SLOVAK ACCREDITATION AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Standards for the Higher Education Internal Quality Assurance System, Educational Programmes Leading to the Acquisition of Microcredentials and Short Study Programmes

Bratislava, 30 July 2026

Article 1
Introductory provisions and scope of the standards

1. *The Standards for the Higher Education Internal Quality Assurance System, Educational Programmes Leading to the Acquisition of Microcredentials and Short Study Programmes* (hereinafter referred to as the "Standards for the Internal System") are defined as a set of requirements for the internal system and the manner of its implementation[1]. Articles 2 to 11 set out the requirements for quality assurance of higher education and short study programmes, while Article 12 sets out the requirements for quality assurance of educational programmes leading to the acquisition of microcredentials.
2. The Methodology for Evaluation of Standards, issued by the Agency, sets out the procedures, criteria and indicators by means of which the review panels of the Agency's Executive Board (hereinafter referred to as the "review panel") and the Agency's staff assess compliance with the standards. It also sets out the measures for bringing an internal system or its implementation into compliance with the Standards for the Internal System.
3. The standards use defined terms, the definitions of which are set out in Article 13 of these standards.
4. The Standards for the Internal System are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area[2] of 2015 and take into account generally binding regulations, in particular Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on the quality assurance of higher education and amending Act No. 343/2015 Coll. on public procurement and amending certain acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Quality Assurance Act"), Act No. 300/2025 Coll. on higher education institutions and amending certain acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Higher Education Act"), Act No. 292/2024 Coll. on adult education and amending certain acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Adult Education Act"), and other generally binding legal regulations governing the field of higher education.
5. The Standards for the Internal System set out the requirements for the assessment of the internal systems of higher education institutions based in the Slovak Republic. They apply mutatis mutandis to the assessment of the internal systems of applicants for state approval[3]. They apply mutatis mutandis to the assessment of internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions based abroad, with an emphasis on evaluating compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area[4] of 2015.
6. The provisions of these standards apply to short study programmes unless otherwise specified.
7. The provisions of these standards relating to students also apply to participants of short study programmes, unless these standards provide otherwise. This is without prejudice to the fact that a participant in a short study programme is not a student within the meaning of the Higher Education Act.

[1] Pursuant to § 2 letter a) of Act No. 269/2018 Coll. on the quality assurance of higher education and amending Act No. 343/2015 Coll. on public procurement and amending certain acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Quality Assurance Act").

[2] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG 2015.

[3] Pursuant to § 33 of the Quality Assurance Act.

[4] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG 2015.

Article 2

Quality assurance policies

1. The higher education institution shall consistently apply quality assurance policies in its strategic management. The fundamental principle of these policies is that the higher education institution assumes primary responsibility for the quality of the education it provides across all its constituent parts, at all levels and in all aspects.
2. The higher education institution has a clearly defined mission set out in its strategic documents, particularly in its long-term plan, and consistently fulfils this mission.
3. The higher education institution has clearly defined strategic objectives that are in line with its mission and are set out in its strategic documents, particularly in its long-term plan. These objectives take account of the educational activities, creative activities and other related activities it carries out.
4. The higher education institution has established and formalised quality assurance policies and adheres to them consistently. To this end, it has established appropriate structures and processes integrated into a coherent internal system across the institution. The internal system defines the powers, remit and responsibilities of individual structures, management staff, other staff and other stakeholders for ensuring the quality of higher education and related activities.
5. The higher education institution allocates sufficient human, financial and material resources to the operation of the internal system, commensurate with the size of the institution and the scope of the educational, research, artistic and other related activities carried out.
6. The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure:
   a) the involvement of students and other stakeholders in quality assurance;
   b) the integration of educational and research, artistic and other activities, with the level and focus of creative activity corresponding to the level of higher education and the learning outcomes;
   c) support for the internationalisation of educational, research, artistic and other activities, so that the extent of such internationalisation corresponds to the institution's mission and strategic objectives, its learning objectives and outcomes, and the needs of stakeholders;
   d) protection against any form of intolerance and discrimination against students, staff and applicants, in particular on the grounds of sex/gender, race, skin colour, language, age, sexual orientation, faith or religion, disability, political or other opinion, national or social origin, membership of a national or ethnic group, or property;
   e) upholding scientific integrity and adhering to academic ethics, vigilance against plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct; enabling their detection and ensuring that appropriate consequences are applied;
   f) effective mechanisms for investigating complaints through which students may seek protection of rights or legally protected interests that they believe have been infringed, or report specific deficiencies in the action or inaction of the higher education institution[5]; the transparent examination of complaints with the participation of student representatives, and the provision of feedback to complainants on the outcome of the examination and the measures taken;
   g) compliance with and observance of generally binding regulations concerning higher education and the assurance of its quality, as well as the higher education institution's internal regulations;

[5] Pursuant to § 3 par. 3 letter g) of the Quality Assurance Act.

h) continuous improvement of the quality of activities carried out by the higher education institution and the development of a culture of quality across all its constituent parts and at all levels;
i) aligning the internal system with the higher education institution's long-term strategy;
j) the efficient performance of administrative activities relating to quality assurance and ensuring that lecturers, students and other academic staff are not burdened by unnecessary bureaucracy.

7. Where the higher education institution conducts habilitation and inauguration proceedings, the policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that the higher education institution meets the Standards for Habilitation and Inauguration Proceedings.[6]
8. Quality assurance policies are binding on all the higher education institution's contractual partners or other third parties that contribute to or have an impact on the quality of education, research, artistic and other activities and other related activities.
9. Quality assurance policies and processes include the regular monitoring, evaluation and review of the internal system, in which all stakeholders participate. As part of these processes, the higher education institution considers whether the internal system achieves the strategic quality assurance objectives set out in its strategic documents, particularly its long-term plan.
10. The higher education institution ensures that the public has easy access to formalised policies and processes, as well as other documentation relating to the internal system, whilst the method of making this information available takes into account the specific needs of people with disabilities. Documentation relating to the internal system that is relevant to students is published in all languages in which study programmes are delivered.

Article 3

Development, modification and approval of study programmes

1. The higher education institution has formalised structures and processes for the development, modification and approval of study programmes and short study programmes, where it offers them. The powers, remit and responsibilities of individual structures, staff and other stakeholders are defined to ensure the quality of study programmes and short study programmes.
2. The policies, structures and processes for the development, modification and approval of study programmes ensure:
   a) the involvement of students, employers and other relevant stakeholders;
   b) transparent, fair, professionally sound, objective and independent assessment and approval, in which conflicts of interest and potential bias are excluded;
   c) compliance with the Standards for Study Programmes[7]; this requirement applies mutatis mutandis to short study programmes;
   d) that each programme leads to a clearly specified and communicated qualification awarded upon successful completion, the level of which corresponds to the requirements of the relevant level of the qualifications framework;

[6] Standards for Habilitation and Inauguration Proceedings issued by the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.

[7] Standards for Study Programmes issued by the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education.

e) that the content and level of the qualification meet the sector-specific expectations of employers and other external stakeholders;
f) that each study programme has a clearly specified graduate profile and, within this framework, clearly defined and communicated learning objectives and outcomes which are verifiable and correspond to the mission of the higher education institution, the relevant level of the qualifications framework and the field of knowledge according to the relevant field of study or combination of fields of study[8] in which its graduates acquire their education;
g) that education is clearly linked to research, artistic and other activities, with the level and focus of the research, artistic and other activities corresponding to the level of study and the learning outcomes;
h) that study programmes provide students with transferable skills which contribute to their personal development and can be utilised in their future careers and in their lives as active citizens in democratic societies;
i) that the learning outcomes of short study programmes correspond to the labour market's demand for skills in short supply that are applicable in specific professions.

3. The structures and processes for the development, modification and approval of joint study programmes with higher education institutions abroad ensure the application of the procedures and standards of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes adopted within the European Higher Education Area[9].

Article 4

Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) in the delivery of study programmes, students' active role, autonomy, creativity and independence in education and in the learning process are encouraged, and this approach is also reflected in the assessment of students;
b) in the delivery of study programmes, the diversity of students and their needs is respected, and flexibility in study pathways is facilitated, taking into account the possibility of reconciling work and family life with university studies;
c) in the delivery of study programmes, a range of teaching methods, formats and approaches is utilised flexibly, and the application of assessment methods is regularly evaluated and improved;
d) students are provided with appropriate guidance and support from teachers, and mutual respect is fostered in the student–teacher relationship;
e) examiners are thoroughly familiar with existing methods for verifying the achievement of learning outcomes, as well as methods for testing, examining and assessing student performance, and receive support from the higher education institution to further develop their knowledge and skills in this area;
f) the criteria, methods and deadlines for assessment and marking are known to students in advance and are easily accessible;

[8] The fields of study in which higher education institutions in the Slovak Republic may provide higher education, and their descriptions, are set out in Decree No. 244/2019 Coll. of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic on the system of fields of study in the Slovak Republic

[9] European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes; available at: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes.

g) assessment enables students to demonstrate the extent and level to which they have achieved the expected learning outcomes, and provides students with feedback which, where necessary, may be accompanied by recommendations and guidance relating to the learning process;
h) assessment is consistent and fairly applied to all students, carried out in accordance with pre-approved procedures, and yields reliable conclusions which do not lead to unjustified differences in similar cases;
i) assessment takes due account of the circumstances of students with special needs;
j) where circumstances permit, student assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;
k) students have access to remedies against the results of assessment, whilst fair treatment of those seeking redress is guaranteed.

Article 5

Admissions procedure, course of study, recognition of qualifications and the awarding of academic degrees

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) consistent rules are established, applied, published and easily accessible for all stages of a student's study cycle, in particular for the admissions procedure, the course of study and evaluation, the recognition of qualifications, the completion of studies, the awarding of degrees and the issuance of diplomas and other documents certifying the qualifications obtained;
b) the information provided to prospective students is published in advance and offers objective and comprehensive details of study programmes, admission requirements and criteria, and other conditions of study;
c) the admissions procedure is fair, transparent and reliable, and the selection of applicants is based on appropriate methods for assessing their aptitude for study, whilst the conditions of the admissions procedure are inclusive, and equal opportunities are guaranteed to every applicant who demonstrates the necessary prerequisites for completing their studies;
d) support measures are provided, and an environment is created to ensure equal opportunities to study at higher education institutions for students with specific needs[10] and students from disadvantaged backgrounds;
e) the quality of defended final theses, rigorous theses and records of final placements meets the requirements of the qualifications framework at the relevant level and demonstrates an appropriate level of creative work, while plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are effectively detected and, as a matter of principle, penalised;
f) the recognition of higher education qualifications; periods and parts of study; credits obtained in another or re-enrolled study programme; and prior learning, including parts of higher vocational education, short study programmes, microcredentials obtained in accordance with the legislation of the Slovak Republic or another country, non-formal education and informal learning, is transparent, consistent and reliable, and is carried out in accordance with generally

[10] Pursuant to § 119 par. 2 of the Higher Education Act.

binding regulations and the principles of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region[11] to promote student mobility;

g) the higher education institution awards graduates the relevant academic degree and issues a diploma and other documents certifying the education obtained, which specify and describe the qualification obtained, including the learning outcomes achieved and the context, level and content of the successfully completed course of study.

Article 6
Teachers

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) the selection of higher education teachers is transparent, objective and professionally sound, and is carried out based on pre-established requirements and criteria that are consistent with the mission and long-term objectives of the higher education institution and with generally binding regulations;
b) the selection of higher education teachers is open and facilitates their inter-institutional, cross-sectoral and international mobility;
c) the higher education institution systematically ensures that it has lecturers to deliver study programmes whose qualifications, workload distribution, standard of creative output, practical experience, teaching skills and transferable skills enable the achievement of learning outcomes. The number of lecturers and their workload correspond to the number of students;
d) the link between education and teachers' research, artistic and other activities is strengthened, with the focus of these activities corresponding to the learning outcomes. The standard of the results of these activities corresponds to the level of the qualifications framework for the education provided;
e) teachers undergo professional development and enhance their professional, language, pedagogical, digital and transferable skills;
f) the allocation of teachers to deliver study programmes and educational activities, to teach individual subjects, to supervise final and rigorous theses, and to supervise final placements is transparent, whilst ensuring a level of qualifications, competences, practical experience, specialisation and the outcomes of research, artistic and other activities that corresponds to the level, learning outcomes and thematic focus of final theses;
g) a group of teachers is responsible for the implementation, quality assurance and development of the study programme in accordance with the requirements of the Standards for Study Programmes;
h) two teachers are responsible for the implementation, quality assurance and development of the short study programme, one of whom is designated for its theoretical component and the other for practical instruction; at each practical training venue, appropriate professional supervision is provided by a person professionally qualified to deliver practical instruction;

[11] Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Lisbon 1997.

i) the professional qualification of the teachers delivering the study programme is higher than the qualification attained upon completion of the study programme, except for doctoral students, foreign language lecturers, professional experts and teachers who deliver teaching focused on links to professional practice and practical training; in the case of short study programmes, teachers meet at least the qualification requirements for the post of professional lecturer pursuant to § 50 par. 8 of the Higher Education Act;
j) the distribution of the workload of higher education teachers enables the quality of study programmes to be maintained and developed; teaching and other related educational activities to be delivered; students to be assessed; final theses and final placements to be supervised and assessed; and teachers to participate in research, artistic and other activities related to their professional development and the fulfilment of the higher education institution's mission. These activities are carried out to an extent and in proportions corresponding to the allocation of working time, the size of their workload and the nature of the post they hold;

Article 7

Resources for ensuring studies and supporting students

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) the higher education institution has sufficient financial resources allocated to comprehensively support study programmes and related research, artistic and other activities, and support activities that are consistent with its mission;
b) the provision of premises, materials, technical equipment, infrastructure and institutional support for educational activities, research, artistic and other creative activities corresponds to the learning outcomes, the number of students and their specific needs;
c) the implementation of study programmes or educational activities via distance learning or a blended approach utilising online learning is supported by an appropriate digital learning environment, technical infrastructure, electronic information resources, and technical and methodological support commensurate with the learning outcomes, the number of students and their specific needs;
d) to implement third-cycle study programmes, the higher education institution has established a doctoral school or has concluded an agreement on a joint doctoral school with another higher education institution or institutions. The purpose of the agreement is to jointly deliver the part of the programme focused on the development of academic skills, pedagogical and psychological skills, transferable skills and skills for scientific and research, artistic and other activities, particularly in the areas of scientific research methodology, didactics, project management, academic ethics and presentation skills for all doctoral students;
e) the higher education institution has effective contractual partnerships with specialised training facilities and other institutions necessary to achieve learning outcomes relating, in particular, to practical preparation for the relevant professions;
f) access to information resources, library collections and services is easy and commensurate with the learning outcomes**,** the focus of research, artistic and other activities and the number of students;
g) students have easy access to counselling and other support services and administrative resources that meet their diverse needs and are essential for their academic progress and personal and career development;

h) the higher education institution has qualified support staff providing tutoring, counselling, administrative and other support services and related activities for students, with a capacity commensurate with the number of students and their diverse needs;
i) students have access to adequate social welfare, sporting, cultural, spiritual and social activities during their studies;
j) all the resources listed in points (a) to (i) are also provided for the higher education institution's off-campus sites where study programmes or educational activities take place;
k) all resources are used efficiently and effectively;
l) the resources are accessible to students, and students are informed of their availability.

Article 8

Collection and processing of information

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) information is systematically collected, processed, analysed and evaluated, and is used for the effective strategic, tactical and operational management of the implementation and development of study programmes, research, artistic and other activities and other related activities of the higher education institution;
b) the higher education institution has established and systematically monitors a set of indicators. These indicators evaluate, in particular, the characteristics of applicant and student populations; success rates and other characteristics of the admissions process; success rates and reasons for failure in study programmes; rates of successful completion of study programmes; student satisfaction with the delivery of study programmes and the availability of resources necessary for study; graduate employability; employer and other external stakeholder satisfaction with the quality of study programme graduates; the profiles of teaching staff and other staff; the outcomes of research, artistic and other activities and the extent to which they are linked to education; and the degree of internationalisation of the higher education institution's activities;
c) all stakeholders are involved in the collection and processing of information.

Article 9

Publication of information

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) clear, accurate, adequate and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative information relevant to prospective students, current students, staff, employers and other external stakeholders, and the general public is published on study programmes and their graduates, as well as on other related activities in line with the higher education institution's mission;
b) up-to-date information is published on the implementation and functioning of the internal system, on the results achieved and the measures taken;
c) information on study programmes is published in Slovak and English, as well as in other languages if the programmes are taught in those languages;

d) the published information is easily accessible, including for people with disabilities.

Article 10

Ongoing monitoring, periodic evaluation and periodic approval of study programmes

The policies, structures and processes of the internal system ensure that:

a) study programmes are continuously monitored, periodically evaluated and periodically approved, with employers, students and other stakeholders involved in the internal system;
b) the higher education institution ensures that the implementation of study programmes, student assessment and the learning outcomes achieved are in line with current knowledge, technological capabilities, the needs of society, the needs of students and the expectations of employers and other external stakeholders; and the higher education institution creates a supportive and effective learning environment for students;
c) the higher education institution ensures that it has sufficient spatial, human, material, technical, infrastructural, information and financial resources to implement study programmes and other related activities;
d) students are given the opportunity at least once a year to express their views on the quality of study programmes, the quality of teaching staff, the quality of support services and the quality of the higher education institution environment. Students are provided with feedback on the results of the evaluation and the measures taken;
e) changes to study programmes resulting from their ongoing monitoring and periodic evaluation are proposed with the involvement of students, employers and other stakeholders;
f) study programmes are periodically approved at least once every six years.

Article 11

Periodic external quality assurance

1. The higher education institution undergoes periodic external quality assurance evaluation to ensure that its internal quality assurance system is developed and implemented in accordance with the Standards for the Internal System.

Article 12

Quality assurance of educational programmes leading to the acquisition of microcredentials

1. The higher education institution has established and formalised policies within its internal system for the quality assurance of educational programmes leading to the acquisition of microcredentials (hereinafter referred to as “educational programme”) and adheres strictly to them. It has established appropriate structures and processes for this purpose.

2. The internal system defines the powers, remit and responsibilities of individual structures, senior staff, other staff, participants in educational programmes and other stakeholders for ensuring the quality of educational programmes.
3. The higher education institution has formalised structures and processes within its internal system:
   a) for the development, implementation, amendment and approval of educational programmes within the sub-framework of higher education qualifications;
   b) for assessing applications from certified educational institutions for authorisation to deliver an educational programme within the sub-framework of higher education qualifications and the sub-framework of professional qualifications, where the programme corresponds to one or more of the higher education institution's accredited study programmes;
   c) to withdraw authorisation for a certified educational institution to deliver an educational programme within the sub-framework of higher education qualifications and the sub-framework of professional qualifications.
4. The structures and processes referred to in paragraph 3 of this Article shall ensure:
   a) transparent, fair, professionally sound, objective and independent assessment and approval, in which conflicts of interest and potential bias are prevented;
   b) compliance of educational programmes with generally binding regulations and the internal regulations of the higher education institution or certified educational institution;
   c) that the requirements of the educational programme are clearly defined in accordance with § 7 par. 1 letters a) to f) of Decree No. 405/2024 Coll. of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, implementing certain provisions of Act No. 292/2024 Coll. on adult education;
   d) that the educational programme corresponds to an accredited study programme or programmes;
   e) that the graduate profile of the educational programme clearly defines the learning objectives and outcomes, which consist of the acquisition of specific and verifiable knowledge, skills and transferable skills that correspond to the current needs of the labour market and society. In addressing the needs of the labour market, the higher education institution also appropriately considers sector-specific and geographically specific requirements;
   f) that consistent rules are in place, applied, published and easily accessible for all stages of the educational programme, in particular the conditions for admission to the educational programme, the fee schedule relating to the educational programme, the method and criteria for assessing learning outcomes, the criteria for obtaining a microcredential and the issuance of documents certifying acquired learning outcomes;
   g) that consistent rules for the recognition of microcredentials within the higher education system at any level are established, applied, published and easily accessible;
   h) that educational programmes have an appropriately set expected workload required to achieve the learning outcomes, expressed in ECTS credits, which does not exceed the standard credit workload required to obtain a higher education qualification at any level;
   i) that each educational programme has a person responsible for the quality, coordination and delivery of teaching activities, whose qualifications correspond to the level of the qualifications framework and the content of the educational programme;
   j) that, where circumstances so require, the educational programme has additional teaching staff whose qualifications correspond to the content of the educational programme;

k) that the provider of the educational programme has sufficient financial, spatial, material, technical, infrastructural and institutional resources necessary to achieve the learning outcomes. This includes adequate resources for educational programmes delivered in a distance or blended learning format, particularly where delivery relies on means of communication based on the use of computer networks;
l) that, in the establishment and implementation of educational programmes, the higher education institution consistently applies the principles of academic ethics and prevents academic misconduct and other forms of unethical behaviour;
m) that the provider of the educational programme systematically collects, processes, analyses and evaluates information which is used to ensure the quality of the educational programme, and that all stakeholders are involved in the collection and processing of information;
n) that the higher education institution has clearly defined target groups and recognises the need to develop their skills, and that it designs its educational programmes specifically to meet their needs, particularly in terms of professional practice, as well as in the areas of social, cultural and civic competences;
o) that comprehensive and up-to-date information on the educational programme, which is relevant to stakeholders and the general public, is made publicly available;
p) that the educational programmes are continuously monitored, periodically evaluated and periodically approved, with all stakeholders involved in these processes.

Article 13
Definitions

1. For the purposes of these standards, a set of terms is defined, the definitions of which are set out in paragraphs 2 to 28 of this article.
2. *Academic misconduct* is dishonest or unethical behaviour that is contrary to research integrity and violates moral standards. It includes, in particular, plagiarism; cheating and copying in examinations; fabrication of research results; recording of fictitious data; omission of unsuitable facts and data; falsification of research; dishonest practices in the publication of results; failure to declare a conflict of interest; misuse of information obtained during peer review; ghost authorship; superficial and substandard peer review; systematic and deliberate publication in journals or with publishers showing signs of dishonest practices, referred to within the academic community as “predatory”; and the unacknowledged, prohibited or misleading use of artificial intelligence tools where such use distorts the authorship, originality, truthfulness, origin, verifiability or independence of the submitted academic, professional, artistic or scientific output.
3. *A learning objective of a study programme* is a statement that identifies the abilities a student is expected to have upon completion of the programme; in other words, it expresses the expectations placed on graduates of the study programme. Learning objectives are implemented in the study programme through verifiable and measurable learning outcomes.
4. *Informal learning* is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, developing skills and forming attitudes through everyday experiences, the environment and interactions with other people.
5. *Authority* is the power, entitlement, scope or influence of a person in relation to a task, procedure, process or activity for which that person is responsible.
6. *Competence*[12] is a person’s professional ability to carry out a given activity, resulting from a

combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through formal and non-formal education and informal learning whilst gaining practical experience. Competences, together with knowledge and skills, serve as structural characteristics of learning outcomes.

7. *A short study programme* is a higher vocational study programme focused primarily on acquiring practical knowledge and mastering the application of this knowledge in the practice of a profession, through which graduates obtain a qualification at level 5 of the Qualifications Framework. A higher education institution may establish short study programmes in fields of study in which it is authorised to establish accredited study programmes.
8. *The Qualifications Framework* is the National Qualifications Framework. The levels of the National Qualifications Framework are aligned with the levels of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area[13] and the European Qualifications Framework[14].
9. *Microcredential* is a document certifying the learning outcomes that a natural person has acquired upon completion of an educational programme.
10. *Non-formal learning* is systematic learning carried out outside the formal education system, organised by various institutions to provide education to specific population groups in selected types, forms and subject areas.
11. *Quality assurance policies*, also referred to as internal system policies, are a deliberately compiled set of principles that guide the activities of a higher education institution and its staff, students and external stakeholders with the aim of ensuring and continuously developing the quality of higher education and related activities.
12. *Transferable skills* are abilities that are not specifically tied to a particular job or profession but can be applied and further developed in various situations and contexts. These include, for example, communication skills, mathematical skills, organisational skills, digital skills, analytical skills, interpersonal skills, creativity and the ability to think abstractly, critical thinking skills, mentoring and supervisory skills, entrepreneurial skills, motivation and the ability to learn, contextual thinking, and metacognitive skills.
13. *Internal system processes* are the rules, regulations, codes, formalised procedures and sequences of steps through which the quality of higher education and related activities is ensured and developed.
14. *A profile course* is a course within a study programme that makes a fundamental contribution to achieving the graduate profile, i.e. the learning objectives and outcomes of the relevant study programme.
15. *A rigorous thesis* is a thesis following on from a completed study programme, the defence of which forms part of a rigorous examination; only higher education institutions which have an accredited study programme in the relevant field of study, upon completion of which the academic title “master” is awarded, are authorised to conduct such examinations.

[12] This refers to “competence” in the terminology of the Quality Assurance Act [§ 3 par. 3 letter a) point 4], or “capability” in the terminology used in educational literature.

[13] Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

[14] European Qualifications Framework.

16. *A higher education institution* comprises a faculty, other teaching, research, development, artistic, economic-administrative and information units at the institution's or its faculty's main seat, a specialised facility, a branch unit, a consultation centre or other unit outside the higher education institution's or its faculty's main seat.
17. *Standards for Study Programmes* are the requirements which must be met for a study programme to be granted accreditation.
18. *Internal system structures* are collective bodies, departments of the institution, contractual partners or persons with specified competences, powers and responsibilities for a defined scope of quality assurance in higher education and related activities.
19. *Research, artistic and other activities* refer to research, development, artistic activity or other activity[15] undertaken by a higher education institution that is relevant to the fulfilment of the institution's mission, particularly in relation to learning objectives and outcomes**.**
20. *Teachers* are all persons who deliver study programmes, regardless of whether they are employed as higher education institution teachers, research staff, artistic staff, or hold the position of a doctoral student or practitioner, and regardless of whether they work at the higher education institution for a fixed weekly working time, a shorter weekly working time, or based on agreements for work carried out outside an employment relationship.
21. *Modification of a study programme* involves the addition or removal of compulsory or compulsory-optional courses, an adjustment to the learning outcomes of the study programme, a change to the conditions for successful completion of studies, or an amendment to the course description for a compulsory or compulsory-optional course, excluding updates to the lecturer, recommended reading, or the type and scope of learning activities[16].
22. *Scientific integrity* is a fundamental prerequisite for high-quality scientific work, consisting of strict adherence to the highest professional and ethical standards, transparency, conducting research critically and without bias, and absolute integrity in scientific practice, teaching and administration. Its opposite is scientific dishonesty and misconduct.
23. *The internal quality assurance system* for higher education is a consistently interlinked set of policies, structures and processes through which a higher education institution ensures and develops the quality of the fulfilment of its mission in the field of higher education, research, artistic and other activities.
24. *An educational programme* is a course of study leading to the award of a microcredential. It comprises a minimum of 25 teaching hours and may be provided by a higher education institution or, with the higher education institution's consent, by a certified educational institution.
25. *A learning outcome* is a detailed description of what a learner knows, understands and can do upon completion of the learning process, in such a way as to fulfil the individual learning objectives of the study programme. It is usually presented in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Unlike a learning objective, a learning outcome is clearly defined, and the extent to which it has been achieved is measurable and verifiable. Learning outcomes are specified for the study programme as a whole, as well as for its components and individual modules.
26. *Stakeholders* are actors within a higher education institution, individuals, communities or organisations that may influence, or be influenced by, the process of education, research, artistic and other activities. A distinction is made between internal stakeholders (students, participants in educational programmes and short study programmes, and higher education

[15] Pursuant to § 3 par. 2 letter a) of the Quality Assurance Act.
[16] Pursuant to § 2 letter j) of the Quality Assurance Act.

institution staff) and external stakeholders (employers and other representatives of the relevant sectors of the economy and professional practice, higher education institution graduates, the higher education institution's domestic and international partners, etc.).

27. *The final thesis* is a bachelor's thesis in first-cycle degree programmes, a master's thesis in second-cycle degree programmes and a doctoral thesis in third-cycle degree programmes.
28. *A skill* is the ability to apply knowledge and perform a specific cognitive, psychomotor or social activity with ease and precision. Skills, together with knowledge and competences, serve as structural characteristics of learning outcomes.

Article 14

Transitional and final provisions

1. These standards repeal and replace the standards dated 4 September 2025.
2. These standards were approved by the Executive Board of the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education on 30 July 2026 and shall enter into force on 1 September 2026.
3. Higher education institutions are required to bring their internal systems into line with the Standards for the Internal System within 12 months of their entry into force.