

Methodical Guideline for External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions

The National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAB), in accordance with Section 83(2)(d) and Section 84 of the Higher Education Act, carries out external evaluations of educational activities, scientific, research, innovation, artistic and other creative activities (hereinafter referred to as 'creative activities') and related activities of higher education institutions. This evaluation is carried out at the initiative of the Minister of Education or on the basis of a resolution of the NAB Board.

Article 1 Launch of External Evaluation

In accordance with Article 5(1)(d) of the NAB Statute, the NAB Board approves the launch of external evaluation. The NAB shall inform the higher education institution that the Board has resolved to launch external evaluation and shall specify the scope and nature of the evaluation to be carried out. An evaluation committee shall be established for the external evaluation in accordance with Article 11 and Article 12(4) of the NAB Statute.

Article 2 Activities of the Evaluation Committee

a) The activities of the evaluation committee established for the external evaluation shall be governed by the Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committees.

b) The evaluation committee shall, through the NAB Office, request from the higher education institution the documentation necessary to carry out the external evaluation, taking into account the scope and nature of the external evaluation, within a reasonable timeframe. As a rule, this documentation shall include a self-evaluation report drawn up on the basis of the provided outline. If necessary, the evaluation committee may request further necessary documentation even during the course of the evaluation. The higher education institution may propose additional materials to serve as a basis for the evaluation.

c) Once the NAB Office has received the requested documents from the higher education institution, it shall forward them to the Evaluation Committee. The evaluation committee will familiarise itself with the supporting documents and, on this basis, prepare for the on-site visit to the higher education institution. The NAB Office will make arrangements for the on-site visit and handle all organisational aspects relating to it. The visit usually includes, in particular:

- meetings with the management of the higher education institution and other representatives of the institution, including at least students and staff,
- a tour of the higher education institution's premises,
- where relevant, an on-site review of documentation.

d) In accordance with Article 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Evaluation Committees, on-site visits shall always be attended by at least half of the members of the Evaluation Committee, at the minimum three members; in addition to these, members of the NAB Board and staff of the NAB Office may also attend.

e) In the course of an external evaluation, the evaluation committee performs the evaluation in relation to statutory and internal regulations of the activities of the higher education institution and the accreditation standards in their full complexity.

f) The evaluation should not be static in nature; on the contrary, it must reflect developments in the implementation of the higher education institution's activities and its internal quality assurance. The evaluation must determine whether the higher education institution's instruments and measures for advancing quality are effective. For this reason, it must also include the experts' independent judgement in particular where requirements are not explicitly set out (e.g. through quantification or other measurable indicators) in the law, accreditation standards or NAB methodical guidelines. The main objectives of the evaluation are:

- to evaluate the higher education institution's activities within its specific context,
- and its ability to ensure the high-quality delivery of educational activities in the long term,
- to highlight its strengths and weaknesses, and
- to provide it with guidance for its future direction.

Article 3 Report on the External Evaluation

a) On the basis of all available documentation, taking into account the higher education institution's internal evaluation report and its annexes, and following a visit to the institution, the evaluation committee shall draw up a draft external evaluation report. The report assesses:

- whether the institution's activities comply with the Higher Education Act,
- whether the institution's activities comply with its registered internal regulations,
- whether the higher education institution's activities comply with accreditation standards and other relevant regulations, and
- what any potential issues are in the short, medium and long term.

b) The report must be specific, referring to specific data and phenomena, so that the statements contained therein are substantiated and verifiable.

c) External evaluation reports should be structured in a consistent, logical and coherent manner, taking into account the need for readability of the report, in line with evaluations of a similar nature and scope. Emphasis is placed on conducting an objective analysis and examination of the available materials. The report both draws the higher education institution's attention to any shortcomings in its activities and identifies areas for improvement, whilst also highlighting good practice and changes already implemented. The external evaluation report includes recommendations for the higher education institution on developing its strengths and addressing any shortcomings. The report also sets out a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of these recommendations within a

specified timeframe. The external evaluation may also result in proposed conclusions regarding institutional accreditation or the accreditation of study programmes or fields of habilitation procedures and procedures for the appointment of professors.

d) Recommended general structure of the report (may be modified according to the nature and objectives of the evaluation):

- I. Introduction setting out the basic characteristics of the higher education institution and its mission.
- II. The higher education institution's capacity for critical reflection and its ability to take appropriate measures.
- III. Accredited study programmes and educational activities.
- IV. Staffing.
- V. Creative activity.
- VI. IT and equipment, material and financial resources.
- VII. Students and their study conditions.
- VIII. Administrative support and organisation of studies.
- IX. Internal evaluation system, its effectiveness and impact on quality improvement.
- X. Academic culture.
- XI. Conclusions.
- XII. Recommendations for the higher education institution.
- XIII. Conclusions on accreditation and monitoring of compliance with recommendations.

Article 4 Publication of the External Evaluation Report

a) The evaluation committee shall draw up a draft external evaluation report. The draft external evaluation report shall be sent to the evaluated higher education institution for comment, which may include objections, within a specified period of at least 15 days from receipt. The draft report and any comments or objections from the higher education institution shall be discussed by the NAB Board at its meeting.

b) Pursuant to Section 83c(2)(f) of the Higher Education Act, the NAB Board shall endorse the report on the external evaluation of the higher education institution on the basis of the above-mentioned documents.

c) The final report on the external evaluation shall be published on the NAB website. At the request of the higher education institution, any comments it may have, including objections, shall also be published.