational basis or another specific case<sup>17</sup>;
  - d) the same output may only be submitted once within a given assessment;
  - e) the same person submits outputs only within one evaluation of creative activity;
  - f) in the case of co-authored outputs, the same output may be submitted and attributed to other persons up to three times in other evaluations of creative activity;
  - g) the evaluation of creative activity will be carried out by a review panel using the holistic *peer-review* procedure stated in the Methodology for the Evaluation of Creative Activity issued by the Agency.
3. In the event that the institution delivers several study programmes in a given field of study, it demonstrates the outputs of its creative activity according to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Standards separately for each study programme, except for the concurrence with the following cases:
  - a) a higher-level study programme with following content in a given field of study delivered in the same faculty of the institution;
  - b) another form or language mutation of an identical study programme;
  - c) a part of the joint study programme based on a given field of study;
  - d) a part of the study programme in a combination of two fields of study based on a given field of study and delivered in the same faculty of the institution;

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<sup>16a</sup> Pursuant to § 53b par. 3 of the Higher Education Act.

<sup>17</sup> Another specific case is a field of study whose content is related to the preparation of experts for any of the regulated professions with the coordination of education listed in Annex 2 of Decree No. 16/2016 Coll. of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic and is based on fields of study assigned to regulated professions according to Government Regulation No. 296/2010 Coll.; a higher education institution submits 15 outputs.



- e) a teacher's study programme with a focus on acquiring the ability to teach the relevant educational field or the relevant teaching subject or relevant teaching subjects;
  - f) the approbation of the translation combination study programme based on the given language;
  - g) the conversion study programme whose content is based on a given field and level of study;
  - h) a part of the first-level study programme delivered as interdisciplinary studies whose content is based on the given field of study.
4. In the event that the institution delivers several study programmes in a given field of study at different seats, it demonstrates the outputs of its research, artistic and other activities for each seat separately.
  5. In the case of a third-level study programme delivery, the institution demonstrates its long-term continuous creative activity in the field of the study programme. The workplace must show the existence of *long-term* and *continuous* success in receiving financial grants for research or artistic projects and the existence of follow-up or new projects from domestic and international grant schemes or other sources.

## Article 8

### Learning resources and student support

1. The institution has sufficient spatial, material, technical and information resources for a study programme to ensure the achievement of learning objectives and learning outcomes. These include: lecture halls, classrooms, study rooms, laboratories, and laboratory equipment and other necessary equipment, technical facilities and equipment, studios, workshops, design and art studios, interpreting booths, clinics, religious seminars, science and technology parks, technology incubators, school enterprises, practice centres, training schools, sports halls, swimming pools, sports grounds, libraries, access to study literature, information databases and other information sources, information technology, external services and their corresponding funding.
2. In the event that educational activities are provided by distance or combined methods, the institution has systems for the management of the course content and such education; students are guaranteed access to the course content and other study materials.
3. The institution has a professional support staff whose competencies and numbers meet the needs of students and teachers and are related to the learning objectives and learning outcomes.
4. The institution maintains binding partnerships that enable relevant stakeholders to participate in the quality assurance, delivery and development of the study programme.
5. The institution has a sufficient teaching staff, spatial, material, technical and information resources for the study programme, separately for each seat at which the study programme or a part thereof is to be delivered, and in proportion to the learning objectives and outcomes of the given part of the programme.
6. The institution responds effectively to the diversity of students' needs and interests. It provides students with support for their successful study progression and career guidance.
7. The institution provides students with appropriate social security, sport, cultural, spiritual, and social activities during their studies.

8. Students are provided with support for and access to domestic and foreign mobility, and internships.
9. The institution provides individualized support and suitable conditions for special needs students.
10. In professionally oriented study programmes, the programme has contractual partners which are organizations providing professional practice and practical training for students. These organizations have sufficient spatial, material and technological conditions and staff to ensure that the planned learning outcomes can be achieved.

### **Article 9**

#### **Information management**

1. The institution collects, analyses and makes use of relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.
2. The effective collection and analysis of information about study programmes and other activities play a role in the evaluation, design and modification of a study programme.
3. The following are monitored and evaluated in a study programme: indicators of teaching and learning performance, applicant and student profiles, students' progression, success and drop-out rates, the satisfaction of students, the employability of graduates, feedback from students and employers, information about learning resources and support available to students.
4. Appropriate tools and methods are used to collect and process information about the study programme. Students, teachers, employers and other stakeholders are involved in the collection and analysis of information and follow-up measures.

### **Article 10**

#### **Public information**

1. Institutions provide accessible and clearly structured information about a study programme, mainly about intended learning objectives and learning outcomes, requirements for applicants, selection criteria, recommended personality requirements, the level of the national qualifications framework, the field of study, the qualifications they award, teaching and learning rules, the programme's completion conditions, assessment procedures and criteria, programme resources, pass rates, learning opportunities available to students, and information about available jobs for successful graduates and their employability.
2. This information is easily accessible to students, their supporters, prospective students, graduates, other stakeholders and to the public in all the languages in which the study programme is delivered. The form in which the information is available also considers specific needs of applicants and students.

## **Article 11**

### **Continuous monitoring, periodic review and approval of study programmes**

1. The institution regularly monitors, reviews and appropriately modifies a study programme in order to comply with the Standards to ensure that the learning objectives and learning outcomes are in line with the needs of students, employers, other stakeholders, the latest knowledge in the field of study and the technological possibilities to ensure that the level of the graduates, by means of the achieved learning outcomes, is in line with the required level of the National Qualifications Framework and the stakeholders' expectations.
2. The monitoring and reviewing of a study programme include obtaining relevant feedback from the programme stakeholders who also participate in the preparation of the feedback methodology. At least once a year, students have an opportunity to comment on the quality of teaching and the teachers of the study programme in an anonymous questionnaire.
3. The feedback results referred to in paragraph 2 are reflected in improvement measures. Students are guaranteed a role in the design of such measures.
4. The feedback results implemented measures and any planned or follow-up activities resulting from the evaluation of the study programme should be discussed with the stakeholders and are accessible to the public.
5. The study programme is periodically approved in compliance with the formalized processes of the internal system at a period corresponding to its standard length of study.

## **Article 12**

### **Glossary of terms**

1. For the purposes of the Standards, a set of terms and their definitions is provided in paragraphs 2 to 34 of this Article.
2. *Academic fraud* is a dishonest action that is contrary to academic integrity and moral standards. It includes plagiarism, cheating on tests, fabrication of research results, recording of fictitious data, omitting unsuitable facts and data, forgery of research, dishonest practices in publishing research results, non-declaring conflicts of interest, misusing information gathered during a reviewal, fictitious authorship, superficial and poor-quality review, systematic and conscious publishing in predatory magazines and publishing houses.
3. *Approbation* in translation combined study programmes is the acquisition of the ability to interpret and translate into and from the relevant language<sup>18</sup>.
4. The *educational goals of the study programme* are formulations that identify the student's abilities at the time of completion of the programme, i.e. they express the expectations placed on the graduates of the study programme. The goals are implemented in the study programme through verifiable/measurable learning outcomes.
5. The *long-term and continuous success* is a continuous success in the period of the last 10 years before the year in which the creative activity is evaluated.
6. *Informal learning* is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes from everyday experiences, environments and contacts with other people.

7. *Competence* is the authority, capacity, effect or impact of a person in relation to a given task, procedure, process or activity for which such person is responsible.
8. *Competency*<sup>19</sup> is the professional competency of a person as a result of a complex of knowledge, skills and attitudes that the person has acquired through formal and informal learning in the process of gaining practical experience. Competencies, together with knowledge and skills, serve as the structural characteristics of learning outcomes.
9. *The Qualifications Framework* is the national qualifications framework. The levels of the national qualifications framework levels are assigned to the Qualifications Framework levels in the European Higher Education Area<sup>20</sup> and the levels of the European Qualifications Framework<sup>21</sup>.
10. *The internationally recognised level of creative activity* is the third highest level of quality of the results of creative activities, determined on the basis of evaluation according to the procedures and criteria specified in the Methodology for the Evaluation of Creative Activities issued by the Agency. The term does not refer to the nature or geographical extent, nor to the place of realization or to the place of dissemination of the results of the creative activity.
11. *The nationally recognised level of creative activity* is the fourth highest level of quality of the results of creative activities, determined on the basis of an evaluation according to the procedures and criteria specified in the Methodology for the Evaluation of Creative Activities issued by the Agency. The term does not refer to the nature or geographical extent, nor to the place of realization or to the place of dissemination of the results of the creative activity.
12. *Non-formal education* is systematic education outside the formal education system. It is organised by various institutions providing education for certain groups of the population in selected types, forms and content areas.
13. *Quality assurance/internal system policies* are a set of principles that guide the activities of higher education institutions and their staff, students and external stakeholders to achieve the continuous quality assurance and development of higher education and related activities.
14. *Working in a field of study* is the engagement of a person employed by the higher education institution in a given field of study to provide education, research, artistic and other activities.
15. *Internal system processes* are the rules, regulations, codes, formalised procedures and sequences of steps through which the quality assurance and development of higher education and related activities are carried out.
16. *A profile study subject* is a study subject of a study programme that significantly contribute to the achievement of the graduate's profile, i.e. to the learning objectives and learning outcomes of the relevant study programme.
17. *Transferable skills* are skills that are not specifically linked to a particular job or profession but can be used and further developed in a variety of situations and conditions. They include communication skills, mathematical skills, organizational skills, digital skills, analytical skills, interpersonal skills, creativity and abstract thinking, critical thinking,

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<sup>18</sup> Pursuant to § 53a) par. 3 of the Law on Universities.

<sup>19</sup> Means "competence" in the terminology of the Quality Assurance Act [(§ 3 ods. 3 letter a), point 4)] or "ability" in the terminology used in the pedagogical literature.

<sup>20</sup> Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area.

<sup>21</sup> European Qualifications Framework.

- mentoring and supervising skills, business skills, motivation and learning skills, contextual thinking and metacognitive skills.
18. *Rigorous thesis* is a thesis that is submitted following the completion of the second level of a higher education study programme; the viva is a part of the “rigorous” examination. Only institutions which are authorised to provide the second level of higher education in a given field are permitted to provide this kind of examination.
  19. *Standards for study programmes* are a set of requirements which must be fulfilled in order to obtain accreditation of the study programme.
  20. *Structures of the internal system* are authorities, departments of the institution, contracted partners or persons with specified competencies and responsibilities for a defined extent of quality assurance in higher education and other related activities.
  21. *A part of a higher education institution* is a faculty or other pedagogical, research, development, artistic, economic-administrative and information workplace at the seat of the higher education institution or its faculty, a special purpose facility, a detached workplace, a consultation center or other workplace outside the seat of the higher education institution or its faculty.
  22. *A related field* is a field of study or an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary field of knowledge which contributes in a relevant way to the achievement of the concerned study programme learning outcomes.
  23. *Translation studies foundations* in translation combination study programmes comprise a set of basic courses related to translation and interpretation. The translation studies foundations, together with a combination of two languages, form a translation combination study programme<sup>22</sup>.
  24. *Creative activity* is a research activity, development activity, artistic activity or other creative activity<sup>23</sup> of a higher education institution which is relevant for fulfilling the mission of the higher education institution, especially in relation to the goals and outcomes of education.
  25. *Teaching staff* are all persons who provide study programmes, regardless of whether they are employed in the position of a higher education institution teacher, researcher, artistic worker, doctoral student or practitioner, and regardless of whether they work at a higher education institution for a fixed weekly working hours or for shorter weekly working hours or on the basis of agreements on work performed outside the employment relationship.
  26. *Modification of a study programme* is the addition or deletion of compulsory subjects or compulsory optional subjects, changing the conditions for the proper completion of studies or modifying the information sheet of a compulsory subject or compulsory optional subject, in addition to updating the teacher, recommended literature and the type, scope and method of educational activities<sup>24</sup>.
  27. *Scientific integrity* is a primary prerequisite for quality scientific work; it entails strict adherence to high professional and moral standards, and transparency. It implies conducting research critically, without prejudice, and in the absolute integrity of the practice, teaching, and research administration. It is the opposite of scientific dishonesty and deceit.
  28. *The higher education internal quality assurance system* is a coherent set of policies, structures and processes through which the higher education institution ensures and

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<sup>22</sup> Pursuant to § 53a par. 4 of the Higher Education Act.

<sup>23</sup> Pursuant to § 3 par. 2 letter a) of the Quality Assurance Act.

<sup>24</sup> Pursuant to § 2 letter h) of the Quality Assurance Act.

- develops the quality of fulfilling its mission in the field of higher education, creative activities and other related activities.
29. *The learning outcome*<sup>25</sup> is a detailed description of what a learner knows, understands and can do at the end of the learning process to ensure that the individual learning objectives of the programme are fulfilled. It is stated in the content of knowledge, skills and competencies<sup>26</sup>. In contrast to a learning objective, a learning outcome is fixed, and the degree of its fulfilment is measurable and verifiable. Learning outcomes are stated for each study programme and its individual parts and for individual courses.
  30. *A significant international level of creative activity* is the second highest level of quality of the results of creative activities, determined on the basis of an evaluation according to the procedures and criteria specified in the Methodology for the Evaluation of Creative Activities issued by the Agency. The term does not refer to the nature or geographical extent, nor to the place of realization or to the place of dissemination of the results of the creative activity.
  31. *Stakeholders* are persons, communities or organizations within the higher education institution that may have an influence on or be influenced by the educational process, research, artistic and other activities. A distinction is made between internal stakeholders (students and teaching staff) and external stakeholders (employers and other representatives of the relevant sectors of the economy and society, university graduates, domestic and foreign university partners).
  32. *The final thesis* is a bachelor thesis in study programs of the first degree, a diploma thesis in study programs of the second degree and a dissertation thesis in study programs of the third degree.
  33. *Skill* is the ability or art to apply knowledge and easily and accurately perform a certain cognitive, psychomotor or social activity. Skills, together with knowledge and competences, serve as structural characteristics of learning outcomes.

### Article 13

#### Common, transitional and final provisions

1. These standards cancel and replace the standards from 2 July 2020.
2. An integral part of these standards is the Annex No. 1 of 6 May 2021, which regulates the specificities for joint study programmes.
3. These standards were approved by the Executive Board of the Agency on 25 July 2024 and enter into force on 1 September 2024.
4. The higher education institution is obliged to harmonize its internal system and the conducted study programmes within 12 months from the date of entry into force of the change of these standards.

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<sup>25</sup> Means “higher education outcome” in the terminology of the Quality Assurance Act [§ 3 par. 3 letter a), point 4)] or “learning outcome” in the terminology of the Decree Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic No. 614/2002 Coll. on the credit system for studies.

<sup>26</sup> Competences in the sense of the law, competence in the sense of discourse in pedagogical professional literature.

5. Proceedings started before the entry into force of the standards shall be completed according to the standards valid before the entry into force of the change of standards, if this is more favourable to the higher education institution.



# **Annex No. 1 to the Standards for Study Programmes of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education**

**Bratislava 6 May 2021**



**Annex No. 1**  
**to the Standards for Study Programmes**  
**of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education**

**Article 1**  
**Introductory provisions and scope of Annex No. 1**

1. Annex No. 1 to the Standards for Study Programmes of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as “Annex No. 1”) regulates the particularities of standards for the assessment of joint study programmes of higher education institutions within the framework of the accreditation of a study programme pursuant to § 30 of the Quality Assurance Act. This annex forms an integral part of the Standards for study programmes of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.
2. The particularities of the standards for the assessment of joint study programmes are defined on the basis of the standards for quality assurance of joint study programmes in the European Higher Education Area<sup>1</sup>, based on § 54a of the Higher Education Act and § 23 par. 6 letter c) and § 36 par. 2 of the Quality Assurance Act.
3. Other requirements arising from study programme standards and generally binding regulations apply to joint study programmes appropriately in accordance with the specific features specified in Article 2 of this Annex No. 1.

**Article 2**  
**Peculiarities of standards for joint study programmes**

1. Institutions that are supposed to provide a joint study programme can only be institutions that have been recognized as higher education institutions by the competent authorities of states; at the same time, the relevant laws of the states allow them to participate in a joint study programme and possibly award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree or degrees in question will ensure that the degree or degrees in question belong to the higher education system of the state in which the institutions are established.
2. All cooperating institutions participate in the creation and provision of a joint study programme, decision-making on the admission procedure and decision-making on the fulfilment of the conditions for the proper completion of studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA.  
Available at: <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/agreed-standards/>

3. The framework and conditions for cooperation between the institutions providing the joint study programme are contained in a written agreement, which mainly contains:
- a) conditions of admission to the study programme,
  - b) conditions for its completion,
  - c) details on the study organisation, methods and rules for the examination and evaluation of students and rules for the recognition of credits;
  - d) details on student and teacher mobility rules;
  - e) details of the awarded academic title;
  - f) details of documents on completion of studies;
  - g) details on the coordination and responsibility of the institutions involved in the organisation, provision, management and financing of the joint study programme;
  - h) the validity of the higher education institution's internal regulations for the study of a joint study programme,
  - i) decision-making on the academic rights and obligations of students in accordance with the internal regulations of the higher education institution and the legal regulations of the state in which the study takes place.
4. The requirements listed in Articles 2 to 11 of these standards will apply accordingly to the assessment of joint study programmes. To meet the requirement of proving the level of creative activity in Article 7 par. 1 of the Standards for Study Programmes, the higher education institution providing the relevant part of the joint study programme submits 15 outputs of teachers providing profile subjects in the relevant part of the joint study programme.

### **Article 3** **Final provisions**

This Annex No. 1 was approved by the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education on 6 May 2021 and will enter into force on 1 June 2021.