Kosovo Accreditation Agency

ACCREDITATION MANUAL

February 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

The KAA Accreditation Manual, hereafter „the manual", reflects the provisions of the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency No. 08/L-110, the Law no. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, and the Administrative Instructions no. 15/2018 for accreditation of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Republic of Kosovo.

The manual is applicable for external quality assurance processes, as follows:

   a. the re/accreditation of higher education institutions;
   b. the re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs.

The scope of the present manual is to evaluate the higher education institutions' performance against the standards included in Part II of the manual, through the analysis of the self-evaluation documentation, as well as through the information and impressions recorded by the expert panels during the site visit; secondly, it is in the scope of the present manual to evaluate the progress the education provider has made since the previous external evaluation having in mind the continuous enhancement of quality and institutional capacity building of the higher education sector in Kosovo.

Based on this scope, the external quality assurance processes conducted based on the present manual aim to:

   - certify the compliance of the higher education institutions with the standards included in Part II of the manual;
   - consolidate the internal quality assurance systems at institutional level;
   - support the higher education institutions in the quality enhancement and continuous development of their operations;
   - increase the transparency and accountability of higher education institutions;
   - strengthen the involvement of members of the academic community at the institutional and study program level and encourage continuous cooperation with external stakeholders;
   - increase the quality of student learning outcomes across the Kosovar higher education sector;
   - enhance the student learning experience at the higher education institutions.

The manual is addressing:

   a. Representatives of higher education institutions – management at institutional, faculty and unit level, heads of departments, members of the academic community: students, academics, researchers and administrative staff;
   b. Committees and other structures directly responsible for quality management and external quality assurance;
   c. Beneficiaries of higher education, namely students, employers and, in a broader sense, the society at large.

The manual uses the terminology and concepts established in the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency No. 08/L-110, the Law no. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and in the Administrative Instructions no15/2018 for the accreditation of higher education institutions in the Republic of Kosovo and is continuously developed by KAA in accordance to the laws, in order to strengthen its practical character and to better serve its beneficiaries and their concrete requirements. In achieving this, KAA is working closely with all interested higher education institutions, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), representatives of students, rectors conference and unions, civil society organisations and international organisations operating in Kosovo.

Glossary of terms

In line with the provisions of the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency No. 08/L-110, the terms used in this manual have the following meaning:

Accreditation - a formal process of quality assessment of a higher education institution and/or its study programmes through which the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA) determines that the required quality standards and criteria have been met;

Institutional accreditation - a formal process of quality assessment, which determines the official status of recognition granted by the KAA for the institution of higher education which enables the development of academic activity and the right to award qualifications for a certain period of time;

Accreditation of the study programme - formal process of quality assessment, which determines the official status of recognition granted by the KAA, which enables the higher education institution to award qualifications for the relevant field within a certain period of time.

Quality Assurance - means the set of policies, processes, and activities at the state and institutional level for quality assurance and advancement in higher education. Quality assurance also relates to teaching and learning in higher education, including the learning environment and links with research and innovation;

Internal evaluation - the regular process of internal evaluation by the institution of higher education through which quality is maintained and compliance with established standards and criteria of quality assurance;

External evaluation - formal quality evaluation process performed by KAA, which results in giving a recommendation for accreditation, non-accreditation;

Recognized accreditation body - Kosovo Accreditation Agency, or a similar body which is currently a full member of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), or the United States Department of Education (USDE) or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA);

The education provider - any institution authorized to provide educational services in higher education, which are subject to evaluation and monitoring by the KAA.

The study program - a programme that leads to a qualification or diploma, awarded by a provider of higher education as defined in the decision of SCQ;

Standards - requirements, criteria and rules which define the level required by higher education institutions and study programmes for making a positive decision on accreditation.

Developments in the quality assurance of higher education

The quality assurance system of higher education has been continuously evolving. Whether impacted by internal or external factors, the higher education system in Kosovo has been subject to many developments that have prompted a national debate on the importance of having a consolidated and independent quality assurance system. The need to remain compliant with the ESGs and ENQA's panel recommendations has placed the topic of quality assurance as an important item of the government's agenda. The independence of KAA has been carefully preserved through transparent and competitive election processes for the State Council of Quality members and the KAA administration. The independent work of KAA has been monitored by civil society organizations, who, through regular reports, have safeguarded KAA from the interference of third parties. The strategic aim to regain ENQA's full membership has also allowed KAA to receive increased support from international donors, who have contributed with high-level expertise for the drafting and implementation of essential documents and procedures related to KAA's activities. At the same time, higher education institutions have benefited from donor support to establish and define operational processes based on best international practices, draft strategic documentation and policies, and further consolidate internal quality assurance practices.

The collective support towards a consolidated and improved quality assurance system has culminated with the adoption of the new Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency in 2023. The new law not only enforces the status of the agency as an independent body that is responsible for accreditation, monitoring, and quality control but also supports KAA in assuming its role as the main body in the Republic of Kosovo for promoting and encouraging the quality enhancement of higher education.

Over the past five years, there have been tens of institutional accreditation procedures and hundreds of study program assessments. These procedures, at times, have resulted in negative outcomes, which the education providers have used as a basis to redefine their organizational structures and policies and enforce their internal quality assurance arrangements in order to meet the required standards of the present manual. On the other hand, there have been positive developments in the higher education system in Kosovo, which can specifically be attributed to the adoption of the first Accreditation Manual in 2018. The scope of internal quality assurance arrangements is widened: the instruments for internal quality assurance systems are diversified, the perspectives of all members of the academic community are constantly integrated into the decision-making processes, and results of quality assurance assessments are becoming more transparent. The cooperation with different members of the academic community is increased, and the communication between industry, employers, and graduates is being defined and formalized. There has been an increase in the transparency of institutional operations, and student's access to higher education has been facilitated with increased communication between prospective students and university administrators.

KAA has also initiated monitoring and follow-up procedures that aim to complement the accreditation process. A new legal framework has been established, and several monitoring exercises have been conducted at public and private institutions. While there remains a lot to be done, KAA is pledging through its strategic orientation to increase the number of administrative staff to ensure full implementation of the follow-up and monitoring procedures.

The appeals procedure has been set up, and it is becoming a reliable mechanism to address the dissatisfaction of educational providers in case of negative accreditation decisions.

While the primary activities of KAA and its mission remain the same, KAA has recognized the developments that have taken place in the past years and has initiated a revision of the accreditation standards for the bachelor's and master's programs. The revised standards reflect the changing needs and requirements of the higher education system, aim at advancing standards for quality assurance in higher education in accordance with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), and strive to ensure the state and society about the quality of the higher education system in the Republic of Kosovo.

According to the new law on KAA, KAA's primary activities concern:

- accreditation and re-accreditation of institutions and programmes of higher education institutions;
- accreditation of new institutions of higher education and their study programmes including accreditation and re-accreditation of branches of institutions and programmes offered in branches;
- accreditation of new programmes in accredited institutions of higher education;
- accreditation, re-accreditation and validation of programmes including online and distance programmes;
- accreditation, re-accreditation and validation of programmes in foreign languages, joint programmes and dual diploma programmes;
- validation of internationally accredited institutions and programmes;
- continuous quality control and advancement in accredited institutions and their study programmes;
- monitoring of higher education institutions and their programmes for the implementation of accreditation criteria;

In carrying out these activities KAA aims, among others, at:

- opening up the sector of higher education to new providers from Kosovo and abroad;
- promote, improve and develop the quality and quality assurance of the HE sector; and
- create transparency and comparability in the interest of providers, students and the labour market.

KAA aims to encourage innovative forms and content in higher education and to ensure the comparability of degrees from Kosovo HEIs with those awarded by international programs.

Basic principles of the Accreditation Manual

According to the legislation, the development and evaluation of quality has both external and internal dimensions.

The external dimension is established by the European dimension and the compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Also, positioning the Kosovar higher education providers in the European Higher Education Area will ultimately ensure confidence in the quality and academic recognition of professional qualifications.

The internal dimension of academic quality is built on the legislative framework and is depending on the particularities of each higher education institution, tradition, and cultural heritage of higher education in the country. Internal quality assurance is the full responsibility of each higher education provider; in this respect, it becomes a process adapted to the particular institutional framework and it is established as a mechanism through which results, and academic performance are always improved.

The Accreditation Manual is built on the core principles of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area:

1. Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
2. Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programs and students;
3. Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture;
4. Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society.

Secondly, the Accreditation Manual is being built on the following principles:

a. **Public accountability:** Higher education institutions need to demonstrate the quality of the education to all stakeholders and public at large, through the following:
   - achieving quality levels that respond to the expectations of students and employers;
   - underlining higher education as a public good;
   - communicating consistent, clear, and coherent information to the public at large about the real results obtained and the intentions of improvement.
b. **European reference:** the higher education system and institutions in Kosovo belong to the European Higher Education Area and ensure quality levels in line with and competitive at the European and international level. For this purpose, both the recognised accreditation providers, as well as higher education institutions commit to benchmark their institutional processes against comparable institutions at international level;
c. **Institutional responsibility:** the responsibility for and the management of quality lie with each higher education provider, in accordance with institutional autonomy;

d. **Improving quality:** quality is not an end in itself. Continuous improvement and institutional management of quality is the primary objective of the external evaluations;

e. **Fitness for purpose:** quality assurance process should be defined and designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them;

f. **Institutional diversity:** diversity of institutions, their mission and goals are respected and encouraged by external quality assurance;

g. **Transparency:** a key concept helping to build mutual trust and better recognition of qualifications, programs, and other provision. At systemic level, transparency does not only increase the trust in the quality assurance structures operations, but also in the education itself. Institutionally, transparency encourages engagement of the entire academic community and development of quality culture.

h. **Focus on results:** learning outcomes and performance in research lie at the core of quality assurance. External quality assurance imply that higher education institutions demonstrate their results and performance in learning and in research as well as their correspondence with the actual reality of the institution, including verification of student activity in relation to the stated standards;

i. **Stakeholder engagement:** internal stakeholders should develop and implement quality assurance policies through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders;

j. **Quality enhancement:** continuous improvement of quality and institutional management is the primary objective of the external evaluation. Every self-evaluation document must present the particularities of quality culture across the higher education institution and ensure the continuous performance improvement.

These principles provide a reference framework for KAA activity and the present manual. Their aim is to promote a quality culture that consistently contributes to the achievement of a quality higher education, underlined as a public good that is worthy of public trust and that contributes to the personal development and achievement of students, as well as continuous improvement of quality of life, culture, and national economy in a European framework. The principles are formulated so as to ensure not only the continuity of activities and results of KAA, but also of the development of quality education under emerging European and international conditions. When judging the accreditation at study program and/or institutional level, it is only the achievement of standards, considered as the minimum mandatory level to be achieved by all education providers, that is taken into consideration.

Criteria for decision making in external quality assurance procedures

KAA decisions for re/accreditation of study programs are made and apply separately for each geographical location (campuses/branches), form of delivery (full time/part time) and teaching language. These are considered distinct processes and are subject to separate submissions for accreditation to KAA; each of them is expected to individually meet the minimum level of quality standards included in the present manual.

Study programs that are regulated by EU Directives should be compliant to, and evaluated based on Part II of the present manual, respective EU Directive and, if available, local requirements formally approved by relevant authorities.

Foreign education providers, regardless of their accreditation status with other recognised quality assurance bodies abroad, that deliver education on the territory of the Republic of Kosovo, in their individual capacity or in a partnership with a domestic education provider, will undergo all external quality assurance processes described in the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency and the respective regulation approved by the SCQ.

The assessment of higher education institutions and/or study programs is judged based on a four-levels compliance scale, as follows:

    a. Fully compliant
    b. Substantially compliant
    c. Partially compliant
    d. Non- compliant

The expert teams will address, through the External Review report, the compliance of the education provider against the standards included in the present manual at two levels, as follows:

1. **Compliance of each general area:**

In order to assess the compliance level of each general area the following guidelines will be used:
    1.1. fully compliant – all the standards included in a particular general area are met. If the institution exceeds the standards and meets some of the performance indicators, commendations are appropriate. This recognition provides the institution motivation to pursue even greater levels of excellence in their quality management practices;
    1.2. substantially compliant – 70 – 90% of the standards included in a particular general area are met, while the others are not yet in line with stated expectations. Also, there is potential for requirements of the standards not to be satisfied before the next review (examples may include the loss of key faculty members due to retirements, declining student enrolment, or projected reductions in financial or personnel resources, and others);
    1.3. partially compliant - 30 – 70% of the standards included in a particular general area are met. Also, the institution lacks the strength of compliance with the standards to ensure that the quality of the institution will not be compromised;

1.4. non-compliant – less than 30% of the standards included in a particular general area are met. The institution does not satisfy the requirements of the standards.

2. **Overall compliance of the education provider (institutional and/or program level) across all general areas.**

The overall compliance level is determined by the compliance across all general areas. The most frequent compliance level across the general areas determines the overall compliance level.

In order to be granted a positive decision for the program and institutional re/accreditation, every education provider has to demonstrate at least a substantial compliance level in the overall judgment. Therefore, failure in meeting at least an overall substantial compliance level entails delaying, withdrawing, suspending, or denying accreditation.

Standards on evaluation of Higher Education Institutions, Chapter no. 6 related to Learning and Teaching, and chapter no. 10 related to Learning Resources and Facilities are mandatory. No accreditation on institutional level can be granted unless these two (2) chapters has been fulfilled to either substantially or fully compliant level.

Standards on evaluation of Bachelor and Masters study programs, Chapter no 3. related to Academic Staff, and chapter no. 7 related to Infrastructure and Resources are mandatory. No accreditation of programmes on Bachelor or Master level can be granted unless the two up-mentioned chapters has been fulfilled to either substantially or fully compliant level.

3. **For programs that lead to obtaining a degree in General Medicine (Dr. Med), in addition to the standards set out in this manual, the HEI must prove with adequate documentation that it has functional and in possession the following clinics and health services:**

1. Neurosurgery Clinic;
2. Surgery Clinic;
3. Pediatric Surgery Clinic;
4. Plastic Surgery Clinic;
5. Thoracic Surgery Clinic;
6. Vascular Surgery Clinic;
7. Ophthalmology - Eye Clinic;
8. Maxillofacial Surgery Clinic;
9. Orthopedic Clinic with Traumatology;
10. Gynecological-Obstetric Clinic;
11. ENT Clinic;
12. Urology Clinic;
13. Anesthesia Clinic;
14. Clinic of Medical Biochemistry;
15. Radiology Clinic;
16. Hematology Clinic;
17. Nephrology Clinic;
18. Cardiology Clinic;
19. Rheumatology Clinic;
20. Gastroenterology Clinic;
21. Infectious Diseases Clinic;
22. Psychiatry Clinic;
23. Neurology Clinic;
24. Dermatovenerology Clinic;
25. Pediatrics Clinic;
26. Neonatology Clinic;
27. Pulmonology Clinic;
28. Physical Clinic with physical rehabilitation;
29. Medical Oncology Clinic;
30. Allergy Clinic with Immunology;
31. Endocrinology Clinic;
1. Cardiac Surgery Service;
2. Emergency Service;
3. Nuclear Medicine Service;
4. Orthoprosthetics Service;
5. Morgue Service;

1. Institute of Forensic Psychiatry;
2. Preclinical Institutes:
o Institute of Anatomy;
o Institute of Physiology;
o Institute of Histology;
o Institute of Pathological Anatomy;
o Institute of Pathological Physiology;
o Institute of Pharmacology; and
o Institute of Forensic Medicine.

4. Criteria for Accreditation of HEI branches

4.1. Only bachelor level programs can be offered in the branches of HEIs (Level VI according to the NQF);

4.2. Each branch must possess a development plan separate from the main campus;

4.3. The branch institution must prove that it has a separate managerial / organizational and quality assurance structure from the central campus;

4.4. The management / organizational structure of HEI branches should consist of at least:
  4.4.1. Branch Director/Manager;
  4.4.2. A coordinator for each study program offered at the branch;

4.5. The above stated management / organizational structure in the branch, cannot be the same as the management / organizational structure of the main campus;

4.6. The quality assurance structure should consist of at least one quality assurance coordinator;

4.7. The institution must prove with reports on the evaluations it carries out in the branch;

4.8. The HEI must prove that it has administrative counseling and career guidance services (Alumni Office) separately from the main campus in the center;

4.9. Each branch must have cooperation agreements with the relevant industry with which the branch operates;

4.10. The HEI must prove that laboratories and other concretization tools are available;

4.11. HEIs must prove that there is sufficient availability of physical and online books, as well as access to online research platforms;

5. Criteria of scientific research for heads of bachelor and master study programs:

5.1. From October 1, 2021, in addition to the criteria set by the AI for Accreditation, program holders entering the accreditation process at the BA/BSc level must have at least 1 (one) scientific publication indexed by the field of study / program, while in MA/MSc level must have at least 2 (two) scientific publications from the field of study/program in scientific journals indexed as first author or correspondent, according to article 3, point 1.1 WEB OF SCIENCES core collection (SCIE, SSCI and AHCI) or 1.2 SCOPUS, excluding dubious magazines or publishing houses according to AI 01/2018 approved by MESTI.

5.2. From October 1, 2022, in addition to the criteria set by the AI for Accreditation, program holders entering the process of accreditation, re-accreditation or validation at the BA / BSc level must have at least the academic title Prof. Ass. and at least 1 (one)

scientific publication indexed from the field of study/program, while at the MA/MSc level they must have at least the academic title Prof. Ass. and 2 (two) scientific publications in scientific journals indexed from the field of study/program, as first or correspondent author, according to article 3, point 1.1 WEB OF SCIENCES core collection (SCIE, SSCI and AHCI) or 1.2 SCOPUS, excluding journals or suspicious publishing houses according to AI 01/2018 approved by MESTI.

5.3. Exceptions from point 5.1 and 5.2 are the bearers of study/academic programs defined according to Article 26, point 11 of the Law on Higher Education.

2. Standards for external quality assurance

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2.1. Re/accreditation of higher education institutions

For the re/accreditation processes conducted at institutional level, the following general areas of activity will be followed:

1. PUBLIC MISSION AND INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES (ESG 1.1):

Standard 1.1 The higher education institution has a well-defined mission statement that comprises three main pillars: teaching, research, and community service and it is publicly available.

Indicators:
- The HEI has clearly identified itself as a higher education institution and/or research institution through its mission and other documents (for example, Statute).
- The HEI's mission is to contribute to society's development by focusing on education and/or research, and other goals specific to higher education institutions and their position in society.
- The HEI has a well-defined and specific mission statement that reflects its uniqueness and position within the national higher education system and the European Higher Education Area.
- During the development and definition of the mission statement, representatives from both internal and external stakeholder groups are involved in the process to ensure their participation and input (example of how stakeholders are included in decision-making).
- The HEI has a systematic and established approach for formulating, approving, implementing, and periodically reviewing its mission. The institution's mission accomplishment is achieved through its institutional strategies.

Standard 1.2 The institutional mission is clearly reflected in the strategic plan, decision making and long-term institutional objectives.

Indicators:
- The mission statement provides the basis for strategic planning processes and the achievement of strategic goals.
- Medium and long-term institutional objectives are consistent with and support the mission.
- The mission is reflected in operational planning and implementation processes.
- The mission is evident in the development of curricula and in the implementation of quality assurance measures.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.6):

Standard 2.1 The HEI has developed a comprehensive strategic plan that covers all aspects of its operations for a minimum of five years. This plan includes teaching, learning, research, artistic work, quality assurance, student services, infrastructural investments, and community service initiatives, leadership, HR, internationalization etc. The plan was created in consultation with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure it meets the needs of all parties involved.

Indicators:
- The strategic plan is elaborated for short, medium and long terms and is updated regularly based on operational developments, formative evaluation and higher education context.
- The strategic plan comprises strategic goals, an operational plan, specific timeframes, financial considerations, and monitoring mechanisms.
- The implementation of the institutional strategy is reflected in a detailed action plan, which enables monitoring of short and medium-term targets, and it is distributed to all levels of management of the HEI.
- The strategic plan is directly linked to the information management system that provides regular feedback on current activities.
- The HEI is responsible for monitoring key performance indicators and taking necessary actions to advance strategic initiatives.

Standard 2.2 The strategic planning is supported by the annual and long-term budgeting process, allowing for frequent updates and adjustments.

Indicators:
- The HEI has set up an effective reporting and management system, and provides evidence of progress.
- The HEI has implemented risk assessment which is an integral component of planning strategies and developed effective mechanisms to minimize financial risk.

Standard 2.3 The HEI has established a responsible, efficient, and effective internal organization structure, procedures and policies, with the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making.

Indicators:
- The HEI has established transparent and publicly available procedures for election processes of its decision-makers and other elected positions (for example, the election decision, etc.).
- The HEI has established transparent and publicly available internal policies to regulate the scope of work, internal structure, decision-making methods, and the rights and obligations of all stakeholders at all levels (for example, the HEI Statute, regulation on job descriptions, internal structure, organogram, etc.).
- The HEI ensures that the owners' roles and competencies are distinct from the management and decision-making related to academic affairs.
- The HEI ensures that its consultative and decision-making bodies are comprised of members of academic and administrative staff and students.
- The students are given opportunities and encouraged to be active members of the HEI's committees with the right to vote.

- The process of electing student representatives in decision-making and consultative bodies is fair, transparent, and free from discrimination.
- The structures and processes for student representation are in place and they are fair, transparent and free from discrimination.

Standard 2.4 The HEI has appropriate and sufficient administration that demonstrates effectiveness and supports the HEI in daily operations.

Indicators:
- The administration is highly specialised and equipped to fulfill their duties with clearly defined responsibilities.
- The administration utilizes digital platforms to facilitate efficient internal and external communication regarding administrative and academic affairs.
- The HEI provides opportunities and plans to increase the competencies of the administration through different trainings and programs.
- The administrative staff are subject to performance evaluation, including evaluation from students and academic staff, and the results are considered for further decision-making and planning.

3. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.6):

Standard 3.1 The HEI demonstrates that it has sufficient financial resources in the short and medium term to reach its mission and objectives set out in the strategic plan and can demonstrate financial sustainability.

Indicators:
- The HEI possesses reliable financial provisions and a range of financing sources, which are essential for maintaining financial stability.
- The HEI has a realistic annual budget and a five-year budget plan, as well as financial policies which address its financial sustainability.
- The HEI demonstrates financial sustainability and efficiency throughout all its operations and levels in line with its mission.
- The sources of funding and all the conditions related to funding are transparent and do not limit institutional autonomy and promote the flexibility to accommodate all planned activities in line with the strategic plan.

Standard 3.2 The HEI ensures appropriate funding for educational activities.

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures that each study program has a solid financial plan that guarantees its sustainability for at least the next five years.
- The HEI acquires additional funding for its study programs through partnerships with local communities, business partners, and participation in national and international projects.
- The HEI invests extra financial resources in developing and enhancing their study programs (for example, projects, external cooperation, etc.).

- The appropriate financial resources have been allocated for the acquisition, cataloging, and development of equipment, services, and systems to enhance teaching and learning resources.

Standard 3.3 The HEI has officially approved a research budget that is sufficient to support its institutional research objectives, including funds for research equipment and facilities.

Indicators:
- The HEI has a policy or procedure to properly verify funds allocated for specific purposes for research through the accounting systems to ensure they are utilized accordingly.
- The policies are in place to continuously improving the quality of education and research through regular investments in new facilities, equipment, and staff training.

Standard 3.4 A senior governing body (or Specialized Office) is responsible for overseeing and managing the institution's budgeting and accounting functions. They ensure that financial auditing reports are regularly prepared and published.

Indicators:
- The HEI implements internal auditing protocols to ensure that it fulfills its commitments with utmost diligence and maintains public accountability.
- The expenditures and commitments are closely monitored against budgets, with reports prepared at least once a year. Any discrepancies from expenditure estimates are thoroughly explained, and their impact on annual budget projections is assessed.

4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.8):

Standard 4.1 The HEI has policies and effective mechanisms for monitoring unethical behavior and all the employees and students are informed thereof.

Indicators:
- The HEI prioritizes and promotes academic integrity and freedom, maintains ethical standards, and safeguards academic integrity and freedom.
- The HEI has a Policy of ethics and academic integrity that prevents all forms of academic dishonesty and assures the integrity and ethical behavior of all academic staff, administrative staff and students (for example, Policy of Ethics, includes defined procedures for detecting plagiarism, academic cheating, forging of results, etc.).
- The HEI actively supports academic integrity and freedom and has functional structures and procedures for assessing adherence to ethical standards (for example, Ethics Committee, Student Ombudsman, examples of reported and resolved cases, number of cases forwarded to a higher level decision-making body, etc.).
- The HEI effectively uses mechanisms for preventing and sanctioning intolerance and discrimination, and has a system for managing conflicts and resolving irregularities at all levels of the HEI (for example, Disciplinary Regulations).
- A systematic procedure to detect plagiarism has been implemented, providing academic staff and students with evidence-based data (examples of carried out procedures for detecting and sanctioning unethical behavior).

- The HEI has established a clear procedure for intellectual property ownership from the commercialization of ideas developed by academic staff and students.

Standard 4.2 The HEI ensures the availability of information on important aspects of its activities (teaching, scientific/artistic and social activities).

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures transparency and clarity in its communication by providing comprehensive and precise information on its academic staff, research and teaching and social activities.
- The HEI ensures transparency and clarity in its communication by providing comprehensive and precise information on its program offerings, student enrollment, the intended learning outcomes, awarded qualifications, assessment procedures, student rights and responsibilities, available services and facilities, program pass rates, diverse learning opportunities, graduate employment prospects, scholarship options, ongoing research projects, and tuition and administrative fees (for example, HEI website, social networks, open doors day, brochures, flyers etc.).
- The student's final theses are published by the HEI in a publicly accessible repository.
- The HEI informs stakeholders about the outcomes of previous evaluations.

5. QUALITY MANAGEMENT (ESG 1.1, ESG 1.2, ESG 1.7, ESG 1.9):

Standard 5.1 The HEI has established and implemented a highly structured and efficient quality assurance and improvement system, which is continuously being improved.

Indicators:
- The HEI has implemented a publicly available quality assurance policy as part of its strategic management. This policy is achieved through the implementation of a strategy and action plan.
- The HEI has put in place procedures to consistently monitor, evaluate, and enhance the performance of its quality assurance system through tracking, measuring, analyzing, assessing, and implementing necessary changes - closing the loop.
- The higher education institution's internal quality assurance system encompasses and assesses various activities, including study programs, teaching processes, student support, assistance for under-represented and vulnerable groups, learning resources, scientific/artistic endeavors, professional activities, and more. The system also provides relevant documentation to support these evaluations.
- The HEI established the Quality Committee and Quality Management Office as its specialized unit that includes representatives from all stakeholders and has clear roles and responsibilities.
- The HEI provides sufficient resources to ensure the functioning of the quality assurance system.
- The results of external reviews are used to improve the performance of the HEI.

Standard 5.2 The HEI has quality policies and procedures that include the collection and analysis of relevant data, with the purpose of ensuring and improving the quality of all institutional activities (academic activity, student services, administration, etc.). These procedures include all stakeholders of the higher education institution (students and external stakeholders - employers,

alumni, representatives of professional organizations, civil society organizations and internal stakeholders).

Indicators:
- The HEI has set up mechanisms to systematically collect and analyze data on its processes, resources, and outcomes. It effectively uses this information to enhance its activities and ensures that all collected data contribute to the HEI's further development - closing the loop, (for example, analyses based on gathered data and feedback from various stakeholders, and relevant action plans; examples of improvements based on the gathered information and conducted analyses).
- There are effective mechanisms in place to collect, analyze and compare reliable data referring to the profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student's satisfaction with their programs, learning resources and student support available, and career paths of graduates. The statistical data is used for quality assurance purposes, as well as in supporting decision-making.
- The central database retains statistical data readily accessible to departments and units. This information is regularly used to assist in preparing reports on indicators and other quality monitoring tasks.
- All academic and administrative units, including the governing body and middle management, are involved in quality assurance procedures to ensure continuous improvement.
- The students are encouraged to actively participate in quality assurance processes.

Standard 5.3 The HEI established a formal process for the design and approval of its study programs.

Indicators:
- The study programs have undergone a thorough internal quality assurance process and have been formally approved by the higher education institution. Plans for their continuous improvement are in place.
- The procedures and policies for the development and approval of the study programs are well defined and include internal and external stakeholders.
- The HEI has defined procedures and key indicators for monitoring the quality of the delivery of the study programs and the methods of collecting the necessary information.

Standard 5.4 The HEI periodically monitors and reviews the study programs to ensure that the programs are in line with mission and the institutional strategy. The monitoring of the study programs involves active stakeholder participation.

Indicators:
- The procedures to monitor, review and improve the quality of the study programs are defined and in place (for example, employers' surveys on the necessary competencies in the labor market, analysis carried out in cooperation with the stakeholders, examples of the improvements based on the stakeholder feedback study programs).
- The periodical monitoring procedure checks whether ECTS allocation, learning outcomes, and workload estimates are feasible, practical, and suitable.

- All relevant stakeholders (students, staff, alumni, and employers) are involved in the monitoring processes of the study programs which also include questionnaires and the results of questionnaires on student workload, achievement of learning outcomes, academic success, resources, employment of graduates, etc.
- If the student practice is an integral part of the study programs, procedures for monitoring and improving the quality of student internships are clearly defined, continuously implemented, and involve stakeholders' feedback (for example, students, mentors and employers questionnaires, examples of improving student practice).
- The information is collected and analyzed regularly and the programs are adapted accordingly, making sure they are up-to-date.
- The results of the monitoring processes and the resulting action plans are communicated to all stakeholders and published on the HEI website.
- The revised and up-to-date study programs are published on the HEI website.

6. LEARNING AND TEACHING (ESG 1.2, ESG 1.3):

Standard 6.1 The HEI has established policies and procedures that apply to all study programs. The institution actively monitors the implementation of these policies and procedures to ensure their effective realization.

Indicators:
- The HEI has established key performance indicators (KPIs) for every study program. These metrics are evaluated at least once a year by senior administrators in charge of academic affairs, the institution's quality body, and the senior academic body. The institution's overall performance is then formally reported to the governing structure
- The study programs are carefully monitored and supported by specialized internal structures.
- Internal structures and procedures are in place to develop effective and innovative pedagogical technologies to ensure success.

Standard 6.2 The study programs' intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, and they are publicly available.

Indicators:
- The HEI procedures and structures are in place to ensure that the study programs' intended learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission and its strategic goals (proof of alignment of each intended learning outcome with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution, examples, list of learning outcomes of the study programs, published mission statement and strategic goals of the HEI).
- The HEI proves that the study programs intended learning outcomes are aligned with the general goals and objectives of the study programs (proof of alignment of each intended learning outcome with the stated goals and objectives of the study programs).
- The study programs intended learning outcomes are written from a student perspective and they distinguish knowledge, skills, and competences (published and explained on the HEI website).

- The HEI proves that it used examples of good practices in defining intended learning outcomes (ECTS Guide, 2015).
- Intended learning outcomes include the development of generic and specific competencies distinguished into skills, knowledge and values.
- Intended learning outcomes are comparable with similar study programs in EHEA.

Standard 6.3 The HEI demonstrates that each study program is designed considering the correlations between learning outcomes, teaching methodology and assessment.

Indicators:
- The study programs are presented in the form of a series of documents which include: the general and specific objectives of the programs; the curriculum, with the subjects' weight expressed in ECTS credits and courses distributed over the study period; thematic programs and syllabuses expressing learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, skills and values achieved by a course; the assessment methods for each course taking into consideration the planned learning outcomes.
- The HEI has established a collaborative approach between departments to ensure the successful implementation of interdisciplinary study programs. They facilitate student mobility within the institution through credit transfers and the accumulation of ETCS credits.
- The structure of the study programs is flexible and allows each student to choose their learning direction corresponding to their interests and skills.
- The study program's content is regularly updated with the latest scientific research findings, which includes the research conducted by the teachers themselves.

Standard 6.4 The HEI ensures that ECTS allocation is appropriate.

Indicators:
- The ECTS credits for each course are allocated according to the guidelines provided in the "ECTS Users' Guide".
- The HEI allocates ECTS credits in accordance with the actual student workload, based on the analyses of feedback from stakeholders in the teaching process, or other procedures.

Standard 6.5 The study program's intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors.

Indicators:
- The HEI proves that their study programs' intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors (study programs syllabus and curriculum).
- The HEI proves if the study programs are delivered at the graduate level that the intended learning outcomes of the study programs differ from the learning outcomes achieved at the undergraduate level of the study programs.
- The HEI proves that the study program's intended learning outcomes are aligned with the level and profile of qualifications gained.

Standard 6.6 If the HEI study programs lead to degrees in regulated professions, they are aligned with the national and EU Directives and recommendations issued by the national and international professional associations.

Indicators:
- The HEI proves that the study programs are compatible with prescribed conditions defined in EU Directives.
- The HEI proves that it has taken into account and applied the recommendations issued by professional associations (opinion of the professional chambers, possibility of license examinations).

Standard 6.7 The higher education institution ensures student-centered teaching and learning.

Indicators:
- The HEI encourages various pedagogical methods in study programs delivery in accordance with the intended learning outcomes.
- Various teaching methods are used that encourage interactive and research-based learning, problem-solving and creative and critical thinking.
- The learning methods and friendly environment are student-centered and stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.
- The HEI continually evaluates and adapts teaching methods and different modes of the study programs delivery.
- Teaching methods are adapted to a diverse student population.
- The HEI provides /enables the study programs to be executed using modern technology.

Standard 6.8 The HEI ensures that evaluation and assessment are objective and consistent and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3.)

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures that the criteria and method of assessment, as well as criteria for grades are published in advance and all students are informed about it.
- The HEI provides support to the academic staff in the development of skills related to testing and assessment methods.
- The HEI ensures objectivity and reliability of grading.
- The students receive feedback on the evaluation results that identify their strengths and weaknesses, and if necessary, guidelines for the learning process based on these evaluations.

Standard 6.9 The HEI ensures that a functional procedure and mechanism for student appeals is in place. (ESG 1.3.)

Indicators:
- The students are informed about a clearly defined appeals procedure in a timely manner, which is consistently implemented (the examples of appeals procedures).

7. RESEARCH:

Standard 7.1 The HEI has developed a research strategy which is integrated within the institutional strategy and aligns with its institutional mission. This strategy is reflected in a detailed action plan, which includes clearly specified performance indicators and is made publicly available.

Indicators:
- The research strategy is aligned with the mission and vision of the higher education institution.
- The research strategy has been introduced to identify and utilize the expertise of academic and research staff, as well as students, to provide research and development services to the community.
- The HEI has an adequate number and profile of researchers for the implementation of its strategic research agenda, and they are supported by a senior position for research and/or research units.
- The HEI has set up research and development units that can identify and promote institutional expertise, commercial development opportunities, and assist in creating proposals and business plans. They offer aid in preparing research proposals and contracts. They can help develop spin-off companies, as needed.
- The institutional research performance reports are published periodically, and they include records of research activities conducted by individuals, departments, and colleges.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures that academic staff are committed to the achievement of high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

Indicators:
- The HEI has an internal policy that regulates the research work and professional activities of its academic staff.
- The academic staff's research and professional activities are recognized through their contributions to scientific and applied research publications, artistic creations, technology transfers, consultancy services, scientific parks, and/or professional achievements.
- The academic staff publishes their work in high-quality scientific and/or professional publications (national requirements and criteria for publications and advancement of academic staff must be respected).
- Every member of the academic staff publishes their work in high-quality scientific and/or professional publications (national requirements and criteria for publications and advancement of academic staff must be respected).
- The academic staff actively promotes research and/or professional achievements at national and international conferences.

- The HEI encourages the applied research work or projects of their academic staff.

Standard 7.3 The HEI ensures that the academic staff has a proven track record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures that academic staff are encouraged to include in their teaching the results of their research and information about their scholarly activities relevant to the courses they teach.
- The HEI has effective mechanisms in place for recognizing and encouraging the excellence of its academic staff, including a reward system based on research and/or professional productivity.
- The HEI proves that the students are engaged in research activities with the academic staff.
- The HEI ensures support to the junior teaching staff in the development of their research programs through mechanism as mentoring by senior colleagues, project teams, assistance in developing research proposals, and seed funding.

8. STAFF, EMPLOYMENT PROCESSES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ESG 15.):

Standard 8.1 Teacher recruitment is in line with national legislation, internal regulations in effect and it is based on objective and transparent procedure.

Indicators:
- The HEI advertises vacancies which contain systematic information on required teaching (and, if applicable, research skills) nationally and internationally (for example, HEI website, Official Gazette).
- The HEI has clear, objective and transparent process for staff recruitment and conditions for employment (examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of selection committees and the decision made by expert bodies).
- The HEI has adequate methods in place for selection of the best candidates for each position (teacher recruitment procedures arise from the development goals of the HEI and they are aligned with the legislation and internal regulations in effect).
- Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment (for example, HEI internal regulations, Code of Ethics for teachers and students).The HEI guarantees that both teaching and administrative staff have access to a thorough set of policies and regulations, which are outlined in an employee handbook or manual. This includes vital information regarding their rights and obligations, code of ethics and conduct, recruitment and promotion procedures, supervision, participation in projects, performance evaluation, support procedures, as well as professional development and digital skills.

Standard 8.2 The higher education institution has enough permanent academic staff adequately qualified for the delivery of the study programs.

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures that there are enough qualified academics to carry out the study

programs and conduct scientific and professional activities at the required level (for example, CV, data on the percentage of courses delivered by full-time academics for the study programs, number of teachers with the doctoral degree).

- The HEI proves that the academic staff do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.
- Teaching staff can be engaged in a maximum of three courses per semester (winter/summer).
- The HEI provides information that at least 50% of the academic staff involved in delivering the study programs are full-time HEI employees (example, employment contracts).
- The HEI provides information that for each student group (defined by the statute of the HEI) and for every 60 ECTS in the study program, the HEI has employed at least one full-time staff with doctoral degree or equivalent title in the case of artistic/applied science institution.
- Based on the specifics of the study programs, the ratio of students and academic staff cannot be more than 1:30 (for example, student-teacher ratio and alterations thereof over time; future plans regarding student-teacher ratio).
- The HEI provides information that the academics' workload aligns with relevant legislation and bylaws, regulations issued by competent bodies, etc.
- The HEI provides information that the academics' workload ensures the appropriate distribution of teaching obligations, professional and/or scientific work, professional and personal development and administrative duties (including mentoring of students) and community service.
- The HEI ensures that they employ a sufficient number of qualified academic staff for the mentoring of final thesis.
- Members of academic staff who are involved in delivering professional bachelor study programs have appropriate and relevant qualification in accordance with the legislation and qualifications framework.

Standard 8.3 The promotion and re-appointment of teaching staff is based on objective and transparent procedures and policies which are publicly available, which include the evaluation of excellence and they arise from the higher education institution's mission and strategic plan.

Indicators:
- A long-term operational plan for developing academic staff that is in line with the institution's mission and strategic plan has been established.
- The HEI provides information that teacher promotion procedures are transparent and objective (examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of selection committees and the decision made by expert bodies).
- The HEI proves that the promotion of academic staff into higher grades is based on excellence and important achievements (national criteria or legislation, teaching activity, international activity in the scientific discipline, high-impact publications, projects, supervision of final thesis, textbooks, feedback from the students, etc.).
- The HEI ensures that the promotion process for academic staff is carried out promptly once they have met the necessary promotion requirements.
- The HEI has implemented a staff performance evaluation system that includes feedback

from students, supervisors, peers, and self-assessment. The results of this evaluation are taken into account when promoting and reappointing teaching staff, as well as renewing their contracts.

Standard 8.4 The higher education institution ensures and supports academic staff in their professional development.

Indicators:
- The HEI has a plan for the professional development of its academic staff.
- The HEI management ensures that academic staff is involved in professional development programs (for example, language training, digital skills trainings, etc.).
- The HEI proves that its academic staff participates in international mobility programs, study visits at foreign HEI, international projects, networks etc., which are relevant to the study program, and academic staff are encouraged and supported by their own HEI to participate in such activities.
- The HEI proves that it organizes specific training for its academic staff on the method of preparation and delivery of teaching and introduces them to the regulations and practices in higher education (for example, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods etc.).
- The HEI ensures that newly employed teachers undergo adequate training to strengthen teaching competencies before their teaching activity at the HEI.
- The HEI ensures an onboarding procedure for all newly employed staff members to ensure their familiarity with the key strategic, research, ethical and other goals and procedures of the HEI.

Standard 8.5 The HEI ensures that its external associates have adequate qualifications and work experience to deliver study programs in line with the program's objectives and intended learning outcomes.

Indicators:
- The external associates include the latest research, trends and know-how from the labor market in the teaching process.
- The HEI proves that it organizes specific training on the method of preparation and delivery of teaching for external associates who are coming from the business sector and/or from abroad and introduces them to the regulations and practices in higher education (for example, with ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, assessment methods).
- The HEI encourages formal participation of external associates in the supervision of final and graduation theses (examples of co-supervision)

9. STUDENT ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES (ESG 1.4, ESG 1.6):

Standard 9.1 An admission policy is clearly defined and is made publicly available.

Indicators:
- The admission requirements to the study programs, the criteria which are used to decide about the admission of candidates, and the admission process itself are defined clearly

and comprehensively and they are published (for example, clear admission criteria, previous education, high school grades, State Matura points or results, Bachelor degree, elective exams, additional assessments of knowledge and skills).

- The admission requirements and process for international students to enroll in study programs are easily understood, transparent and publicly available.
- The HEI makes sure that all necessary information about the institution is transparent for prospective students. This includes details about the range of available programs and courses, program requirements, student rights and responsibilities, available services and facilities, scholarship opportunities, as well as tuition and administrative fees. This information is publicly accessible before students apply for admission (HEI website, open days, etc.).
- The HEI ensures that the students enrolled in the study programs possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent documents of study, according to MESTI requirements.
- The admission mechanisms are in place to ensure that students who are beginning their education are adequately prepared and capable of following the courses at the HEI (for example, defined decision-making procedure in relation to the admission criteria).
- The admission processes and procedures are consistently and fairly applied for all students and they prevent discrimination and favor underrepresented groups in a transparent way.
- The HEI has a transparent procedure for the recognition of periods of study (for example, Erasmus programs).
- The HEI has adequate procedures for recognition periods of the study.

Standard 9.2 The HEI collects and analyses information on student progression and takes appropriate actions to ensure students completion of the study program.

Indicators:
- The HEI has established a functional system for monitoring students' progress and gives assistance and/or counseling to those who face difficulties.
- The HEI ensures that students are informed about the availability of teaching staff (for example, information on consultation hours provided to students).
- The HEI annually monitors student progression and completion rates and takes appropriate actions if necessary.

Standard 9.3 The HEI ensures appropriate conditions and support to outgoing and incoming students (national and international students).

Indicators:
- The HEI supports its students in international exchange mobility programs (for example, Office for International Cooperation).
- The HEI on regular bases gives information to students on the possibilities of international exchange mobility programs.
- The HEI has regulations in place for recognizing ECTS credits, and students need to be informed in advance about the recognition of parts of their studies.
- The HEI publishes information on application procedures and conditions as well as study program admission in foreign language.

- The HEI actively attracts foreign students and provides support when studying at a domestic HEI.
- The HEI provides courses on foreign language to foreign students.
- The HEI collects and analyses feedback from national and international students and takes appropriate measures to improve procedures of international exchange.
- The HEI provides information on how many students enrolled in the study program participated in international mobility for up to three months and more than three months in the period of the last five years (outgoing mobility).
- The HEI provides information on how many international students participated in the study for up to three months and more than three months in the period of the last five years (incoming mobility).

Standard 9.4 The higher education institution ensures adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account.

Indicators:
- The higher education institution employs an adequate number of qualified and committed professional, administrative and technical staff who are involved in providing student support.
- The HEI provides students with information about various services, information packages for new students, regulations on studies, and internal organization. The institution makes available a comprehensive student handbook that covers all phases of the student life cycle, including admission, progression, recognition, and certification. The handbook includes information on regulations, student rights and responsibilities, disciplinary actions, duties of officers and committees, and potential penalties. This handbook is widely accessible throughout the institution.
- Specialized staff identify and address the requirements of students with special needs to ensure they receive appropriate support.
- The HEI provides guidance on study and career opportunities to students (for example, tutors, supervisors and other advisers as support to student learning and progress) and students are informed about it.
- The student complaint procedures are outlined in the regulations, which are published and made widely available within the institution. These regulations clearly state the reasons for which complaints may be made, as well as the criteria for decision-making and the available remedies. The complaint process ensures unbiased consideration by individuals or committees not affiliated with the parties involved.
- The HEI offers a variety of scholarships and financial assistance to students. These resources come from both the institution and external parties and serve to incentivize and reward academic achievement, as well as support students from underprivileged backgrounds. The scholarships and financial aid are categorized separately and can be combined if applicable.
- The HEI informs and supports students in their extracurricular activities and HEI has available funds available for student initiatives (for example, HEI has objects for sports and recreation, for cultural and voluntary activities).
- The HEI ensures that a senior staff member is assigned to oversee and develop student

support services.

10. LEARNING RESOURCES AND FACILITIES (ESG 1.6):

Standard 10.1 The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research.

Indicators:
- The HEI has adequate premises and dedicated equipment for performing educational activities and research.
- The HEI documents on premises and equipment (property deeds, lease contracts, inventories, invoices etc.) are valid for a minimum of five years.
- The laboratories at the HEI have adequate equipment for all compulsory courses within the curriculum, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities and they are well equipped with IT technologies.
- The HEI has adequate software for the courses of study programs included in the curriculum, with a valid license.
- The space, equipment and the entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities, etc.) are appropriate for the delivery of the HEI study programs and are sufficient for the achievement of the HEI study program's intended learning outcomes (panel member tour of the facilities during the site visit to the HEI, information about facilities, ownership documents, document proving the right to use the premises and equipment in the period of five years, optimal number of students enrolled in the study program with regard to available space, equipment and the number of teachers).
- The HEI ensures that premises and equipment are adjusted to the students with special needs.
- The HEI ensures that the academic staff members have sufficient office space.
- The HEI provides the facilities for cultural, sporting and other extracurricular activities for students.
- The adequate food service facilities are provided to meet the needs of both staff and students.
- A senior staff member is assigned the responsibility for oversee and development of infrastructure and resources.

Standard 10.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for their study programs.

Indicators:
- Library is equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the disciplines included in the curricula.
- Library ensures that the number of seats in the reading rooms corresponds to at least 10% of the total number of students in each of study program.
- Library must ensure that the number of seats in the group work rooms corresponds to at least 10% of the total number of students in each study program.
- Library has its own book stock and other electronic resources from domestic and foreign specialty literature, enough to cover the courses within the curricula, out of which at least 50% should represent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers, from the last 10 years.

- Library has its own book stock with a sufficient number of books to cover the needs of all students.
- Library has a sufficient number of subscriptions to domestic and foreign electronic resources, according to the stated mission.
- The library and its services are accessible beyond regular class hours to accommodate users' needs. The reliable systems are in place to track book borrowing and returns.

11. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION:

Standard 11.1 The HEI has formulated and implemented a proactive institutional collaboration plan that aligns with its mission institutional strategy. This plan is clearly reflected in the institution's decision-making and resource allocation in this field.

Indicators:
- The HEI has a well-defined strategy for choosing the institutions with which it forms memorandums of understanding or partnership agreements. Any such document must be accompanied by a comprehensive action plan (example: the proof of existing co-operation).
- The institutional strategy includes a well-defined section on internationalization.
- The scientific, artistic, and professional accomplishments of the HEI are acknowledged on a national, regional and/or international level.
- The HEI hosts various events such as conferences and summer schools that have gained international recognition and attract a large audience.

Standard 11.2 The HEI has implemented mechanisms to facilitate collaboration with national and/or international higher education institutions, networks and organizations. The HEI provides support to teaching staff to establish partnerships with the academic community, locally and/or globally.

Indicators:
- The HEI encourages international cooperation and mobility of its teachers and researchers and analyses the implementation of this international experience in their activities.
- The HEI enables the international visibility of its staff by supporting their participation in different study mobility, forums, events, internships, summer schools, seminars, etc.
- The HEI has resources and special units that deal with international cooperation.

Standard 11.3 The HEI established and maintain relationships with local industry, public sector, employers and local community.

Indicators:
- The HEI has established partnerships with local and/or regional industries and employers to facilitate program delivery. These partnerships may include work-study programs, part-time job opportunities, and identifying issues for analysis in student project activities. Additionally, the HEI collaborates with these partners to participate in various institutional activities and HEI bodies (for example, Industrial Boards).
- The HEI promotes collaboration with nearby industries and other research organizations.

This cooperation can include working together on research projects, sharing equipment, and developing cooperative strategies when appropriate.

- The HEI and its academic departments work together to create community support or professional service agencies that cater to the needs of the community. The staff members' expertise is utilized in this process.
- The HEI maintains communication with local schools, providing help and guidance in their areas of expertise. They also inform schools about their programs and activities, as well as potential career opportunities, and organize additional educational events for them.

Standard 11.4 The HEI has established and maintains relationships with its alumni.

Indicators:
- The HEI maintains consistent communication with its alumni by updating them about the institution's progress, inviting them to participate in events, and encouraging them to support its growth (for example, regular meetings, HEI website or newsletter, etc.).
- The HEI supports the HEI alumni association.

2.2. Re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs

In the case of re/accreditation of bachelor and masters study programs the next general areas will apply:

1. MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND ADMINISTRATION:

Standard 1.1 The study program is in line with the higher education institution's mission and strategic goals, needs of society and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.1)

Indicators:
- The content and structure of the study program are in line with the institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals and it is publicly available.
- The study program recognizes the specifics of the HEI's position in the target geographic and/or research area.
- The intended learning outcomes of the study program are in line with the institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals and they are publicly available.
- The delivery of the study program is supported by a needs analysis conducted by the higher education institution/academic unit of the higher education institution (employment perspectives, demand for the programme by potential students, etc).
- The study program is justified by the higher education institution through a rational argumentation of the optimal number of students it indents to enroll.
- Facilities and equipment dedicated for the implementation of the study program are capable to cater the number of students intended to be enrolled.

Standard 1.2 The study program is subject to policies and procedures on academic integrity and freedom that prevent all types of unethical behavior. The documents are publicly available, and staff and students are informed thereof. (ESG 1.1)

Indicators:
- The study program is subject to written procedures and mechanisms to address plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and other forms and types of discrimination. (for example, Code of Ethics, Ethics Committee, Student Ombudsman, appropriate software).
- There is evidence that the study program implements the procedures that especially define what happens with the outcomes of the anti-plagiarism software and the exact process that students, academic staff, and administrative staff, must follow.
- Ethical standards are in place governing teaching and research of the study program, and all students, lecturers and other stakeholders are acquainted with them (for example, minutes of the Ethics Committee meeting, HEI informs students via student packages, student handbooks, statistical data about the use of antiplagiarism software, syllabuses containing information about ethical standards).
- Mechanisms for monitoring any potential unethical behavior of students, lecturers and other stakeholders involved in the study program are efficient, regularly implemented and disseminated among all relevant groups (example or proof of how higher education institution solves the case of unethical behavior or conflict, anonymized decisions of the Ethics Committee about certain cases).

Standard 1.3 Relevant information is collected, analyzed and used to ensure the effective management of the study program and other relevant activities and such information is publicly available. (ESG 1.7)

Indicators:
- The information management system includes relevant, updated and reliable information and concrete action plans are in place to monitor the implementation of the study program).
- Ethical norms and government policies with respect to data protection and the privacy of the students are considered for the delivery of the study program.
- Students and staff of the study program are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.

Standard 1.4 The delivery of the study program is supported by appropriate and sufficient administrative support to achieve its goals in teaching, learning, research, and community service. (ESG 1.6)

Indicators:
- All study program activities and operations are subject to a policy and review process that ensures adequate and efficient administrative staff and budgetary support.
- The study program has sufficient administration to support the teaching and learning needs of students and academic staff.
- The administrative staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is subject to a professional development plan.
- The management of the HEI proves that administrative staff is structurally involved in professional development programs (for example, language training, etc.)

Standard 1.5 The recommendations for quality improvement of the study program from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures are implemented. (ESG 1.10)

Indicator:
- The recommendations for improvement of the study program are analyzed and activities and actions on the basis of previous internal and external quality assurance processes are undertaken (for example, action plans and reports on implementation based on recommendations of the expert panels, examples of results achieved based on recommendations from previous internal and external quality assurance procedures).

2. QUALITY MANAGEMENT:

Standard 2.1 The study program delivery is subject to an established and functional internal quality assurance system, in which all relevant stakeholders are included. (ESG 1.1)

Indicators:
- The HEI established an internal quality assurance system in line with national regulations, ESG and other international standards.

- There is a quality assurance policy covering all aspects related to the delivery of the study program which is publicly available.
- Internal quality assurance procedures for the study program are defined by the internal regulations of HEI (for example, quality assurance regulation, quality assurance guideline, etc.).
- The study program is supported by the institution's/academic unit's quality assurance coordinators who do not have teaching obligations and are in charge of monitoring the study program.
- The policies and processes of the internal quality assurance system form a cycle for continuous improvement (PDCA).
- There is an adequate monitoring plan for the implementation of the quality assurance procedures for the study program, and all stakeholders are involved in its continuous revision.

Standard 2.2 The study program is subject to a process of design and approval established by the HEI. (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The development of the study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals.
- The study program underwent an adequate and transparent internal quality assurance process and was formally approved by the designated strategic management bodies of the institution. Its continuous improvement is planned.
- The process for the development and approval of the study program is well-defined and includes internal and external stakeholders, including specific subject experts.
- Key performance indicators for monitoring the quality of the study program delivery are defined, and the achievement of these indicators is monitored on a regular basis.

Standard 2.3 The study program is periodically monitored and reviewed to ensure its objectives are achieved. The monitoring of the study program involves stakeholder participation. (ESG 1.9)

Indicators:
- The study program undergoes regular monitoring to assess its relevance to the needs of society (for example, employers' surveys on the necessary competencies in the labor market, analysis carried out in cooperation with the stakeholders, examples of the improvements based on the stakeholder feedback for the study program).
- The study program undergoes regular checks to establish whether the estimated workload (ECTS) allocation of students and the defined learning outcomes are achievable, realistic, and adequate.
- The stakeholders, students, staff, alumni, and employers are involved in the monitoring processes of the study program which also includes questionnaires, focus group discussions, and the results of their feedback on student workload, academic success, resources, employment of graduates, etc.
- The HEI can prove it regularly conducts stakeholder questionnaires (students, staff, alumni, employers, etc.) and includes the feedback into regular study program improvement processes.

- If the student practice is an integral part of the study program, processes for monitoring and improving the quality of student practice are clearly defined, are continuously implemented, and involve stakeholders' feedback (for example, students, mentors and employers' questionnaires, examples of improving student practice).
- The collected information is analyzed and concrete actions are taken to ensure that the program is up to date.
- The results of the monitoring processes and the resulting action plans are communicated to all stakeholders and published on the HEI website.

Standard 2.4 All relevant information about the study program is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and it is publicly available. (ESG 1.8)

Indicators:
- All policies, regulations and guidelines pertaining to the study program are publicly available.
- Information on admission criteria, recognition of qualifications, enrolment quotas, syllabuses, learning outcomes, credits, assessment methods, and final qualification are published.
- Information on pass rate, dropout rate, and graduate employment are publicly available and objectively presented.
- The publicly available information on the study program is accurate, reliable, and objective and is updated on a regular basis.

3. ACADEMIC STAFF:

Standard 3.1 The study program delivery is supported by teaching staff who are recruited in line with national legislation, and internal regulations in effect, and it is based on objective and transparent procedure. (ESG 1.5)

Indicators:
- The HEI advertises vacancies nationally and internationally (for example, HEI website, Official Gazette).
- The HEI has clear, objective and transparent processes for staff recruitment and employment conditions (examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of selection committees and the decision made by expert bodies).
- The higher education institution has adequate procedures for the selection of the best candidates for each position (teacher recruitment procedures arise from the strategic goals of the HEI and the specific needs of study programs, and they are aligned with the legislation and internal regulations in effect).
- Candidates for employment are provided with full position descriptions and employment conditions (for example, HEI internal regulations, Code of Ethics for teachers and students).

Standard 3.2 The study program is supported by sufficient permanent academic staff who are adequately qualified to deliver the study program. (ESG 1.5)

Indicators:
- The number and qualifications of academic staff (elected into a grade in an appropriate field and/or area) are adequate for the implementation of the study program and for performing scientific/professional activity at the required level (for example, CV, data on the percentage of courses delivered by full-time academics for the study program, number of teachers with a doctoral degree).
- The academic staff engaged in the study program do not cover, within an academic year, more than two teaching positions (one full-time, one part-time), regardless of the educational institution where they carry out their activity.
- The Academic staff should not be overburdened. Their engagement should not exceed the norms compared to institutions in Europe in terms of teaching hours and the number of courses.
- At least 50% of the academic staff who are involved in delivering the study program are full-time HEI employees (employment contracts).
- For each student group (defined by the statute of the HEI) and for every 60 ECTS in the study program, the HEI has employed at least one full-time staff with a doctoral degree or equivalent title in the case of an artistic/applied science institution.
- The ratio of students to full-time academics for the study program is 1:30 and is appropriate for the student's successful achievement of the program's learning outcomes (for example, student-teacher ratio and alterations thereof over time; future plans regarding student-teacher ratio).
- The qualification of the academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is adequate and relevant to the courses they teach (CV; publications; books, etc.).
- The workload of academic staff aligns with relevant legislation and bylaws, regulations issued by competent bodies, etc.
- The workload of academic staff enables the appropriate distribution of teaching obligations (including mentoring of students), professional and/or scientific work, professional and personal development, and administrative duties and community service.
- Sufficient number of qualified mentors are employed who provide guidance to the students enrolled in the study program (for example, mentors who support students in learning and progress as well as in mentoring the final thesis).

Standard 3.3 The study program is supported by teaching staff who are subject to advancement and reappointment based on objective and transparent procedures which include the evaluation of excellence. The advancement of staff arises from the higher education institution's strategic goals, and is in line with the legislation and internal regulations in effect. (ESG 1.5)

Indicators:
- The teacher advancement procedures engaged in the study program are transparent and objective (examples of completed carried out teacher recruitment procedures, copies of vacancy announcements, the composition of selection committees, reports of selection committees and the decision made by expert bodies).
- The promotion of academic staff into higher grades is based on excellence and important achievements (national requirements for publishing in WoS and Scopus, teaching activity,

international activity in the scientific discipline, high-impact publications, projects, supervision of final thesis, textbooks, feedback from the students, etc.).
- The results of the feedback are taken into account in the advancement and re-appointment of teaching staff and in the renewal of contracts (for example, the evaluation of the staff based on students, management, the colleague's questionnaire and self-evaluation).

Standard 3.4 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is entitled to institutional support for professional development. (ESG 1.5)

Indicators:
- The HEI has an annual operational plan for the professional development of the academic staff engaged in the study program and demonstrates their participation in the development activities.
- The management of the HEI proves that all academic staff engaged in the study program is involved in professional development programs (for example, language training, etc.).
- The HEI provides support to all academic staff of the study program in the development of skills related to testing and assessment methods.
- The HEI proves that all academic staff engaged in the study program participates in international activities (such as mobility programs, study visits at foreign HEIs, international projects, sabbatical leaves, networks, etc.), which are relevant to the study program, and academic staff are encouraged and supported by their own HEI in these activities.
- The HEI provides evidence that it organizes specific training for its academic staff on the method of preparation and delivery of teaching and assessment and introduces them to the regulations and practices in higher education (for example, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, supervision process skills, assessment methods, etc.).
- Newly employed teachers for the delivery of the study program undergo adequate training to strengthen teaching competencies before starting their teaching activity at the HEI.
- The HEI ensures newly employed staff members undergo adequate onboarding aimed to familiarize them with HEI's standard operating practices, most importantly QA standards and procedures, standards of ethical behavior, etc.
- The HEI ensures support to the academic staff in the development of their research programs through different mechanism as mentoring by senior colleagues, project teams, assistance in developing research proposals, and funding.

Standard 3.5 External associates who teach at the study program have adequate qualifications and work experience for the delivery of the study program and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ESG 1.5)

Indicators:
- External associates include the latest research, trends and know-how from the labor market in the teaching process.
- Specific training on the method of preparation and delivery of teaching for external associates from the business sector and/or from abroad are organized. The training also introduces them to the regulations and practices in higher education (for example, with ECTS credits, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment methods).
- External associates engaged in the study program are encouraged to participate in the supervision of final and graduation theses (examples of co-supervision).

- The workload and expectations from the external associates are clearly agreed to ensure that the teaching is performed on high quality.

4. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS CONTENT:

Standard 4.1 The study program intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly, precisely, and comprehensively according to the best practices; they are aligned with the published institution's/academic unit's mission and strategic goals, and are publicly available. (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The study program's intended learning outcomes are aligned with the institution's/academic unit's mission and its strategic goals (proof of alignment of each intended learning outcome with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution).
- The intended learning outcomes are aligned with the general goals and objectives of the study program (proof of alignment of each intended learning outcome with the stated goals and objectives of the study program).
- The program's intended learning outcomes are written from a student perspective; they describe what a graduate of the study program will know and will be able to do (published and explained on the HEI website).
- The HEI proves that it used examples of good practices in defining intended learning outcomes (ECTS Guide, 2015)
- Intended learning outcomes are of the indicated level of studies and include the development of generic and specific competencies, and are divided in knowledge, skills, and competences.
- Intended learning outcomes are comparable with similar study programs in EHEA, and the mapping of learning outcomes against other programs in EHEA has been performed

Standard 4.2 The study program intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors. (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The study program's intended learning outcomes comply with the National Qualification Framework and the European Qualifications Framework level descriptors (study program syllabus and curriculum).
- If the study program is delivered at the graduate level, its intended learning outcomes differ from the learning outcomes achieved at the undergraduate level of the study program.
- The intended learning outcomes of the study program are aligned with the level and profile of qualification gained, and they avoid overlapping across different study programs.

Standard 4.3 The content and structure of the curriculum is coherent and enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and to progress smoothly through their studies. (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The courses within the curriculum are provided in a logical flow and meet the definition and precise determination of the general and specific competencies, as well as the compatibility with the study programs and curricula delivered in the EHEA.
- The rules defining the order of students' progression through the program courses ensure that the learning outcomes of previously successfully passed courses are sufficient to meet the prerequisites of the next courses in the curriculum.
- The core disciplines necessary for achieving the leaning outcomes and acquiring competencies in the respective fields are adequately covered by the program courses. (mapping of competences on course level against the program learning outcomes has been performed).
- The study program is comparable with similar study programs abroad and enables graduate students horizontal and vertical mobility and employability in the European and global market (comparative analysis of the proposed study program in relation to similar accredited study programs in the EHEA).

Standard 4.4 If the study program leads to degrees in regulated professions, it is aligned with the EU Directives and national and international professional associations. (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The study program is compatible with prescribed conditions defined in EU Directives. (Mapping of the program content and parameters against the requirements of all relevant directives has been performed).
- The contents of the study program and other aspects of its delivery have taken into account and applied the recommendations issued by professional associations (opinion of the professional chamber, possibility of license examination, etc.).

Standard 4.5 The intended learning outcomes of the student practise period are clearly specified, and effective processes are followed to ensure that learning outcomes and the strategies to develop that learning are understood by students (if applicable). (ESG 1.2)

Indicators:
- The HEI has developed a regulation for practice that includes the expected learning outcomes, rights and responsibilities of all involved parties and templates for all documents necessary for completing practice.
- During the practice period, students have mentors assigned among the academic staff in the study program. The practise is organized in appropriate learning environments outside the higher education institution, in cooperation with the labor market (contracts/agreements with employers, regulations on student practice).
- ETCS credits are allocated to practical work that is monitored through activity reports (records of student practice).
- The delivery of the study program is supported by cooperation agreements, contracts, or other documents with institutions/organizations/practical training units and feedback on

cooperation from employers which participate in the organization of the student practice (feedback from supervisors from or outside the higher education institution, record of student practice).

Standard 4.6 The study program is delivered through student-centered teaching and learning. (ESG 1.3)

- The study program has a didactic concept which supports students in achieving the program learning outcomes.
- The study program is delivered through various pedagogical methods that align with the intended learning outcomes and are adequate for the level of studies.
- Various teaching methods are used that encourage interactive and research-based learning, problem-solving and creative and critical thinking, with clearly defined instructions aligned with the learning outcomes
- To deliver the study program, teaching methods and different modes of program delivery are continually evaluated and adapted.
- Teaching methods are adapted to support a diverse student population on demand (part time students, mature students, international students, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.).
- The delivery of the study program is ensured through the use of modern technology.

Standard 4.7 The evaluation and assessment used in the study program are objective and consistent, and ensures that intended learning outcomes are achieved. (ESG 1.3)

Indicators:
- The program clearly describes the relation between the overall intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) and the contribution made by each individual module to achieve those learning outcomes.
- Assessment methodologies which are implemented in the program ensure systematic assessment of individual learning outcomes related to all relevant areas of knowledge, skills and competences as defined in the program learning outcomes (a mapping of assessment methods against the learning outcomes of the study program has been performed).
- The assessment criteria and methods, as well as grading criteria for the study program, are published in advance and all students are informed about it.
- The study program ensures objective and reliable grading of students.
- Students receive timely feedback on the evaluation results that identify their strengths and weaknesses, and if necessary, guidelines for the learning process based on these evaluations.
- A functional student appeals procedure for the study program is in place (examples of appeals procedures).

Standard 4.8 Learning outcomes are evaluated in terms of student workload and expressed in ECTS. (ECTS 1.2)

Indicators:
- Assessment criteria must express what students know and can do as a result of demonstrating the learning outcomes.
- The workload is calculated and ECTS assigned to all learning activities that lead to the

program learning outcomes including the learning outcomes of the program components.

5. STUDENTS:

Standard 5.1 Clear admission policies, including requirements, criteria and processes for the study program are clearly defined and are publicly available. (ESG 1.4)

Indicators:
- The requirements and criteria for admission to the study program, as well as the entire processes are defined clearly and comprehensively and they are published (admission criteria refer both to national and international students, national requirements separately for the bachelor and master level, additional assessments of knowledge and skills, etc).
- Students enrolled in a bachelor study program, possess a high school graduation diploma or other equivalent documents of study (State Matura results) according to national requirements. For a master study program, students must possess a bachelor's degree diploma.
- The admission process of the study program ensures the selection of candidates with appropriate prior knowledge and competencies (for example, defined decision-making procedure in relation to the admission criteria.)
- The admission criteria and process are consistently applied and fairly applied for all students, and they prevent discrimination.
- The HEI has adequate procedures for recognition periods of the study.

Standard 5.2 Student progression data for the study program are regularly collected and analyzed. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure the student's completion of the study program. (ESG 1.4)

Indicators:
- A functional system for monitoring students' progress is established and gives assistance and/or counseling to those who face difficulties.
- The study program is subject to regular monitoring of student progression rates and student completion rates. Appropriate actions are taken if necessary.
- Results of regular monitoring of student's progression are distributed to staff and students.
- The study program clearly defines the progression possibilities in terms of continuation of study or change of study. Students are informed about what they can achieve with their qualifications).
- The study program is subject to policies in place for the transfer or recognition of qualifications gained by other institutions.

Standard 5.3 The study program ensures appropriate conditions and support for outgoing and incoming students (national and international students). (ESG 1.4)

Indicators:
- Students enrolled in the study program are regularly informed about the possibilities of international exchange mobility programs.

- Students enrolled in the study program are supported and stimulated to be involved in international exchange mobility programs (for example, Office for International Cooperation).
- The HEI has regulation for the recognition of ECTS credits.
- The HEI publishes information on application procedures and conditions as well as study program admission in foreign language.
- The HEI actively attracts foreign students and provides support when studying at a domestic HEI.
- The HEI provides courses on foreign language to foreign students.
- The HEI collects and analyses feedback from national and international students and takes appropriate measures to improve procedures of international exchange.
- The HEI provides information on how many students enrolled in the study program participated in international mobility for up to three months and more than three months in the period of the last five years (incoming and outgoing mobility).

Standard 5.4 The study program delivery is ensured through adequate resources for student support. The needs of a diverse student population (part-time students, mature students, students from abroad, students from under-represented and vulnerable groups, students with learning difficulties and disabilities, etc.) are taken into account. (ESG 1.6)

Indicators:
- The number of professional, administrative, and technical staff who are involved in providing student support for the study program are sufficient and adequately qualified.
- Students are informed about services (information packages for new students, regulations on the study, and regulations on the internal organization etc.) that are publicly available.
- Students enrolled in the study program are provided with guidance on study and career opportunities (for example, tutors, supervisors and other advisers to support student learning and progress).
- Structures and procedures for appeals and complaints for the study program are clearly defined and are transparent to all students.
- Students enrolled in the study program are informed about extracurricular activities and the HEI has available funds to support their initiatives (for example, HEI has spaces for sports and recreation, for cultural and voluntary activities).

6. **RESEARCH:**

Standard 6.1. The study program aligns with the institution's/academic unit's mission and the research strategic goals.

Indicators:
- The study program has defined scientific/applied research objectives that are reflected in the research development plan of the HEI (research strategy).
- The implementation of the study program is ensured through sufficient financial, logistic, and human resources provided by the institution for achieving the proposed research objectives.
- The study program is subject to clear policies that define recognized research and relate

to international standards and established norms in the field of study program.

Standard 6.2. The academic staff engaged in the study program is committed and supported to achieve high-quality research work and/or professional activity.

Indicators:
- The academic staff research and/or professional activity is validated through scientific and applied research publications, artistic products, technological transfers, consultancy centers, scientific parks and/or professional activity.
- The academic staff publish their work in high-quality scientific or professional publications, research or professional achievements are presented at national and international conferences, they participated in projects as consultants (for example, for academic and scientific study programs, national requirements about publication and promotion purposes must be respected).
- The academic staff who are involved in delivering professional bachelor study programs have a minimum master's degree and at least five years of relevant professional activities.

Standard 6.3 The academic staff engaged in the delivery of the study program is encouraged to participate in different aspects of cooperation with national and international partners.

Indicators:
- The academic staff engaged in the study program is involved in identifying and capitalizing on its expertise and providing research and development services to the community.
- The academic staff engaged in the study program is involved in developing collaborative research arrangements with colleagues from other HEIs from the country and abroad.
- The teaching staff engaged in the study program is supported to cooperate with local business partners through joint research projects, cooperative strategies for development, and shared use of equipment when it is possible.
- The teaching staff engaged in the study program is supported and involved in technology transfer and cooperation to transfer knowledge with the industry and public sector.

Standard 6.4 The teaching staff engaged in the study program has a proven record of research results on the same topics as their teaching activity.

Indicators:
- Academic staff engaged in the study program are encouraged to include in their teaching the results of their research and information about their scholarly activities relevant to the courses they teach.
- Students enrolled in the study program are engaged in research activities with the academic staff.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES:

Standard 7.1. The HEI ensures adequate premises and equipment for performing education processes and research. ESG (1.6)

Indicators:
- The HEI has adequate premises and equipment for performing educational activities and research.
- The laboratories (if applicable) for all compulsory activities within the curriculum of the study program, wherever the analytical syllabus includes such activities, are well equipped with IT technologies.
- The HEI has adequate software for the disciplines of study included in the curriculum, with a valid license.
- The space, equipment, and entire infrastructure (laboratories, IT services, work facilities, etc.) are fully functional and capable to cater for the number of students enrolled in the program. They support the achievement of the study program's intended learning outcomes separately from other study programs offered by the institution. (panel member tour of the facilities during the site visit to the HEI, information about facilities, ownership documents, the document proving the right to use the premises and equipment in the period of five years, optimal number of students enrolled in the study program with regard to available space, equipment and the number of teachers).
- Premises and equipment dedicated to the implementation of the study program are adjusted to students with special needs.

Standard 7.2 The HEI ensures adequate library resources for study program. (ESG 1.6)

Indicators:
- Library is equipped with reading rooms, group work rooms and its own book stock according to the courses included in the study program.
- Library and its services are available for extended hours beyond normal class time to ensure access when required by users.
- Library ensures that the number of seats in the reading rooms is sufficient to the total number of students enrolled in the study program.
- Library must ensure that the number of seats in the group work rooms is sufficient with the total number of students enrolled in the study program.
- Library has its own book stock and other electronic resources from Albanian and foreign specialty literature, sufficient to cover the specific courses within the curricula and the needs of all students. The library should represent adequate and recent book titles or specialty courses of recognized publishers.
- Library has a sufficient number of subscriptions to domestic and foreign publications and periodicals.

Standard 7.3 The study program is appropriately funded to deliver its intended educational activities and research. (ESG 1.6)

Indicators:
- The HEI ensures that there is a financial plan at the level of the study program which

demonstrates the sustainability of the study program for the next five years.
- The HEI gains additional sources for funding the study program through national and international projects, and through cooperation with business partners and the local community.
- The HEI uses additional financial resources for study program development and improvement.

3. Guidelines for external quality assurance

3. Guidelines for external quality assurance

3.1. Guidelines for self-evaluation

Aim of the self-evaluation documentation:

The self-evaluation documentation is a central point of the Expert team activity. More importantly, however, the self-evaluation documentation should inform the students, employers, other relevant stakeholders and the society at large about the institutional quality, the methods of assuring the quality of study programmes and institutionally, standards and performance indicators, and, on the other hand, about the attention the institution gives to the quality and thoroughness of the information published, driven from its commitment to accountability and public responsibility.

The self-evaluation documentation gives the institution the possibility:
- to create the conditions which, based on the analysis and internal evaluation's results, should publicly confirm and certify by the external evaluation process, the institution's strengths and assess the efficiency of its policies and procedures for continuous quality assurance and enhancement;
- to present its own perspective on the way the institution exercises its responsibilities in two fields of vital interest within the institutional evaluation: providing quality programmes, publicly motivated by comparable benchmarks and, on the other hand, adequately exercising public responsibility and accountability for the education it delivers;
- to present its own evaluation on the efficiency of internal structures and mechanisms of quality assurance; the means to ensure the accuracy, as well as the complete and credible character of the information published by the institution, its practices and procedures concerning the mission and main objectives of institutional evaluation;
- to give the Expert team the opportunity to understand the way the institution ensures the standards institutionally and at the level of study programs. Thus, the team can reach its conclusions regarding the level of confidence the higher education institution can guarantee.

Style and structure of the self-evaluation documentation:

The self-evaluation documents must:

- be honest and relevant;
- be concise and supported by the attached documents;
- be public on the institution's website;
- present an adequate balance between description and self-critical evaluation.

The self-evaluation documents must provide the Expert team enough data to support them in understanding the main characteristics of the way the institution approaches the quality assurance process compared to the national standards, as well as its own standards and the comparable benchmarks it has set for itself. The documents must be presented effectively and concisely; the institution's self-evaluation documents must be thus elaborated as to minimise

the need of additional data and clarifications the Expert team might need. As the perception of the Expert team depends (at least in the initial stages) on the institution's self-evaluation documents, it is important for them to be clear and easily verifiable in the attached documentation prepared by the institution.

The general structure of the self-evaluation report should include the following:
- Introduction – a general presentation of the institution/study program, its mission and objectives, leadership, management structures, administration and staffing arrangements, students and their socio-economic background, relevant contextual information about the area in which the institution operates, teaching, learning and curriculum;
- Main body - comprises the institution's perspective on how it meets the standards included in the present manual and, also, a SWOT analysis for each of the general areas.
- The main body will also include the evolution of institutional/program level performance during the period since the last external evaluation;
- Appendices - all the documents supporting the elements presented in the main body. This part shall only be presented in electronic format.

Recommendations for the elaboration of the self-evaluation documentation:

In order to draft its self-evaluation documentation, the institution must:
- describe, in short, the main characteristics of the institutional/program framework and of its activities for maintaining academic standards, for enhancing the quality of the institution and its study programmes and for the support of teaching and learning process, research and community service;
- present and analyse its own observations drawn from internal evaluations on institutional practices, subjects or curricular areas, as well as on the way challenges and difficulties were addressed, in order to promote the enhancement of institutional processes;
- describe the teachers' and students' internal professional rules and emphasize all the important changes operated at institutional level in response to their application;
- mention the use of external reference sources, including the National Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, as well as the standards, performance indicators and benchmarks associated to the study programme/institution;
- identify the disciplines or curricular areas that represent good practice and illustrate the performance indicators;
- describe and comment its strategy for the next three years for consolidating good practices and for addressing the identified challenges and shortcomings;
- create SWOT analysis for each general area;
- present and analyse the progress recorded since the last external evaluation.

The higher education institution is expected to represent itself honestly and accurately to internal and external constituencies as well as to the general public. Self-evaluation documentation should always be truthful, provide correct, reliable, and complete information, and avoid any actual or implied misrepresentations or exaggerated claims.

3.2. Guidelines for re/accreditation processes

Stage 1: Initiating the external evaluation process

Higher education institutions functioning in the Republic of Kosovo and offering programmes, including distance and online programmes, leading to an academic degree or a professional degree, are obliged to apply for re/accreditation/validation at KAA.

The re/accreditation procedure of the higher education institution and its study programs implies the following successive steps:

1. Submission of the request for re/accreditation:
    - the education provider submits a request for re/accreditation of the study program(s) or the higher education institution. The request is submitted together with the application forms, namely the "First Page", a template document in which the education provider must indicate the type of accreditation it is applying for (*institutional/program/branch*); provide information about the study programs to be included in the re/accreditation procedure (*academic degree, number of ECTS, campus, specialisation*); and provide detailed program information about each study program individually, as defined in the template.
    - the education provider submits information about the program learning outcomes and the list of subjects for every study program mentioned in the application form (First Pages).
    - the education provider submits an official information letter about its managerial and organisational structure, including names of all positions mentioned in the structure.
    - the education provider submits information about its academic staff. All members of academic staff of the educational provider must declare their full-time or part-time engagements through the declaration process conducted electronically in e-Akreditimi platform. In addition to the declaration process, academic staff must upload their relevant documentation in the platform which is needed to verify their stated academic qualifications. Following the declaration process, the education provider extracts the data in an excel sheet for every responsible person of the study program according to the template defined by KAA. In addition to formal qualifications, the education providers submit information about the research record of each responsible person of the study program.
    - the deadline for submitting the application for accreditation, re-accreditation, validation, and declaration of academic staff is July 1 - 31 of each calendar year.
    - the request for re/accreditation, the first pages, information about the managerial structure, information about the program learning outcomes, information about responsible persons of the study program, are submitted in printed form physically at KAA offices and electronically in the official email address of KAA.
    - in the case of application for institutional accreditation, HEIs must provide evidence from the competent authorities that the founders and senior

management have not been convicted by a final decision for committing a criminal offense intentionally in the last five (5) years.

At least one month before the legal deadline for applying for re/accreditation, KAA electronically notifies all higher education institutions about the application procedure, including novelties in the process, if applicable.

In addition to the electronic information, KAA invites all higher education institutions to meetings physically or online with one of the administrative officers of KAA to discuss additional details, if required by the educational provider.

2. Reviewing the application for re/accreditation by the SQC:
   - the KAA Secretariat verifies all information submitted by the education providers and provides an assessment against the formal criteria laid down in the national legislation;
   - if needed, the KAA Secretariat invites representatives of the education providers to clarify any uncertainties related to the application forms, including the accuracy of data of academic staff;
   - the KAA Director is responsible for presenting the application data for each institution of higher education in one of the regular meetings of SQC;
   - the application forms and data of academic staff are reviewed by the State Council of Quality to ensure that the minimum criteria included in the law are fulfilled, including but not limited to the minimum numerical criteria for academic staff required by the law, the relevance of the field of study, number of scientific publications, etc.
   - following the SQC meeting, KAA notifies the education provider if the request for institutional re/accreditation or the re/accreditation of the study programs has been formally approved by Council. The notification is done electronically and incudes an attachment with information about the remarks of SQC for every reviewed study program individually;
   - if the application for re/accreditation has been approved, the education provider is required to submit the self-evaluation documentation within 15 days from the date of the approval of the application by SCQ;
   - the self-assessment report is drafted based on the present Accreditation Manual.
   - if the application for re/accreditation has been rejected, the education provider is instructed to file a request for the reconsideration of the SCQ decision to the Appeals Committee.

3. Submission of the self-evaluation documentation:
   - the self-evaluation reports (SERs) are submitted separately for the institutional re/ accreditation process and each study program regardless of the level of study (BA or MA) and the location where the program is offered (main campus or branch);
   - for institutional re/accreditation, besides the SER, the education provider must submit as an appendix all relevant documents referred to in the SER according to each general area, including, but not limited to, internal policies, regulation,

strategies, information about the research records, institutional activities related to internationalisation, etc.
- for each study program re/accreditation, besides the SER, the education provider must submit as an appendix all relevant documents referred to in the SER according to each general area, including, but not limited to, the CVs of academic staff, research records of academic staff, detailed syllabuses for each module, and other relevant study program information;
- the SER is submitted only electronically, through CD, at KAA offices in Albanian and English language.

4. Appointment of the expert team:
- to conduct the external assessment procedure of the education provider, KAA appoints an international panel of experts. International panel of experts assigned for the external evaluation procedure consist of two (2) up to seven (7) external experts depending on the number of study programs being evaluated and the type of evaluation (institutional or programme) and at least (1) student expert;
- all international experts must have the relevant academic and professional degree in the program field which is undergoing the assessment process;
- KAA Secretariat consults the education provider on the preferred dates for the site visit and agrees on the final period;
- for each expert panel, the KAA Director proposes the composition to SCQ. After the SCQ confirms the expert panel, the KAA submits the information on the composition of the Expert Panel to the higher education institution;
- KAA communicates the education provider the team composition. The education provider is being given the opportunity to object the composition of the Expert team members within 3 working days from the date of receipt of the notification. The team composition can be modified if the education provider has solid reasons to believe that the objectivity and professionalism of the evaluation process might be affected;
- the provider will formally request the SCQ to change the team composition if it is able to justify and argue its request. If the HEI submits its objection to the composition of the expert panel, the SCQ shall decide if the objection is reasonable, based on facts. If it is reasonable, new expert/s shall be appointed. Objection to the composition of an expert panel does not affect set deadlines for the submission of the self-evaluation report and other documents;
- following the approval of the expert panel, KAA formally invites the expert panel members to participate in the re/accreditation procedures. Upon the confirmation of the participation of the expert panel members, KAA communicates the agenda of the site visit to the education provider at least two weeks prior to the site visit date. All communication between the expert team and the education provider before, during and after the evaluation process is conducted through and moderated by a KAA officer, who is assigned as the coordinator of the process;
- the education provider covers the accreditation expenses no later than one week after the site visit has been confirmed.

5. Preparatory meeting for the expert panel:
    - upon confirming their participation in the expert panel, all members are given access to the KAA Accreditation manual, self-evaluation documentation, site visit agenda and other relevant information about the site visit;
    - the documentation is submitted electronically to every member of the panel by the KAA coordinator;
    - before the site visit to the HEI, the members of the expert panel are required to participate in an online or onsite meeting with the KAA coordinator. They shall be informed on the purpose of the evaluation, procedures, their duties and responsibilities, final report writing, and other practicalities related to the visit;
    - the expert panel shall share their first impression of the self–evaluation report, their findings, observations, and areas of concern that should be addressed during the site visit and prepare the questions for the meetings they shall address during the site visit to the HEI;
    - during the preparatory meeting, the international experts shall agree on the areas of responsibilities (quality standards) between themselves;
    - during the preparatory meeting, the international experts shall also agree on the length of the site visit based on the size of the institution and the number of meetings required to fulfil the purpose of the accreditation site visit;
    - if necessary, the expert panel shall agree on the list of additional documents/evidence needs to be requested from HEI;
    - before the site visit is conducted, the expert panel shall agree themselves about the chair of the panel, who, among others, will coordinate the work of all international experts and lead discussions and chair the meetings during the site visit to the HEI;
    - all members of the expert panel sign a Confidentiality Statement through which they pledge to maintain the confidentiality of information obtained during the procedure.

Stage 2: Site visit

-   the expert panel evaluates, through a site visit to the headquarters of the institution, the compliance of the provider against the standards included in the Accreditation Manual. The site visits are arranged separately for institutional re/accreditation of the main campus and the institutional re/accreditation of the branch campuses.
-   in the case of re/accreditation of study programs, each geographical location (campuses/branches), form of delivery (full time/part time) and teaching language is considered a distinct process and is subject to a separate site visit;
-   the site visit is carried out according to a predefined schedule in the site visit agenda which is communicated to the expert panel and the HEI no less than one week prior to the visit to the HEI;
-   the institutional re/accreditation site visit lasts between 1-2 days, depending on the size of the institution and the number of branches;
-   the study program re/accreditation site visit lasts 1 day;

- the HEI is required to select in advance the persons with whom the panel will meet during the site visit, including their names and positions, and send the information to the KAA Coordinator at least one week prior to the site visit;
- the maximum number of persons present in one meeting is eight (8);
- the compulsory meetings of the institutional re/accreditation site visit are the following: initial meeting with the management of the organisation, meeting with the teaching staff, meeting with the QA staff and administration, meeting with current students, meeting with the persons responsible for the study programs, meeting with graduates, meeting with employers of graduates, final meeting with the management of the institution. The expert team can request additional meetings to be included on the site visit agenda;
- the compulsory meeting of the study program re/accreditation site visit are the following: meeting with the management of the faculty/institution, meeting with the QA staff and administration, meeting the academic staff, meeting with responsible persons of the study program, meeting with graduates, meeting with representatives of the industry. In case of initial accreditation of the study program, meeting with current students and graduates are not applicable;
- in all types of site visits, a visit to the facilities the provider is using for its activities will be included;
- during the site visit, the HEI is responsible for putting all the necessary physical and technological resources at the disposal of the international panel experts and the KAA representatives to ensure the site visit's successful completion;
- the HEI must provide username and password for internet access to all panel members and the KAA Coordinator. If needed, the HEI must ensure access to printers or photocopy facilities for the panel;
- the HEI must make available IT support team throughout the site visit, to ensure that translation services or online meetings (if applicable) are conducted successfully;
- the HEI must ensure coffee and tea facilities that are used by the panel members during breaks;
- all activities shall be planned and conducted in conditions of minimum disturbance of the teaching activity; they have as main purpose to give the expert team the opportunity to confirm the compliance of the self-evaluation documentation against the state of affairs at the date of the site visit, to collect the perception of the interviewees on different institutional matters as well as approach towards quality, to collect any other information that would help the team gain a full picture about the provider, to discuss and observe the academic standards, the quality of learning, the maintenance and improvement of the teaching standards and quality.

Initial meeting with the management of the institution
The Expert team, together with the KAA Coordinator, shall first meet with the representatives of the management of the education provider. The chair of the expert team shall firstly ensure that all attendees understand the external evaluation's purpose and development. This initial meeting's agenda shall include the following aspects:
- clarifying and confirming the objectives and type of the evaluation;
- reiterating the basic characteristics of the evaluation process;

- stating the outcomes of the evaluation process: an external assessment against the standards, as well as a final evaluation report published by KAA;
- clarifying potential comments of the Expert team on the self-evaluation documentation provided by the provider;
- approach any standard that the Expert team considers the input of the management representatives is valuable on.

After the abovementioned aspects are clarified and agreed, the panel continues with the questions related to the self-evaluation documentation against the general areas of the Accreditation Manual.

Meeting with the students
Meetings with students are strictly confidential; it is only the students and the experts that can attend them. The students' comments are not nominally recorded.

To ensure diversity as well as objectivity among students in the meeting, for an institutional re/accreditation procedure, the HEI will be required to submit to KAA the double number of students intended to invite for the site visit. KAA shall randomly select eight (8) of them and will communicate their names to the HEI to be invited to the site visit.

Experts take notes during all the meetings with the members of the academic community with whom it will meet. These notes must have a rather analytical than descriptive character and must refer to the documentary information sources and direct observations. Each expert summarises the positive aspects (strengths) and those which are to be improved. The experts can exchange notes that shall help the agency create a base of collective evidence used for drafting the final assessment.

Exit meeting with the management of the institution
The expert panel ends the site visit with an exit meeting with HEI's management, in which the panel chair or a person appointed by the chair (a member of the expert panel) informs the participants of the panel's observations during the site visit. In the exit meeting, the HEI will be informed about the agreed deadlines of the External Review Report. At this point, no further discussion or elaboration of standards of the Accreditation Manual are allowed.

Stage 3: Drafting and approving the External Review Report:

- the expert team has the right to request prior or during the site visit supplementary documentation that supports them in evaluating, in a thorough manner, the performance of the education provider against the standards included in the Accreditation Manual. However, the expert team can only request supplementary documentation that the provider has already referred to during the site visit or through the self-evaluation report; the team cannot ask the education provider to produce new documentation. No HEI additional documents/evidence/clarification can be asked /presented to the expert panel after the exit meeting;

- the results of the evaluation are included in the External Review Report, a document that respects the general structure provided by the present manual and its templates;
- timelines for drafting the external review report are agreed collectively on the last day of the site visit to the HEI and during the last expert panel internal meeting;
- the chair of the Expert team submits the External Review Report to KAA as agreed during the last expert's internal meeting, but no later than 2 weeks after the evaluation visit;
- within 3 working days, the KAA Coordinator validates the report to ensure that all quality criteria and standards have been adequately assessed. The review report must respect the general structure provided by the present manual and, secondly, it has to have a coherent flow between the body of the report and the Expert team recommendation. The recommendation has to be fully supported by evidence and arguments included in the body of the report. The validation process may include further communication between KAA Coordinator and the expert team so as to bring the External Review Report in line with the present guidelines;
- the External Review Report is sent to the education provider giving it the chance to correct any potential factual errors that might have been included. During this dialogue, the institution cannot submit further information and evidence that have not been already referred to during the site visit or through the self-evaluation report. Any such new evidence can only be introduced under a new evaluation process that will represent a separate application to KAA;
- the HEI has the right to provide potential comments on the factual errors in 3 working days;
- after receiving the potential comments from the education provider, the Expert team analyses whether any corrections should be operated, finalises the reports and submits it to KAA;
- the External Review Report is discussed and approved by the State Council of Quality. The SCQ may request additional clarification from the international experts, if necessary;
- after judging the external review report, the SCQ can make one of the following decisions;

In the case of initial institutional or study program accreditation:
- Not to accredit;
- Accredit with conditions;
- Accredit for 3 years.

In the case of institutional or study program re-accreditation:
- Not to accredit;
- Accredit with conditions;
- Accredit for 3 years.
- Accredit for 5 years.

- for all bachelor and master programs, the decision on accreditation or re/accreditation determines the number of students allowed to be enrolled for one academic year;
- KAA publishes its decision together with the External Review Report on its official website not later than two weeks after the meeting of the State Council of Quality and the education provider is being given the final report;
- in case of conditional re/accreditation decision by the SCQ, the provisions of the Methodology for Monitoring and Follow-up Procedures shall apply;
- in case of negative accreditation decision by the SCQ, the education provider is entitled to an appeals procedure in line with the Law on KAA and the subsequent regulations of KAA.

If the State Quality Council of KAA makes a negative decision, the following provisions apply:
- in the case of a decision not to re/accredit a higher education institution, the HEI is prohibited to enrol new students for the respective academic year, while it is allowed to continue with the current enrolled students until the second evaluation;
- in the case of a decision not to re-accredit/to withdraw/to suspend the accreditation of a study program, the education provider looses its right to enrol new students in that particular program, while the registered students continue their studies according to the statute of the institution;
- within one year of a KAA formal decision not to accredit/to withdraw/to suspend the accreditation of a study program, reflecting thus the failure of meeting the quality standards, the education provider is obliged to submit a request for a new external evaluation;
- within one year of a KAA formal decision not to accredit/to withdraw the accreditation of a higher education institution, reflecting thus the failure of meeting the quality standards, the education provider is obliged to submit a request for a new external evaluation;
- for education providers that fail to meet the quality standards in two consecutive external evaluations provisions of the article 34, paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Law on Kosovo Accreditation Agency shall apply.

Stage 4: Follow-up procedures:

- the education provider formally responds, within the timeline decided by the SCQ decision, on how it plans to address the recommendations provided by the expert team;
- The Follow-up plan will individually approach each of the recommendations in the External Review Report and will describe how they will be addressed and implemented by the education provider – that will include the mechanism/instrument/measure the provider plans to use for each of the recommendations' implementation, who is the individual responsible, the planned timeframe for completion);
- templates for follow up plans (improvement plans) are decided by KAA;
- arrangements related to follow up procedures, including timelines, verification of Expert Team recommendations and potential site visit to the HEI following

the accreditation process, are defined under the KAA Methodology on Monitoring and Follow-up procedures.

- during the accreditation period decided by KAA, the education provider can operate changes at the level of a study program within the limit of 35%. Changes exceeding this percentage constitute a new program and will therefore be required to undergo a new accreditation procedure.

Roles and responsibilities during the re/accreditation processes

Expert panels have the duty to gather, verify and exchange information and supporting elements so as to be able to check the statements made in the self-evaluation documentation, as well as during the site visits and to formulate their own assessments on the performance of the education provider against the standards included in the present manual. The experts shall discuss and exchange the collected evidence, verify the comprehensiveness and interpretation of the data and analyse various sources in order to come to a consensual, coherent and consistent conclusion through triangulation and cross-referencing.

The self-evaluation documentation is an important source of information, helping experts to examine the quality of the learning opportunities and academic standards. Experts are requested to assess the way gathered evidence complies with the self-evaluation carried out by the education provider and with the facts observed during the site visit, as well as to verify to what extent the evidence supports the level of standards' achievement the provider declares about itself.

Duties and responsibilities of expert panel before, during and after the accreditation procedure are defined under the Law on KAA and the Regulation on the Selection, engagement, and compensation procedures of external experts (KAA) No. 03/2024. In addition to the defined legal duties and responsibilities, the following guidelines also apply:

When preparing for the review, **the expert** must:
- read and assimilate self-evaluation documentation and briefings effectively;
- use pre-review evidence and self-evaluation documentation to accurately identify the further sources of information required;
- formulate key areas for consideration for their allocated standards of the review;
- plan the re/accreditation process efficiently for their allocated standards;
- establish productive and constructive working relationships with the members of the expert team;
- apply their professional knowledge effectively to the requirements of the assigned role.

During the review, **an expert** must:
- gather and record evidence systematically and accurately identify when sufficient evidence has been gathered and where further evidence is required;
- conduct interviews and manage discussions in an appropriate and professional manner;
- establish open and professional relationships with key staff and, as appropriate, with employers and other education provider partners;
- analyse and interpret data and other evidence astutely to inform judgments;
- write clear, evaluative and comprehensive records of evidence that underpin and support the judgments;
- make sound judgments, securely based on a wide range of evidence, for example discussions with students, documentation and performance data, and evidence supplied by other team members;
- identify strengths, areas for improvement and recommended actions;

- share evidence effectively with the other team members and with staff from the education provider;
- present and substantiate judgments clearly in team meetings;
- contribute constructively to team meetings and help the team reach robust judgments;
- challenge judgments constructively and respond positively to the challenges of others;
- provide unambiguous and constructive feedback, firmly based on evidence;
- write clear, concise and authoritative contributions to the review report;
- work effectively to meet all deadlines.

Additionally, one of the experts, will fulfil the role of **chair of the team**, having the following supplementary responsibilities:

- ensure that the goals of the re/accreditation process are clear to all experts and that they understand their roles within the evaluation;
- establish an open and professional relationship with the education provider that enables effective communications throughout the re/accreditation process;
- provide clear leadership to the experts and build the team so to ensure that all members give their best;
- chair the main meetings included in the site visit agenda (other meetings can be assigned to relevant experts, e.g. student member for the meeting with students);
- lead expert team meetings constructively to enable the team to reach accurate and robust judgments;
- provide the relevant sections in the External Review Report for the assigned standards and performance indicators;
- collate the final report, drawing on experts' contributions, and edit it to ensure that it matches the requirements of the KAA Accreditation manual;
- ensure that the written report is a fair and accurate reflection of the education provider, is written in straightforward language and is of a quality that requires little or no further editing;
- ensure that the report is produced in the timeframe agreed with the coordinators of KAA;
- respond to, and resolve, any complaints made after the review, including corrections of potential factual errors in the External Review Report, in close consultation with the expert team.

For the purpose of the re/accreditation process, each education provider is invited to nominate a quality assurance officer to act as the provider's main link with the expert team; this person will be referred to as **the officer.**

The officer, same as any other representative of the education provider, shall not be present during the meetings taking place between the expert team and students, staff, employers, etc. The officer should have a detailed understanding of the education provider's programs and operations including; preferably, the officer should be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels before, during and after the review, as well as to have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.

The officer's responsibilities include:
- submit or ensure the submission of the self-evaluation documentation;
- provide information to KAA to enable the agency plan the evaluation process;
- brief the interviewees the expert team will meet during the site visit about the arrangements of the evaluation process;
- inform all students and employers about the evaluation process;
- liaise with the experts and coordinators of KAA about the team's use of the provider's facilities, for example, working/meeting rooms;
- ensure that interviewees are available for meetings as scheduled and, if need be, organise supplementary meetings as requested by the experts;
- ensure that the necessary documents are available for experts and facilitate the submission of supplementary documents, should the expert team ask for any;
- receive the External Review Report and ensure the correction of potential factual errors;
- coordinate the communication between KAA and the education provider on any other subsequent topics, such as the Follow-up plan.

In order to ensure a smooth re/accreditation process, guarantee the quality of the site visits through objectivity and professionalism and coordinate a close communication between the expert teams and the higher education institutions in all stages of the process, KAA delegates at least one representative that accompanies the expert team for the entire duration of the external assessment procedure. The KAA coordinator does not play an active role and does not contribute to the decisions on the expert team recommendation to KAA for the education provider.

The KAA **coordinator** will have the following tasks and responsibilities:

1. Preparation of the site visit:
   - ensure that the prior notice of the re/accreditation process given to the education provider is sufficient in order to prepare adequately for the visit;
   - ensure that the education provider submits the self-evaluation documentation by the set deadline;
   - ensure that the expert team receives the self-evaluation documentation in time to prepare adequately for the visit;
   - provide guidance and address all concerns of the education provider and expert team in approaching the self-evaluation documentation;
   - act as an intermediary of all formal affairs and communication between the expert team and the education provider;
   - ensure that all practical arrangements (accommodation and local transfer) are in order.

2. During the visit:
   2.1. Administration of the site visit:
   - ensure that all practical arrangements, such as working/meeting rooms are available for experts;
   - act as an intermediary of all formal affairs and communication between the expert team and the education provider;

- process potential requests for supplementary documentation asked by the expert team;
- ensure the adherence to the agreed site visit agenda – timetable, locations, attendees and adjust the site visit agenda if needed;
- provide support in applying KAA Accreditation manual and other supporting documentation (templates, annexes, etc.);
- offer clarifications for both the expert team and the education provider regarding all administrative steps of the review process;
- ensure the adherence to the KAA Code of Ethics and moderate the situation in case of potential breaches;
- collect original signatures of the experts on the re/accreditation process relevant documentation.

2.2. Coordination in the content of the review:
- organise online preparatory meeting with the expert panel prior to the site visit;
- organise the training of the expert panel and brief them with relevant information about the Accreditation Manual and the context of the HEI to be evaluated;
- attend all meetings on the site visit agenda and debriefing meetings;
- supervise and ensure the expert teams cover all standards included in the KAA Accreditation manual;
- ensure the fair interpretation of all standards and performance indicators included in the KAA Accreditation manual;
- ensure the expert teams triangulate and cross reference the data sources so that to reach sound judgments.

2.3. Evaluate the performance of the reviewers:
- take notes for the KAA experts' performance appraisal process - the extent to which experts are adhering to the Code of Ethics and procedures of KAA;
- complete and submit the evaluation form of the experts' performance.