

APPROVED
by order of the Foundation “Academic Information Centre”
No. 1-09 of 25 February 2019

COORDINATED
in the meeting of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Council
of 25 February 2019

Rules of Procedure of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Council

Adopted in accordance with Section 72, Paragraph one, Clause 2
of the State Administration Structure Law

I. General

1. The Rules of Procedure (hereinafter - Rules) prescribe the tasks, composition, and work organisation of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Council (hereinafter - the Council), the procedures for the appointment of the chairperson and the deputy chairperson of the Council, as well as the decision-making procedures.
2. The Council is a collegial body, established by the Academic Information Centre (hereinafter - the Centre), which aims at ensuring the establishment of an independent Study Quality Committee and Appeals Committee to ensure the compliance with the provisions of Cabinet Regulation No. 795 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Licensing of Study Programmes” (hereinafter - Cabinet Regulation No. 795) and the Cabinet Regulation No. 793 of 11 December 2018 “Regulations on Opening and Accreditation of Study Directions” (hereinafter - Cabinet Regulation No. 793).

II. Tasks of the Council

3. The Council shall:
 - 3.1. approve the composition of the Study Quality Committee, the chairperson and the deputy chairperson;
 - 3.2. approve the rules of procedure of the Study Quality Committee; and
 - 3.3. approve the composition of the Appeals Committee, the chairperson and the deputy chairperson.

III. Composition of the Council

4. The Council shall be composed of eight Council members - one delegated representative from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Rectors’ Council, the Student Union of Latvia, the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia, Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, the Association of Latvian Colleges, and the Centre.
5. In the event that a Council member should cease to be a Council member or be unable to attend a Council meeting, the body referred to in Paragraph 4 of these Rules shall delegate another representative to form a part of the Council. A Council member may attend a Council meeting remotely subject to prior coordination thereof with the chairperson of the Council and the Centre before the meeting.
6. The Council members shall not receive any remuneration for the work carried out in the Council.

IV. Appointment of the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson of the Council

7. The first Council meeting shall be convened by the Centre and chaired by the chairperson of the board of the Centre, until the chairperson and the deputy chairperson of the Council have been appointed.
8. During first Council meeting, the Council members shall elect the chairperson and the deputy chairperson of the Council from amongst them by open ballot.
9. In the event that equal numbers of votes are cast for a Council member, the open balloting is repeated regarding those candidates for the position of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson, who have received the highest number of votes in the first round of voting.
10. In the event that equal number of votes are cast for the candidates for the position of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson of the Council in the repeated open ballot, the representative of the Centre shall have the casting vote.
11. In case a Council member refuses to hold the office of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson of the Council or ceases to be the representative of his/her delegated institution, the election of the chairperson or the deputy chairperson of the Council shall take place in the following meeting in accordance with the provisions set forth in Paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of these Rules. In the event that the chairperson or the deputy chairperson of the Council should not able to fulfil his/her functions, they shall be fulfilled by the chairperson of the board of the Centre.

V. Rights and Obligations of the Council

12. The chairperson of the Council shall:
 - 12.1. organise the work of the Council and be responsible for the fulfilment of the tasks set for the Council;
 - 12.2. chair the Council meetings;
 - 12.3. organise the voting in compliance with the provisions set forth in Paragraph 19 of these Rules;
 - 12.4. sign the Council meeting minutes;
 - 12.5. on his/her own initiative or upon a proposal of the Council members, invite the sectoral experts, specialists, and the representatives of non-governmental organisations to participate in the Council meeting in an advisory capacity; and
 - 12.6. fulfil other obligations to ensure the work of the Council.
13. In the absence of the chairperson of the Council, his/her obligations shall be fulfilled by the deputy chairperson of the Council.
14. The Council members shall:
 - 14.1. participate in the Council meetings, in the preparation of proposals, opinions or reports of the Council, and taking decisions by the Council;
 - 14.2. provide proposals on the reviewed issues on the agenda of the Council meeting;
 - 14.3. report to the chairperson of the Council, if he/she has become aware of any circumstances, which may give rise to a conflict of interest;¹
 - 14.4. may suggest to invite the sectoral experts, specialists, and the representatives of non-governmental organisations to participate in the Council meeting in an advisory capacity;
 - 14.5. become acquainted and comply with the requirements specified in documents regulating the activities, rights and obligations of the Council, the Study Quality Committee, and the Appeals Committee, as well as the requirements for the composition of the committees, including Cabinet Regulation No. 795 and Cabinet Regulation No. 793;

¹ The term "Council members" shall refer to the father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, child, grandchild, adoptee, adopter, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister or the spouse of a candidate for the position of the member of the Study Quality Committee or the Appeals Committee.

- 14.6. become acquainted with the list of the candidates for the position of an expert of the Study Quality Committee and the Appeals Committee, prepared by the Centre, as well as the submitted documents;
 - 14.7. analyse the identified and potential risks and problem situations regarding the procedure for the approval of the experts of the Study Quality Committee and the Appeals Committee; and
 - 14.8. refrain from disclosing the information on the candidates for the position of an expert of the Study Quality Committee and the Appeals Committee to third parties and comply with the provisions of the Personal Data Protection Law.
15. The Council shall, for the purpose of complying with its obligations, be entitled to request the information on the candidates for the position of a member of the Study Quality Committee and the Appeals Committee.

VI. Organisation of the Activities of the Council

16. The Council meetings shall be organised by the Centre, whereas the secretariat functions of the Council shall be fulfilled by the Accreditation Department of the Centre (hereinafter - the Agency). The Council meetings shall be convened whenever necessary.
17. The Agency shall:
- 17.1. undertake the necessary technical measures to ensure the work of the Council;
 - 17.2. prepare the agendas of the Council meetings;
 - 17.3. draw up the Council meeting minutes;
 - 17.4. no later than 10 working days before the Council meeting to take place, inform the Council members about the meeting, its place, date, and agenda of the Council meeting by electronic means;
 - 17.5. within five working days following the Council meeting, send electronically to the Council members the draft minutes of the Council meeting for an electronic coordination thereof. The draft minutes shall be coordinated within five working days;
 - 17.6. publish the information regarding the decisions taken by the Council on the website of the Agency and the Centre; and
 - 17.7. fulfil other tasks to ensure the work of the Council in compliance with the provisions set forth in Paragraph 2 of these Rules.
18. The meetings of the Council shall be valid only if at least five Council members are present. Should that not be the case, the Council meetings shall be convened repeatedly within five working days.
19. The Council shall take decisions on the issues referred to in Paragraph 3 of these Rules by mutual agreement among the Council members. If the Council members fail to reach an agreement, an open ballot shall take place, and the decision is taken by simple majority. In the event that the number of votes should be equal, the chairperson or, in his/her absence, the deputy chairperson of the Council shall have the casting vote.
20. In the event that a conflict of interest has arisen between a Council member and any of the candidates for the position of a member of the Study Quality Committee or the Appeals Committee, this Council member shall refrain from voting.
21. The meeting minutes shall be signed by the chair and the minute taker of the meeting, by prior mutual agreement among the Council members participating in the respective Council meeting. Following the coordination of the meeting minutes, which has taken place electronically, the final version thereof shall be sent to all Council members.
22. The Council meeting minutes shall contain the information regarding the persons participating in the Council meeting, the issues on the agenda of the meeting, the decisions taken, and the tasks set. In case of negative votes, the individual opinion of each Council member shall be indicated in the meeting minutes.

23. The representatives of the Centre, as well as other persons invited by the Centre and the Council members may participate in the Council meetings, subject to prior approval by the chairperson of the Council.
24. In the event that urgent issues need to be discussed, the Centre shall convene extraordinary meetings, informing the Council members electronically no later than 3 days prior to the day on which the meeting is to take place.
25. For more efficient operation of the Council, urgent issues falling within the competence of the Council may be discussed by electronic means. In such case, the Agency shall send the draft documents to all Council members. If the Council members have not made any proposals or raised any objections within three working days, the document shall be considered as agreed upon by the Council members without any objections.