

## **The guidelines for the preparation of the joint report of the group of experts for institutions of higher education or colleges**

The guidelines for the preparation of the joint report of the group of experts for institutions of higher education or colleges<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter – the experts group) (hereinafter – the guidelines) (hereinafter – HEI) are developed in accordance with Subparagraph 2.6 of Cabinet Regulation No. 407 of 14 July 2015 "Regulations on Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Directions" and are subject to the requirements set forth in these regulations.

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the experts group with a structured framework to prepare the joint report for the accreditation of the HEI. The experts group shall prepare the joint report in English of the accreditation of the HEI.

### **The joint report shall be prepared by the experts group:**

- in accordance with the sequence set forth in the guidelines, justifying the made statements and providing references and examples;
- in accordance with the literary and grammar rules of language, legal and academic terminology;
- providing recommendations for the elimination of the deficiencies detected (in a short-term period) and for improvement of the performance of the HEI (in a long-term period).

Preparing the report, the experts group shall evaluate all assessment criteria specified in the guidelines.

Each assessment criterion is followed by aspects (in italics) which are to be taken into account when evaluating the relevant criterion. At the discretion of the experts group, it may assess other aspects which are significant for the evaluation of the relevant criterion. Evaluating each criterion, the experts group shall analyse the information available for the experts group, providing definite examples and reference to the Self-Assessment Report prepared by the HEI and information obtained during the visit.

The experts group shall analyse each criterion and make conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses of the HEI with regard to meeting the assessment criterion.

Preparing the joint report about the HEI, the experts group shall agree on the evaluation of the criteria and evaluate each criterion as follows: “poor”, “average”, “good”, or “excellent”. If the opinion of the experts regarding any criterion differs, the different opinion shall be specified in the joint report.

In the recommendations part, the experts group shall provide short-term recommendations for the elimination of the deficiencies detected, as well as long-term recommendations for further improvement of the performance of the HEI. In the part with the

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<sup>1</sup> The definition “higher education institution” used herein is applicable to all higher education and science institutions mentioned in the Law on Higher Education Institutions which implement academic and professional study programmes, as well as deal with science, research activities and artistic creation (universities, higher education institutions, academies, and institutes).

assessment of the HEI, the experts group shall justify the recommendation about the accreditation of the HEI.

The joint report of the experts group shall be prepared in English in a computer readable form and shall be submitted in an electronic and paper format. The report submitted in a paper format shall be drawn up in duplicate and signed.

After the procedure for the accreditation of the HEI is completed, the joint report of the experts group shall be published in the Register of Study Directions.

### **The structure of the report**

- K1. Aims and objectives of the HEI, its management structure
  - K2. Infrastructure and material and technical provision
  - K3. Resources
  - K4. Staff
  - K5. Internal quality assurance system
  - K6. Study organisation and management
  - K7. Science, research and artistic creation
  - K8. Compliance with the requirements of the labour market
  - K9. International cooperation and internationalization
  - K10. Activities of students' self-governance
  - K11. Support systems for students
- Recommendations for the HEI  
 Assessment of the HEI  
 Summary of the assessment criteria of the HEI

<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Explanation of evaluation</b>
Poor	The HEI does not comply with the criterion to be evaluated or poorly complies with it, without a clear aim, structure and its implementation strategy. The management principles and processes are not clearly defined, implemented and known to the staff of the HEI and/or involved parties. The performance of the HEI does not meet the good practice in Latvia and in the world. The existing provision of the HEI within the specific criterion is evaluated as critical; it does not promote the quality of studies or even pose a threat to it.
Average	A regulatory framework is created in order to meet the criterion to be evaluated, but this framework is not fully implemented and the staff of the HEI and/or involved parties are not informed about it and do not take part in its implementation, provision, improvement and other stages. Though, in general, the HEI formally complies with the criterion to be evaluated, but it is not fully ensured and deficiencies in its implementation are significant and affect the study quality, while long-term planned activities, support of the interested parties and additional resources are required to eliminate them.
Good	A regulatory framework is created to meet the criterion to be evaluated; this framework is documented, implemented and the staff of the HEI and involved parties are informed about it. Regulatory framework, procedures, processes, etc. are regularly revised and improved. Methods that develop and improve the study quality are used for the implementation of the criterion. Insignificant deficiencies are detected in the HEI upon the implementation of

	the criterion to be evaluated, and these deficiencies can be easily eliminated.
Excellent	A regulatory framework which is documented, implemented, logical and effective, regularly being revised and improved is created by the HEI in accordance with the criterion to be evaluated, and the staff and involved parties are informed about this framework and take part in its implementation. Specific methods and solutions which are adopted to the study directions are used for the implementation of the criterion. These methods and solutions significantly improve the study quality and can be used as examples of good practice for other HEIs in Latvia and in the world. Fully meeting the criterion to be evaluated, a significant contribution is provided to the development of the society.

JOINT REPORT OF THE EXPERTS GROUP  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Name of the higher education institution

The experts group recommends / does not recommend to accredit the HEI

Experts group:

1. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
2. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
3. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
4. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
5. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
6. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_
7. Degree / professional qualification, name, surname \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## K1. Aims and objectives of the HEI, its management structure

[Aims and objectives, their clarity, attainability, relation with the aims and objectives of science, academic staff of the HEI, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also with those of artistic creation, as well as with students’ interests and needs. The compliance of the management structure with the requirements of this Paragraph]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *aims and objectives of the HEI (Are they clearly defined, achievable and in compliance with the main directions of activities of the HEI?);*
- *SWOT analysis of the HEI (Can the HEI define its weaknesses and use its strengths to prevent threats posed to achieving the aims set for the HEI?);*
- *development planning documents created by the HEI (Can the provisions of the documents be met, taking into account the activities currently being implemented and study quality?);*
- *involvement of the staff of the HEI and students in determination and review of the aims, objectives and strategic directions;*
- *management structure of the HEI and its mechanism (Is it developed and in compliance with achieving the aims of the HEI? / Is the process management oriented to development, quality improvement, aims and objectives of the HEI? / Are the interested parties involved in the decision-making process? / Is this process effective?);*
- *implemented study directions and study programmes (Are they in compliance with the actual trends of the relevant industry, science and economy, as well as with the set aims and strategic directions of the HEI?);*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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## K2. Infrastructure and material and technical provision

[The compliance of technical and material base of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to its quantity and quality, with the study directions in the HEI, the implemented relevant study programmes, including related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *infrastructure of the HEI (Are needs for resources identified? / Are resources available for the HEI? / Are resources suitable for the needs and specific features of the HEI? / Do they contribute to achieving the aims of the HEI?);*
- *availability of the infrastructure of the HEI (Is it available for the teaching staff and students<sup>2</sup> (to achieve the study results in a qualitative manner)? / Is there a systematic approach to development of the infrastructure resources in the long-term period?);*
- *material and technical provision of the HEI (Are needs for the material and technical provision identified? / Is the material and technical provision available for the HEI? / Is it suitable for the needs and specific features of the HEI? / Does it contribute to achieving the aims of the HEI?);*
- *availability of the material and technical provision for the HEI (Is it available for the teaching staff and students (to achieve the study results in a qualitative manner)? / Is there a planned and long-term development of the material and technical provision?);*
- *infrastructure resources and resources of the material and technical provision which are required for the implementation of the study process if the study programmes are implemented in the branches (Are these resources being ensured? / Are they available and qualitative? / Is there a planned resource development?) (if applicable).*
- *infrastructure resources and resources of the material and technical provision which are required for the implementation of the study process if the study programmes are implemented in the form of distance learning (Are these resources being ensured? / Are they available and qualitative? / Is there a planned resource development?) (if applicable).*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### K3. Resources

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<sup>2</sup> The definition “teaching staff” used herein is applicable to the academic staff of the relevant higher education institution and its visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants.

[The compliance of the resources of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to their quantity and quality, with the implementation of study directions and relevant study programmes, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *financial resources required to ensure the performance of the HEI (Are the required resources identified? / Are they available for the HEI? / Are they sufficient to ensure a high-quality study process? / Is the availability of the financial resources being ensured? / Is there a systematic approach to development of the financial resources in the long-term period?);*
- *system of the HEI for attracting and managing the sources of financing for scientific activities, research and/or artistic creation (Is it developed and implemented? / Are there sufficient financial resources for scientific activities, research and/or artistic creation associated with the study directions and their relevant study programmes?);*
- *methodological support of the HEI required for the implementation of the study process (Is it sufficient and suitable for the needs of the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study directions? / Is it effectively applied in the study process? / Is there long-term availability of this support?);*
- *informational resources of the HEI (Are the required resources identified? / Are they available for the HEI? / Is the availability of the informational resources being ensured? / Is there a systematic approach to development of the informational resources in the long-term period?);*
- *resources required for the implementation of the study process if the study programmes are implemented in the form of distance learning, including financial resources, infrastructure, material and technical provision, and methodological and informational support (Are the required resources identified and being ensured for the implementation of a sufficient and high-quality study process? / Is there methodological support and technical provision for the teaching staff?) (if applicable);*
- *resources required for the implementation of the study process if the study programmes are implemented in the branches, including financial resources, infrastructure, material and technical provision, and methodological and informational support (Are the required resources identified and being ensured for the implementation of a sufficient and high-quality study process?) (if applicable).*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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#### K4. Staff

[The compliance of the staff of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to its quantity and quality, with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – such compliance with artistic creation.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *administrative and technical staff of the HEI (Is the required support with the administrative and technical staff being ensured for the implementation of the study directions?);*
- *teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study directions/programmes (Is the teaching staff chosen according to the specific features of the implemented study directions and study programmes? / Do the qualification and professional and academic experience of the teaching staff ensure achievement of the aims/results of the study directions/programmes?);*
- *attraction and selection of the teaching staff, including foreign teaching staff of the HEI (Are there regulated and implemented procedures that are being observed to ensure selection of qualified and appropriate teaching staff?);*
- *teaching staff's professional and didactic needs for improvement (Are they determined in a target-oriented manner? / Are the appropriate improvement measures offered and used? / Is the outcome and efficiency of the taken measures being assessed?);*
- *support system for the foreign teaching staff (Is it created and implemented? / Is it effective?);*
- *activities of the academic staff in science, research and/or artistic creation (Is the academic staff active both nationally and internationally? / Does the academic staff successfully apply the acquired information in the study process?).*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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#### K5. Internal quality assurance system

[The compliance of the internal quality assurance system in the HEI with achieving the aims of the HEI, by assessing aspects in the internal quality assurance system.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*



- *quality policy (Is it defined, publicly available? / Are the interested parties involved in the determination of the policy?);*
- *aims of the quality policy of the HEI (Are they associated with the strategic directions and aims of the HEI?);*
- *mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy (Is a mechanism created? / Does it ensure implementation of the policy? / Are there defined responsible persons for implementation of the policy?);*
- *internal quality assurance systems (Is it effective? / Are indicators for implementing the objectives and achieving the aims of the HEI defined?);*
- *compliance of the internal quality assurance system with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (Is it created in accordance with the ESG standards?).*

#### Analysis

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### K6. Study organisation and management

[The compliance of organisation and management of studies with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes of the HEI, as well as with related research, and, if study the direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *study management system and structure in the HEI (Is it oriented to development, quality improvement? / Is it in compliance with the aims and objectives of the HEI? / Is the decision-making process effective?);*
- *management of the study directions and their relevant study programmes (Does management of the study programmes constitute a part of the management system of the study directions? / Are councils of the study programmes created (councils that actively involve all the parties that participate in the study process, including students, employers)?);*
- *stages of the study process (Are they well-considered, clear? / Are student-centered education principles taken into account upon development of these stages?);*
- *students’ admission procedure of the HEI, including in later stages, as well as recognition procedures (recognition of study periods (including by mobility), professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education) (Are they clear, organized and effective?);*

- *procedure of the HEI for granting professional qualification and/or degree (Is it defined and clear? / Is it in compliance with the provisions of regulatory enactments?);*
- *system for assessing students' achievements (Is it clearly defined and understandable for all the involved parties? / Are the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) observed?);*
- *process for review of students' complaints and proposals (Is it clear, being observed? / Are all the involved parties informed about it and about review results?);*
- *academic integrity principles (Are they clearly defined by the HEI? / Are they being observed in all study stages? / Are all the involved parties informed about it? / Are there procedures determined in case of violation of the principles (rules)? / Are anti-plagiarism tools being applied and are they functioning and effective?);*
- *mechanism for ensuring the financial guarantees and options to continue studies if a study programme implemented by the HEI is cancelled or reorganized;*
- *if study programmes are implemented in the form of distance learning – clearly defined organisation of the study process, principles of evaluation of students' achievements and support provided for students to achieve the study results (if applicable);*
- *if study programmes are implemented in the branches of the HEI – main places of the implementation and branches' responsibilities with regard to the implementation of the study programmes are determined; cooperation is effective and ensures achieving the aims set for the study programmes (if applicable).*

#### Analysis

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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#### K7. Science, research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also artistic creation

[Activities of the HEI in the field of science and research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also in the field of artistic creation; compliance thereof with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes of the HEI, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *structure and management created for activities in the field of science, research, and/or artistic creation (Is the structure created and implemented? / Is it well-considered and effective? / Does it help to achieve the aims and objectives of the HEI?);*

- *directions of the HEI in the field of science, research, and/or artistic creation (Are they in compliance with the study directions and their relevant study programmes implemented in the HEI, as well as in compliance with current activities of the relevant industry, needs of the labour market and scientific trends? / Are they included in the development strategy of the HEI?);*
- *integration of science, research and/or artistic creation and of their results into the study process (Are they integrated into the study programmes of all levels? / Are students of all levels involved in science, research and/or artistic creation?);*
- *innovative solutions in the study process.*

#### Analysis

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### K8. Compliance with the requirements of the labour market

[Activities of the HEI to ensure the compliance of studies and research with labour market demands, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *principles and aims of the HEI for cooperation with employers, relevant industry (Are they defined? / Does their achievement contribute to completion of the aims and strategy of the HEI?);*
- *forms and mechanism of the HEI for cooperation with employers, organisations of the relevant industry, local governments etc. (Is there any practical cooperation? / Does it contribute to improving the study quality and science, research and/or artistic creation?);*
- *mechanisms for obtaining employers’ feedback, including opinion surveys (Are there any opinion surveys? / Are respondents active? / Does the HEI get, as a result of opinion surveys, the employers’ opinion on quality of the study programmes and necessity to improve the study programmes in accordance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market? / Are the results of opinion surveys examined and taken into account in the process of improvement of the performance of the HEI and its study programmes?);*
- *graduates of the HEI (Are they employed in accordance with the qualification/degree acquired or in other field? / Does the HEI make forecasts regarding employment opportunities of students?);*
- *system of the HEI for monitoring the employment status and career of the graduates (Is it functioning? / Does it contribute to improving the study quality?);*
- *cooperation of the HEI with the graduates;*

- graduates' opinion surveys (Are there such surveys? / Are respondents active? / Does the HEI get, as a result of opinion surveys, the graduates' opinion on quality of the study programmes and necessity to improve the study programmes in accordance with the needs of the relevant industry and labour market? / Are the results of opinion surveys examined and taken into account in the process of improvement of the study programmes?).

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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**K9. International cooperation and internationalization**

[The compliance of international cooperation and internationalization with achievement of the aims of the HEI, and with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes, including related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *strategy and directions of international cooperation and internationalization (Are they defined? / Are they in compliance with the development strategy and aims of the HEI?);*
- *selection of cooperation partners (Are they in compliance with the internationalization strategy and directions? / Is there any active cooperation with the partners confirmed by some particular activities?);*
- *forms of international cooperation implemented by the HEI (Do they help to achieve the set aims of the HEI? / Are they in compliance with the internationalization strategy?);*
- *mechanism of the HEI for cooperation with foreign HEIs, with foreign organisations of the relevant industry and representatives of foreign employers (Is it created? / Is there any practical cooperation? / Does such cooperation contribute to the study process and/or to science, research and/or artistic creation related to the study programmes being implemented within the study directions?);*
- *system of outgoing and ingoing mobility of students and staff (Is it determined? / Are the teaching staff and students informed about it? / Do they used it? / Does it provide added value for the implementation of the study process and study quality?);*
- *mechanism of the HEI for attraction of foreign students and teaching staff (Is it created, systematic and functioning?);*
- *joint study programmes with foreign HEIs and study programmes in foreign languages (if applicable);*
- *HEI in the international environment (Is the HEI included in an international organisation of the relevant industry? / Does it have any international marks of quality, quality certificates etc.?).*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### K10. Activities of students' self-governance

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- *structure and work of students' self-governance (Is there created self-governance? / Are students informed about self-governance and its functions? / Do they actively take part in activities of students' self-governance?);*
- *Compliance of the work of students' self-governance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Does students' self-governance, carrying out its activities, represent students in academic, material (social), cultural life matters? / Is there a procedure defined that allows students to be elected for collegiate entities of the HEI?);*
- *procedure for financing students' self-governance (Does it comply with the Law on Higher Education Institutions?);*
- *support provided by the management of the HEI to facilitate students' representation and activities of students' self-governance.*

Analysis

Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### K11. Support systems for students

[A support system related to education and career development for students of the HEI to promote their employment.]

*Evaluating the criterion, please analyse the following aspects:*

- support system related to education and career development to promote students' employment (Is the HEI aware of students' needs? / Is there a support system implemented by the HEI (also formally)? / Are opportunities available for students?);
- social and/or emotional support system; residence and scholarship offer (Is the HEI aware of students' needs? / Is there a support system implemented by the HEI (also formally)? / Are opportunities available for students?);
- support system for foreign students (Is the HEI aware of students' needs? / Is there a support system implemented by the HEI?).

#### Analysis

#### Conclusions, specifying strengths and weaknesses

#### Evaluation of criterion

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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### Recommendations

*The recommendations shall be indicated in two parts:*

- *Recommendations for elimination of the deficiencies detected (in a short-term period)*
- *Recommendations for improving the performance of the HEI in a long-term period.*

### Assessment of the HEI

- *Justification of the recommendation about the accreditation/non-accreditation of the HEI*
- *If the opinion of the experts regarding any assessment criterion differs, specify expert's name and surname, different opinion, assessment criterion and justification of the different opinion, as well as its influence on evaluation of the assessment criterion and on recommendation about the accreditation/non-accreditation of the HEI.*

### Summary of the assessment criteria of the HEI

No.	Criteria and issues	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
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K1	The aims and objectives of the HEI, their clarity, attainability, relation with the aims and objectives of science, academic staff of the HEI, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also with those of artistic creation, as well as with students’ interests and needs. The compliance of the management structure with the provisions of this Paragraph.				
K2	The compliance of material and technical provision of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to its quantity and quality, with the study directions in the HEI, the implemented relevant study programmes, including related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.				
K3	The compliance of the resources of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to their quantity and quality, with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – such compliance with artistic creation				
K4	The compliance of the staff of the HEI, and branches thereof (if such branches exist), as to its quantity and quality, with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – such				

	compliance with artistic creation				
K5	The compliance of the internal quality assurance system in the HEI with achieving the aims of the HEI, by assessing aspects in the internal quality assurance system.				
K6	The compliance of organisation and management of studies with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes of the HEI, as well as with related research, and, if study the direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.				
K7	Activities of the HEI in the field of science and research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also in the field of artistic creation; compliance thereof with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes of the HEI, as well as with related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation.				
K8	Activities of the HEI to ensure the compliance of studies and research with labour market demands, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation				
K9	The compliance of				



	international cooperation and internationalization with achievement of the aims of the HEI, and with the implementation of the study directions and their relevant study programmes, including related research, and, if the study direction “Arts” is implemented – also such compliance with artistic creation				
K10	Activities of students’ self-governance.				
K11	A support system related to education and career development for students of the HEI to promote their employment.				