

Handbook for External Quality Assessment Experts

**HANDBOOK
FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY
ASSESSMENT EXPERTS**

Vilnius, 2005



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

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Curriculum development for external quality assessment experts training
No. LT/03/B/F/PP-171005

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Module No 1

EDUCATION SYSTEM

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To introduce the aims, tasks and implementation procedure of the Expert Training Programme;
- ◆ To introduce the education system of the country implementing the Expert Training Programme;
- ◆ To introduce the main tendencies of vocational education and training in Europe.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

The module *Education System* covers the main principles of quality assurance of professional education and training in Europe. The purpose of the Module pertains to the introduction of the key aim of the teaching programme and its main objectives.

It offers an overview of European education strategies (including main declarations) and their main ideas; Important task of this module is to describe challenges for European education and vocational training. The national education system of a selected European country is described focusing on the level of vocational education and training. The module also includes a description of the objectives of vocational education institutions, their main trends of management, activities and structure.

The length of the module *Education System* is 4 hours, with 2 hours devoted to theory and 2 hours for individual work.

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ Challenges for European education and vocational training;
- ◆ Guidelines of the European education strategy;
- ◆ Quality assurance in Europe (history, experience);
- ◆ Key aims and objectives of the expert training programme;
- ◆ National Education Systems of European Union member states.
The Bologna Declaration (higher education). The Copenhagen Declaration (initial vocational education and training, continuous vocational education and training);
- ◆ Lithuanian System of Education (national system of education, vocational education and training system, objectives of vocational education institutions, main trends of their activities and structure);
- ◆ Latvian System of Education (national system of education, vocational education and training system, objectives of vocational education institutions, main trends of their activities and structure).

INTRODUCTION

Trust, as the main principle of quality improvement, makes up the foundation of European education and vocational education and training.

Education institutions are responsible for their system of internal quality assurance. The role of external quality assessment agencies consists in recommending and assisting the education institution by giving it more initiative and independence. A regular quality assessment helps the institution improve the system of internal quality assurance.

To assure quality in vocational education and training it is important:

- To identify a common core of criteria for quality development at European level;
- To develop an operational approach based on the common core of criteria and the set of indicators, to outline a proposal for a co-operation framework in order to develop common activities between countries on specific issues;
- To promote the exchange of good practice and the use of voluntary peer review at different levels (Copenhagen process. The first report of the technical Working group “Quality in VET”, 2003);
- The future of quality assurance systems development and improvement in Europe as in a common space for vocational education and training (“A framework of this kind of Europe must naturally be based on the national frameworks which themselves must be coherent and cover the various levels of initial and continuing training. The necessary mutual trust can only stem from quality assurance instruments, which are appropriately compatible and credible so that they can be mutually validated. In this connection, the “common framework” for the development of quality vocational training (as part of the follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration) and the creation of a platform for quality assurance or accreditation in higher education (in conjunction with the Bologna process) should be top priorities for Europe.”);
- Quality assurance system will be based on the commonly agreed standards, procedures and guidelines;
- European dimension should achieve transparency of quality assurance systems, but not replace them;
- Co-operation among institutions should be established for seeking this goal.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EUROPE (*history, experience*)

Reasons to enhance quality assurance

The key reason enhancing the creation of the system of quality assurance is declared in the main strategic documents of Europe (the Bologna Declaration, the Lisbon Declaration, the Copenhagen Declaration, the Salamanca Convention).

In early eighties of the last century the development of the education sector in Europe led to establishing an independent quality assurance system similar to the one in the USA (set up ca. 100 years ago). The relationship of vocational education and training with the labour market, a rapid development of the knowledge society stimulated changes in the system of vocational education and training. The functions of inspectorate in charge of the quality of teaching/studies became more liberal. In Western countries, there were no major fluctuations between control and independence. Those countries witnessed a less revolutionary creation process of standard-based quality assurance systems. The first four countries having established independent quality assurance systems in early eighties included the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands and France. In mid-eighties almost all European countries adopted the idea of national quality assurance, and many of them started implementing it. However, progress made in the higher education system was far better than in vocational education and training.

A Historical and Political Context of Quality Assurance

In many Western European countries the key aim of assessment is improvement and accountability. Accreditation, if applicable, is within the responsibility of the ministry in charge of the sector under assessment, whereas the quality assessment is within the responsibility of independent agencies.

However, in Eastern and Central Europe the assessment often aims at accreditation and financing. Many countries in the region have recently witnessed the foundation of private education institutions and teaching/study programmes. The assessment in them was started in order to suspend the increase of the number of institutions and programmes. The assessment ended in a decision on further financing and accreditation. Therefore, Western Europe set up assessment agencies, whereas Eastern and Central Europe started assessment and accreditation agencies.

KEY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EXPERT TRAINING PROGRAMME

The **key aim** of the programme is to educate and train quality assessment assessors of vocational education and training institutions from different professional areas.

The **key objectives of the Expert Training Programme** are:

- To introduce the national system of education and its role in the European context to the future assessors;
- To provide more knowledge on the main quality assurance principles in vocational education and training;
- To develop an understanding of the role, responsibility and main tasks of the assessor;
- To provide knowledge on the assessment method;
- To develop assessor's skills of institutional quality assessment.

NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION. THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS

The Bologna Declaration (1999)

Objectives, which are of primary relevance in order to establish the European area of higher education and to promote the European system of higher education worldwide:

- Adoption of a system of *easily readable and comparable degrees*;
- Adoption of a system essentially based on *two main cycles*, undergraduate and graduate;
- Establishment of a *system of credits*;
- Promotion of *mobility* by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement;
- Promotion of *European co-operation in quality assurance* with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

Higher Education*

- 80% of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration have a legal basis for the implementation of a two-tier high education or are in the process of implementing it. 20% of the countries are in the process of setting up the legal basis;

- Almost 90% of the higher education institutions of the signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration already have a two-tier system or will have it in the near future. 11% of the institutions will not have to change the study programmes.

Transferable and Cumulative Credits

The European Credit System has not been integrated into the institutional policy and guidelines; its principles and measures are often not equally readable. One of the key aims is to integrate the credit system into vocational education studies.

2/3 of the European higher education institutions make use of the European Credit System, 15% make use of other systems. Almost ¾ of higher education institutions declare that they have implemented the credit transfer system. The general tendency in all countries is that higher education studies are becoming shorter.

Formal labour market courses last 4–43 weeks and provide qualifications in a selected field. After the labour market training a vocational education certificate is awarded; it, however, is not of the same standard as a diploma of vocational training. The programmes prepare individuals for the direct integration into the labour market (ISCED 2C and ISCED 3C).

In many European countries there are two types of higher education institutions:

- Universities;
- Non-university type higher education institutions.

The European Union has about 3300 higher education institutions. About 4000 of them are spread throughout Europe, including other Western European countries and pre-accession countries.

Continuous Education

- The definition of a life-long education and its relationship with continuous and adult education is still not sufficiently well-defined and differently treated in different countries;
- A dispute on lifelong education is a consequence of previous disputes on continuous and adult education, focusing on a flexible schedule of the available courses.

* It includes the non-university sector, which, in accordance with the current concept, falls within the system of vocational education and training.

Initial Vocational Education and Training COPENHAGEN DECLARATION (2002)

Main Priorities

- European level;
- Transparency, information, consultation;
- Recognition of competences and qualifications;
- Quality assurance;
- “Enhancement of co-operation in the area of quality assurance focusing on the exchange of models and methods as well as common criteria and principles in the quality assurance of vocational education and training between institutions.”

Institutions of vocational education and training are divided into two major types:

- Initial vocational education and training to be able to access the labour market;
- Continuous vocational training, which contributes to the first type of vocational education and training, which is part of a continuous process ensuring the compliance of the individual’s knowledge and skills to the labour requirements and continuous updating.

European systems of vocational education and training differ among themselves in their relationship with the education system and the labour market.

Table 1. Models of vocational education and training institutions

Model	Context	Country
<i>I – Close</i>	A close relationship between the education system and the labour market, including the education system and the system of qualifications, which is directly linked to the individuals’ accession to the labour market.	Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary
<i>II – Distant</i>	A distant relationship between the education system and the labour market, with the flexible co-ordination of qualifications and professions or activities, providing conditions for school education, general vocational training and subsequent on-job training.	Australia, Canada, Japan, the USA

Model	Context	Country
<i>III – Mixed</i>	Mixed relationships between the education system and the labour market, with the close cooperation when arranging practical training in training centres and special vocational education and training and distant co-operation in school education.	England, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden

LITHUANIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Legal basis of vocational education and training

- Law on Education;
- Law on Higher Education;
- Law on Vocational Training.

In accordance with the Law on Education, **the Lithuanian education system comprises the following components:**

- Formal education (primary, basic and secondary education, vocational training, studies at higher education institutions);
- Informal education;
- Self-education;
- Assistance to the learner (information, psychological, social and pedagogical assistance; pedagogical and special needs assistance for the health care units at school);
- Assistance for the teacher and school (in the form of information, consultation, in-training service etc.).

Education is mandatory until the age of 16.

National and regulatory institutions

- *Ministry of Education and Science*
- Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training
- Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
- *Ministry of Social Security and Labour*
- Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority

Responsibilities are shared in the following way:

- The Ministry of Education and Science take the responsibility for the general education and initial vocational education and training;

- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour take the responsibility for the vocational training of the labour market.

Continuous vocational training

- Institutions of initial vocational education and training, universities and labour market training centres established for the purpose of the vocational training of the labour market are also engaged in the implementation of continuous vocational training programmes;
- Continuous vocational education and training can also be implemented in other eligible institutions of public or private sector, if they are allowed to do that;
- The system of continuous vocational education and training focuses mainly on training the unemployed. The system of traineeship and in-service training is in the process of being set up;
- There are no incentives for individuals and companies promoting the in-service training of their employees.

Colleges

- Financed by the state (on a regional principle);
- Private education institutions.

Vocational schools

- Financed by the state (on a regional principle);
- Private education institutions (2).

Vocational schools (financed by the Ministry of Education and Science)

- Regional multi-functional vocational training centres (comprising initial as well as continuous vocational training);
- Vocational schools;
- Public institutions of vocational education and training (an important role is played by social partners; municipalities also take an active part in the process).

Quality assessment of vocational education and training

- The external quality assessment of vocational training implemented in institutions of initial vocational training is within the responsibility of the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training;
- The establishment of the non-university sector (colleges) is within the responsibility of the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training;
- The quality assessment of studies implemented in higher education institutions is within the responsibility of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education Institutions.

More information on the Lithuanian System of Education is available in Annexes 1–3.

LATVIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Legal basis of education

- Law on Education;
- Law on High and Higher Education Institutions;
- Law on General Education;
- Law on Vocational Education.

Assessment system

A ten-point marking system is obligatory in all types of education institutions.

Obligatory and general education

General education in Latvia takes 12 years. It consists of nine years of basic and three more years of secondary education. The nine years of basic education (Lat. *pamatizglītība*) is obligatory.

Those who failed to obtain general education until the age of 16 can still obtain it until the age of 18, as stipulated in the law. They are also eligible to choose teaching programmes of vocational training and upon their completion obtain a professional qualification of the first degree alongside with the completion of the general education programme.

Secondary education

Secondary schools of general education (Lat. *vispārējā vidējā izglītība*) enrol about 55% of all graduates of nine-year schools starting with those who have the highest marks in their certificates. The school of the year 1999/2000 offered 4 types of teaching programmes at secondary schools: general programmes with no obvious focus and programmes focusing on natural sciences, humanities and vocational education subjects.

Basic vocational education and training

Programmes of basic vocational education and training (Lat. *arodpamatskola*) aim at providing the fundamentals of a profession for those who until the age of 15 failed to complete the teaching programme of a basic school.

Second level vocational education and training

Since September 1999 the system of vocational education and training has been simplified and resulted in two basic groups of general level secondary education.

Vocational training (Lat. *Arodizglītība*) programmes

The programmes take two or three years. After their completion, a professional qualification of the second level is obtained. It is important for one's individual work requiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The programmes contain elements of general education; however, graduates do not obtain certificates in general education and hence are not eligible to enrol in the studies of higher education.

Programmes of secondary vocational education and training (Lat. *vidējā profesionālā izglītība*) take four years. After their completion, a professional qualification of the third level is obtained. The programmes provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to task solution and work arrangement and planning. Programmes in secondary vocational education and training contain the full cycle of general education, which is why those who obtain certificates of the above programmes are eligible to enrol in higher education institutions.

Higher secondary vocational education and training programmes are currently reorganised into college programmes. Their completion of first level vocational higher education programmes (otherwise called college programmes) leads to the vocational qualification of the fourth level. College programmes are treated as the first cycle programmes of vocational higher education.

Education financing

Education of different tiers and types receives different financing. Primary and secondary schools are within the responsibility of municipalities. Secondary vocational education and training institutions are financed from the state budget. After a regional reform in the country they are to be transferred to municipalities. However, currently schools are in the public sector and are jointly financed by four ministries, namely the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ministry of Culture.

Higher education

Latvian system of higher education is a two-tier system.

Credit system. The Latvian credit system is similar to the ECTS, however, the credit size is different. The Latvian credit is equal to 40 work hours. During one study year 40 credits are usually accumulated.

Academic high and higher education. Programmes of academic higher education (ISCED, level 5A) are based on fundamental and applied sciences. The studies are completed by defending bachelor and master theses, which result in the award of bachelor (Lat. *Bakalaura*) and master (Lat. *Maģistrs*) degrees.

Vocational higher education

Currently vocational higher education programmes are revised and are likely to be transformed in the course of the ongoing reform.

The first level vocational higher education programmes (otherwise called college programmes) take at least two years to complete.

The second level vocational higher education programmes aim at the highest professional qualification (V), obtained as a result of practical work and studies in the fundamentals of planning and science in the most complicated professions. The duration of such programmes is at least four years.

The second level of vocational higher education usually includes several types of programmes:

- Vocational higher education programmes as *non-university type* vocational programmes;
- Vocational higher education programmes as *university type* vocational programmes (professional bachelor);
- Post-bachelor programmes of vocational higher education (professional master).

**TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK**

Task 1. What stimulates a need for quality assurance?

Task 2. What is common between the national system of education and education systems of other European countries? What are the differences?

**PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS**

There are no practical assignments for the current Module.

LITERATURE

Main literature:

1. A European Common Quality Assurance Framework. Final version / Technical working group on Quality in VET. – CEDEFOP, 2003.
2. Quality development in vocational education and training. Interim report of the European Forum. – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2002.

Additional literature:

1. A European Guide on Self-assessment for VET – providers. Final version. Technical working group on quality in VET, CEDEFOP. “Education & Training 2010” The success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms. 11.11.2003, Brussels. Commission of the European Communities. (2003).
2. Copenhagen process (2003). The first report of the technical Working group “Quality in VET”. January 2003–September 2003. European Commission.
3. International perspectives (2003). Australian National Training Authority.
4. “The Copenhagen declaration”. Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission.

Country specific literature:

Lithuania:

1. Švietimo įstatymas. <http://www.lrs.lt>
2. Aukštojo mokslo įstatymas. <http://www.lrs.lt>
3. Profesinio mokymo įstatymas. <http://www.lrs.lt>
4. Šalies monografija. Lietuva (2002). Lietuva.

Latvia:

1. Education Law. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
2. Law on Higher Educational Establishments. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
3. Accreditation Regulations for Higher Educational Establishments. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
4. Recommendations Concerning Activities of the Evaluation Commission. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
5. Higher Education in Latvia – Scheme of Higher Education System of Latvia. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
6. Structure and Development of the Higher Education Quality Evaluation System in Latvia. <http://www.aiknc.lv>



Module No 2

QUALITY AND ITS ASSESSMENT

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To introduce the concept of quality;
- ◆ To provide knowledge into the quality assurance in education;
- ◆ To introduce the European traditions and experience to ensure high quality education;
- ◆ To provide knowledge into the national system of quality assurance.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

The module *Quality and its Assessment* covers several concepts of quality which could be made use of in the study course. It includes a detailed analysis of the concept of the *objective compliance*. It also contains a brief introduction to the projects ISO, TQM, EFQM, TEEP, Tuning Project and other quality assurance activities.

The module discusses the European context, which serves as the basis for quality assurance. Four major principles of the European education quality assurance system are introduced, namely:

- Autonomy of the process of assessment;
- Self-assessment process, regular self-assessment based on a continuous data collection;
- External assessment;
- Public announcement of the final assessment and further actions taken.

The module also discusses the relationships between improvement and accountability, quality, autonomy and the assessment task.

The problems of national quality assurance in Latvia and Lithuania are discussed separately.

The duration of the module *Quality and its Assessment* is 4 hours, with 2 hours devoted to theory and 2 hours to individual work of learners.

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ The concept of quality and its assessment:
 - Approach to quality;
 - Quality defining factors;
 - Main concepts of quality;
 - International quality assurance systems (ISO, TQM, EFQM, Tuning Project etc.);
 - Education quality assurance in Europe;
 - Quality and autonomy;
 - The role of quality agencies;
 - The structure of assessment (internal and external assessment, types of assessment: programme assessment, research assessment, institutional assessment);
 - Assessors (selection of assessors and convening teams, meta-assessment).
- ◆ Quality assessment in Lithuania;
- ◆ Quality assessment in Latvia.

THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY AND ITS ASSESSMENT

Approach to quality

It is not simple to define the quality of teaching/studies. The definition heavily depends on the approach adopted.

A student defines the studies as good, if they provide sufficient knowledge and skills and lead to officially recognised academic or vocational qualifications (by certificates or diplomas).

An education institution defines study programmes as good, if they are in conformity with the needs of the labour market, attract many candidates (and improve their selection possibilities), improve the profile of an institution and require less extra effort of the institution (are in conformity with the existing material resources, qualifications of the teaching staff).

An employer defines the studies as good, if the knowledge and skills of graduates comply with the demands of free work places, when less effort is required for the graduates to adjust to the working environment.

A state and its institutions responsible for ensuring the social security for its citizens (students) and thus ensuring that the study years were not wasted shall administer the system of education/training and set the minimum requirements for the quality of studies and terminate the studies when they do not comply with the requirements.

Institutions enter into the following types of relations with the study quality:

- *Quality assurance* is within the responsibility of the education institution on a permanent basis;
- *Quality assessment* is performed by expert institutions;
- Regular *quality control* functions are within the responsibility of the education institution and public institutions.

Quality defining factors

Quality in education is the main value, however, causing much confusion. There are opinions that are in conformity with the changing education system and play a positive role in the society, culture and economics. However, a chosen approach to quality could determine the evaluation of the quality assessment.

The main quality concepts are as follows:

- **Quality as strengthening**
The concept focuses on the aspect of continuous improvement.
- **Quality as threshold**
Identifying the threshold of quality is concerned with identifying norms and criteria.
- **Quality as development**
The focus is on the learner.
- **Quality as compliance with the aim**
One of key ideas in the literature on quality is that the definition of quality should be sufficiently well-specified, depending on the aim. There is no general quality.
- **Quality as absence of errors**
Standards and *absence of errors* can be best defined in industry, when the requirements for the product are easiest to identify, the standard units of measurement precisely refer to the compliance of the product with the standards.
- **Quality as excellence**
This is a traditional academic approach aimed at excellence.

International quality systems (ISO, EFQM, Tuning Project, TEEP etc.)

In any undertaking, including education, there are different quality assurance systems. Some of the systems are used in education, for example, ISO; however, it is not very frequent. In the opinion of many specialists, in education a different approach to quality is needed. Ideas and principles, used in other systems, can be useful; however, transferring the whole system of quality assurance from industry to education can hardly bring any positive effect.

Standards of international quality management system

ISO 9000 is an international set of ISO methodologies of a company quality standards and general management applicable in all ISO supporting countries (ca. 130). Standard *ISO 9001:2000* sets the requirements for the quality management systems, including the requirements for documents, planning, resource management, product realisation, processes of measuring, analysis and improvement. Part of the processes requires a procedure specified in writing. The requirements are rather general with no specific focus and therefore can be applied in all types of

companies. The standard requirements do not ensure either high quality or work efficiency; however, they do ensure the company's capability to manage and improve the quality of its products and services.

Since the *ISO 9000* standard is recognised almost world-wide, companies intending to export their products abroad are interested in its implementation, as it often becomes the only proof of the product (service) quality.

Many companies implementing *ISO 9000* have a dilemma between a formal certificate of its quality management system (by preparing formal documents, process descriptions etc.) or a practical implementation of the standard. Since even a formal implementation of the standard requires a detailed analysis of the documents and processes of the work, companies that are badly organised have hardly any opportunities to be certified. Companies that are successfully certified, as a rule, try to reimburse some of certification costs by using the strengths of the standard which usually leads to the improvement of work organisation and quality.

Modern standard *ISO 9000 2000*, which has replaced standard *ISO 9000:1994*, consists of three standards:

- *ISO 9000:2000 Quality Management Systems. Foundations, Terms, Definitions;*
- *ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management Systems. Requirements.* The Standard serves as a basis for certifying quality management systems;
- *ISO 9004:2000 Quality Management Systems. Work Improvement. Recommendations.* The Standard describes the methods of improvement of the company work.

Why are the standards so important?

Many companies require that their suppliers are registered as conforming to *ISO 9001*. The companies therefore take it as a way of expanding their opportunities in the market. In addition, the conformity of the company to the *ISO 9001* ensures its serious quality management system contributing to its success.

In the registered companies the number of complaints launched by the customers has considerably decreased, so did the operational costs whereas the demand of products and services increased. Another advantage is concerned with improved work conditions, a bigger share of the market, an increased profit.

The *ISO 9000* registration has become mandatory for any company seeking to expand its operation in Europe. In industry it is a requirement for suppliers. *ISO 9000* is becoming a widely recognised international standard.

Application of ISO standards in education

At the end of the 1980s there was an attempt made to implement ‘industrial’ concepts of quality in education institutions. In this way education institutions have taken efforts to improve the quality of teaching. However, the quality of teaching is not the main argument for the ISO implementation due to the following reasons:

- Stimulation of high quality ;
- Response to external factors, especially the pressure from customers, authorities and stakeholders (founding institutions);
- Developing quality assurance systems, comprising the whole organisation;
- A need to improve some performance fields of the institution.

Despite the fact that some education institutions acknowledge the advantages of the ISO 9000, the implementation of the system is likely to cause some problems:

- The amount of paper work increases;
- High costs of certification and its sustainability;
- A danger to sheer off the track into bureaucracies concerned with procedures and registration;
- Difficulties concerned with the implementation of innovations.

It is admitted that the ISO 9000 standards are not the most suitable quality standards for education institutions and could only be adapted to the education environment by amending the standards by new criteria.

Total Quality Management (TQM)

Total Quality Management (TQM) is based on an idea that quality control is not something left to the ‘quality inspector who stands at the end of the production line and inspects the final product’. It is (or should be) something that penetrates into the company at the moment of supplying the raw materials to the moment of the final product.

The TQM is a management theory focusing on human resources. The awareness and competences of the employees are developed with the help of a full range of measures: quality training, continuous improvement of processes through the improvement of strategic planning, comparison of the organisation with similar organisations in the market (level identification), team work, exchange of experience, improving communication within the organisation.

The TQM is successfully implemented in education institutions. The key aim of such institution pertains to the compliance with the user needs.

Below is a graphic representation of the traditional structure and the amended structure after the total quality management has been introduced:

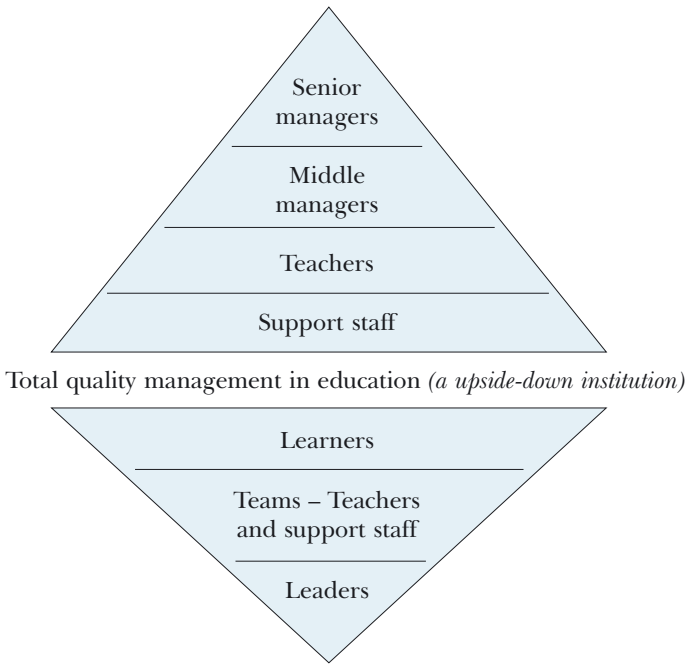


Figure 1. Total quality management in education

A changed structure of the organisation after the implementation of the Total Quality Management clearly aims at satisfying the user.

European Foundation for Quality Management: EFQM model

EFQM Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive TQM framework based on nine criteria. Five of them are ‘Enablers’ and the other four are ‘Results’. The ‘Enabler’ criteria cover what an organisation does. The ‘Results’ criteria cover what an organisation achieves. ‘Results’ are caused by ‘Enablers’ and ‘Enablers’ are improved using feedback from ‘Results’.

The EFQM Excellence Model, which recognises that there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, is based on the premise that excellence results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy that is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources.

Below are some **key concepts** used in the framework of the EFQM Excellence Model:

- **Results Orientation**
Excellence is achieving results that delight all the organisation's stakeholders.
- **Customer Focus**
Excellence is creating sustainable customer value.
- **Leadership and Constancy of Purpose**
Excellence is visionary and inspirational leadership, coupled with constancy of purpose.
- **Management by Processes and Facts**
Excellence is managing the organisation through a set of interdependent and interrelated systems, processes and facts.
- **People Development and Involvement**
Excellence is maximising the contribution of employees through their development and involvement.
- **Continuous Learning, Innovation and Improvement**
Excellence is challenging the status quo and effecting change by utilising learning to create innovation and improvement opportunities.
- **Partnership Development**
Excellence is developing and maintaining value-adding partnerships.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility**
Excellence is exceeding the minimum regulatory framework in which the organisation operates and striving to understand and respond to the expectations of their stakeholders and the society.

The EFQM Excellency Model is among the most widely used organisation systems in Europe.

Tuning Educational Structures in Europe

This is a pilot project supported by the European Commission through the Socrates Programme.

The Tuning Project responds to some claims of the Bologna Declaration, particularly those focussing on readable and comparable degree systems, adoption of the two-cycle system, European credit system. The Tuning Project also contributes to the implementation of other clauses of the Bologna Declaration.

The Methodology of Tuning

The methodology was made in such a way that the programmes could be readable and comparable. There were four levels of treatment chosen:

1. Generic competences;
2. Subject – specific competences;

3. ECTS as a credit accumulation system;
4. The role of learning, teaching, assessment as well as performance relating all of these to the quality assurance and assessment.

Each level will be developed in accordance with a certain process. The starting point has become updated information on the situation in arts in Europe. The information was processed and discussed by assessor groups according to seven interrelated fields. As a result, the assessors identified the concept, context and conclusions which could be effective in Europe. All levels taken together provide the basis for the institutions to 'tune' the teaching programmes without damaging the autonomy and restricting the development.

A more general aim of the Tuning Project is its ambition to become the platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge among different countries, education institutions or their employees in accordance with the Bologna Process and the European level. It aims at creating the common higher education area in Europe by improving the transparency of the education structures and their openness to innovation, by transferring the good practice.

Education Quality Assurance in Europe

Trans-national European Evaluation Project (TEEP)

Any European perspective on the quality of higher education has since 1999 been strongly influenced by the processes of the follow up to the Bologna Declaration of that year, signed by 29 European Ministers of Education. By signing this declaration the Ministers agreed on coordinating their policies to reach a number of objectives, which they consider to be of primary relevance in order to establish a European area of higher education and also to promote the European system of higher education worldwide.

This general background, and the subsequent initiatives and developments between the ministerial meetings in Bologna and Prague and beyond, have provided the major motivation for setting up the Trans-national European Evaluation Project (TEEP).

The TEEP has been supported by the European Commission through the SOCRATES programme. It is part of a package of measures initiated by the European Commission in order to stimulate the Bologna Process (from Prague to Berlin, the EU-contribution). The Project has been coordinated through the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

One of the key aims of the TEEP pertains to developing and implementing common criteria. The criteria play a major role when promoting and supporting such activities in which they are recognised as an imperative in quality assurance.

The TEE Project has resulted in identifying well-defined differences between educational structures, national traditions and regulatory systems in which different programmes are implemented. Though limited in scope, the TEE Project has shown that besides the European higher education there are clearly dominating national education systems and national priorities. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration differences in education cultures and define the criteria so that they are flexible and susceptible to the impact of the local and national context, legal basis and circumstances.

It is important to point out that well-defined criteria have led to comparability. The generic criteria have ensured that all 14 programmes evaluated within the Project received assessment in the same aspects.

The method is based on four principles which are appropriate and approved by all participants:

1. Ensures the autonomy of the evaluating institution. It is important that each participating country has a national coordinating institution which would ensure the continuity of the external assessment and prepare all stages of the assessment process: setting up, planning and approval of the methodology considering the assessment process;
2. The self-assessment process requires a wide participation within the programme or institution as well as a regular assessment from within, based on a regular data collection;
3. A high quality external assessment requires a competent and well-balanced assessment team including academics as well as non-academics. The participation of international assessors contributes to the impartiality of assessment. The team of external assessment should be supported by the national coordinating institution and its competent staff;
4. The key aims of the final assessment are concerned with the identification of strengths and weaknesses as well as proposals on further improvement. The final assessment should consider the context and particularly the objectives and mission of the programme (institution). The final assessment should be public.

Quality and Autonomy

To achieve a high quality of the education institution, there are the following prerequisites to be set: autonomy, efficiency and accountability.

- *Autonomy*: institutional autonomy is a prerequisite for implementing the internal system of quality assurance. Institutions should be capable of drawing long-term strategic plans and thus ensure appropriate quality supervision systems (e.g. to ensure the feedback of strategic planning).

- *Efficiency*: the institutions should analyse the internal and external management to be able to optimise the decision taking process by including students and stakeholders and to ensure an efficient administrative structure, which would lead to setting up the strategy of internal and external communication.
- *Transparency*: When the quality culture has been set up and institutions periodically assess their programme and other activities, the procedures of external accountability could be well shaped as institutional audit, which would evaluate the strengths of the institution and consolidate internal quality processes. The non-persistent quality assurance method would foster further efficiency and accountability of the institution.

The following motto should not be forgotten: *the academic freedom, the autonomy of the higher education institution starts whenever the quality of studies is assured*. Since the quality should be assessed on a regular basis, and the final assessment reports are public, the educational institution is interested in providing high-quality and competitive studies.

Steps to the quality culture

There are several key principles:

- *Improvement*: assessment procedures could well continue from the development and improvement of the institution to the accountability to the stakeholders.
- *Self-analysis*: Since the assessment aims at the institutional strengthening, it focuses on the importance to analyse oneself (stage of self-assessment stage) and manage the quality of performance as an important step in the development and strategic planning.
- *European expert assessment*: since the Association aims at creating a common European area of education, the members are eligible to apply for an external assessment by European assessors.
- *Openness to the world*: finally, since the Association focuses on inter-institutional co-operation and promotes the principle of solidarity, the service is made accessible worldwide, thus contributing to the need to enhance a dialogue among regions in the area of quality assurance.

The education institution is interested in improving its studies. However, an outsider (assessor) can see more. The key aim of assessors' assessment is to assist the higher education institution in its improvement. Hence the self-assessment of the education institution should be open and critical identifying the achievements and strengths as well as problems which the assessors would help to deal with. There are compulsory measures of improvement concerned with the accountability of the education institution to its stakeholders (the state or private institution), source of funding (state or students, or their sponsors), the state (as a guarantor of the security of its citizens).

The Role of Assessment Agencies

Main aspects of the need of assessment agencies:

- *Mission*

The assessment agency clearly defines its mission or its goals without ignoring the cultural and historic context. The definition of the mission includes reference to the basic premise of the education that the external assessment of the institution is its most important area and that there are systemic ways how to implement the mission or how to achieve the goals. It is also proved that the strategy and planning of the institution complies with its mission.

- *External quality assurance and official status*

The assessment agency is engaged in the external (institutional or programme) quality assessment on a regular basis. The quality assurance should cover the assessment, overview, audit, final assessment (grading) and accreditation, which should make part of the main functions of the agency.

The agency should be recognised by competent European national and regional institutions and have a legal basis. It should dispose of sufficient and reliable resources – human as well as material – to be able to engage in the process of external assessment efficiently and effectively, with a clear view of its prospect.

- *Independence*

It is exclusively important that in the decision making process (final assessment) the agency is independent of institutions or ministries. Formal decisions, main methodological principles, assessor appointment or self-assessment guidelines shall be set for the agency (by the board or secretariat or a team of external assessors). Plans, self-assessment guidelines, assessors and other issues in the field of assessment shall be approved by the agency itself. To avoid external influence, the agency should observe the following criteria:

- The agency should have access to documenting its independence of educational institutions and national organisations;
- The procedures, methods, appointment of external assessors and approval of results pertaining to quality assurance shall be autonomous and independent of national and educational institutions and apolitical;
- Interested institutions may be consulted in the process of quality assurance, but the final assessment is within the responsibility of the quality assurance agency;
- Quality assurance agencies, but not any other institutions, shall define their own procedures (including various performance aspects and assessors).

- *Methodologies*

The methodologies used by the agency are open and accessible, so are the results of assessment. The methodologies shall include:

- The self-assessment of the object under assessment;
- The external assessment of the assessor team and their site visit, if required by the agency;
- Public announcement of the final assessment.

The agency may define further procedures considering the recommendations; its decisions and conclusions shall be consistent, even when they are taken by different teams. The agency shall provide an opportunity to appeal against its decisions and define the procedure of investigation for the purposes of the agency.

- *Quality assurance of the agency*

The agency shall have its own quality assurance system, which is accessible on the web, and have internal quality assessment processes and be capable of:

- Providing documents, which certify its legal basis and which influence the aims and goals of the assessment it is engaged in;
- Assuring the processes of internal quality assessment. For that purpose, the agency shall have to determine the internal feedback, external feedback from the assessed institution and from the assessors and thus achieve the continuity of quality improvement recommendations;
- Proposing a clear scheme how to avoid a conflict of interests in the teams of external assessors.

Assessment Structure

Internal and external assessment

An education institution is engaged in self-assessment on a regular basis. The self-assessment conducted before the external (assessor) assessment is the basis for the external assessment: the assessors first assess the performance of the education institution following the self-assessment report; then prepare their final assessment including their findings during the site visit to the institution under assessment.

Internal assessment is the main and most important component in the system of quality assurance. It is applicable in all education institutions. The internal assessment is undoubtedly one of the most important factors to improve quality and the teaching/study process. It is the key component of the institutional and programme assessment. The indicators of internal assessment defined by assessment agencies may differ and are described in an assessment manual or another document. Sometimes the documents of internal assessment, especially those intended for the as-

assessment of study programmes, are based on the country's legislation and are drawn to prove that the institution attains its aims when implementing the programme as well as to prove that they comply with legal documents (e.g. FH Board, Austria).

The external assessment is usually within the responsibility of organisations which have a right to issue certificates and/or arrange the teaching process leading to a certificate. The external assessment is performed by a team of assessors, referred to as assessment/expert team, commission etc. The assessment process is arranged by an executive institution, which could be state or private, depending on the country. Each assessment can be carried out in two stages: assessment of documents and a site visit to the institution.

The widely spread levels of assessment are concerned with the assessment of the topic, discipline/subject, programme and institution.

- Whenever conducting assessment at the level of the topic, the quality or situation of that topic in education is analysed, e.g. information communication technologies or student support.
- The discipline/subject assessment covers the quality of a single teaching/study discipline/subject; usually the subject is assessed in all programmes which have the subject.
- The programme assessment covers the assessment of the quality of a single programme.
- Institutional assessment is concerned with the quality assessment of all fields of the institution, e.g. administration, financial resources, management, equipment, teaching and research.

Assessment of Teaching/Study Programmes

Teaching/study programmes can be assessed in two ways: when a new programme is submitted for assessment, partial assessment is performed, which is based on the description of the programme; when a programme which is currently implemented is assessed, the assessors are also engaged in the assessment of its implementation (material and methodological resources, qualifications of the teaching staff, learning outcomes etc.) The assessment of a new teaching/study programme may aim at obtaining a right to its implementation (registering); whereas the assessment of the programme under implementation aims at its improvement and very often also at its accreditation (official recognition).

Institutional assessment

The institutional assessment covers all performance fields of an educational institution. One of its aims is concerned with submitting information to the administration of the institution on the compliance and efficiency of its key objectives and

strategy as well as different systems of assessment, developmental capacities, work effectiveness and efficiency. The institutional assessment does not aim directly at assessing the teaching process.

The assessment covers the assessment of strategic management, decision taking process, organisation and quality assurance, resources and results. There is a marked difference among different countries with some of them focusing on resources and some others on the mission, vision or strategy.

The institutional assessment aims at improvement: it focuses on providing feedback to the institution on its institutional strengths and weaknesses, assisting in improving its performance. Sometimes the transparency and accountability are in the focus, in other words, there are ways searched how to make the work more transparent and fruitful. In some countries the aim of the institution is to collect information for national purposes.

Institutional assessments are usually concerned with factors pertaining to the institutional functioning and financial efficiency. Minimum requirements and standards which the institution should meet are not discussed in advance. Therefore, the final assessment report made by the assessors group is based on the opinions of the assessors on a good or bad performance of the institution. The institutional assessments are often based on the principle of 'compliance with the purpose'; the assessor team is engaged in assessing the compliance of reality with the mission and goals. Obviously, the experience and knowledge gained by the assessor team are used to assess the 'purpose', or mission, determined by the institution itself.

Inspection

The state or any other stakeholder of the education institution concerned about the quality of the teaching and aiming at the high quality can set standards – the limits of some qualitative indicators and criteria for assessing the qualitative indicators – and periodically inspect whether the studies comply with the standards. The inspection is implemented by the stakeholders' inspectors. Sometimes the functions are performed by expert institutions; however, it is not recommended, since such inspection can take over the key aim of expert assessment, which is improvement of the institution.

Accreditation

The accreditation is aimed at strengthening the reliability and public opinion about the organisation or study programme. It aims at ensuring the compliance of the study programme or the education institution with the requirements. In many cases the requirements are sufficiently general. The understanding of the assessor team about general standards is often crucial. So the accreditation is related to the development and control. To attain the development, the institution is informed

about the criteria which provide the basis for taking certain actions to improve the performance. Control aims at avoiding the establishment of a new unit on the basis of accreditation as well as avoiding giving/depriving rights to issue diplomas or certificates.

The accreditation of an educational institution implies that it is recognised as capable of providing teaching/studies of sufficiently high standards. It is a formal decision resulting in the recognition, financing and support for the students/pupils. The accreditation also implies that the institution or its unit is treated as (not) competent.

Accreditation can also be defined as a process by which the educational institution or teaching/study programme provides information on its performance and achievements to the external institution. The latter institution gives an impartial assessment to the information and takes a decision on whether the institution or teaching/study programme complies with the standards.

The minimum requirements can also be set by state institutions or professional associations. They can identify whether the teaching institution can start or continue its operation. The minimum requirements aim at ensuring that the services provided are of sufficiently high level. The assessment is usually based on the external assessors assessment: experts in the field are engaged in the assessment in accordance with the requirements.

Accreditation is also applied when a new study programme is introduced or a new institution is established, or when the quality of the existing programmes or institutions has to be assured. The accreditation is only valid for a well-defined period of time.

Assessors

On the basis of the vocational education and training quality assessment experience, in many European countries there have been several tendencies identified in selecting assessors for the site visit of external assessment:

- In the case of vocational education and training, the external assessment is performed by inspectors*, who work on a permanent basis, whereas higher education assessors groups work on a contractual basis and are hired for a short period of time.
- When selecting inspectors, teaching experience is always taken as an advantage, whereas experience in inspection and management is not so frequently pointed out. The eligibility requirements applicable for inspectors in the Czech Republic could be given as an example. There a university graduate with the relevant

* In this programme the notions of *inspector*, *assessor* and *expert* are synonyms.

qualifications in teaching (education) is eligible to take the position of a school inspector. The applicant shall have at least seven years of experience in teaching and two years in educational management, s/he should also be aware of the factors influencing the efficiency of education (e.g. behaviour in multicultural environment; integration of learners with special needs; causes of socio-pathological impact on schools, their identification and removal). In addition, instructors shall have the fundamentals in the following areas: psychology, social sciences, oratory, law and school management as well as information and communication technologies. One of modern eligibility requirements pertains to the knowledge of at least one foreign language. An *inspector methodologist* is another category of employees pointed out. The eligibility requirements include at least three years of experience in the position of a school inspector marked by high achievements. Sometimes when selecting and appointing new inspectors personal characteristics (general competences) are pointed out, like an ability to work independently, flexibility, cooperation and efficiency (the Netherlands).

- In higher education quality assessment, the academic degree of assessors is very often stressed. In Estonia assessors in higher education shall have an academic degree and five years of experience in a relevant field. Assessor teams often have international assessors.
- A model of four stages, initially set up for the sector of higher education, is presently very widely used in vocational education and training as well. In accordance with the above model, the following elements of external assessment can be singled out:
 - Autonomy and independence of the Government and the institution under assessment in the process of setting up quality assessment procedures and applying assessment methods;
 - Self-assessment;
 - External assessment performed by a team of assessors, and a site visit to the institution under assessment;
 - A report or final assessment is submitted.

Team members

- Education institutions are eligible to propose assessors for accreditation teams for the assessment of their own or other institutions;
- Out of all assessors in the team, there shall be at least one who has quality assessment experience in his/her own or another country;
- An appropriate division of work among team members means that the team chairperson shall take the responsibility for the assessment methodology upon himself/herself;

- Previous contacts of foreign assessors with the state (but not the institution under assessment) are treated as an advantage;
- Foreign assessors shall submit a letter of reference (recommendation) from the head of an educational institution or his/her employer;
- Before approving the composition of the team, the representatives of the education institution (chairperson of the study programme or his/her appointed representative) shall reach an agreement with the national agency engaged in quality assessment on the composition of the team of assessors;
- The members of the assessor team shall follow the principles of ethics: *objectivity, impartiality, appropriateness of conduct, confidentiality*;
- *Objectivity*: The team members shall honestly seek the assessment aims and objectively perform the external assessment of the institution performance;
- *Impartiality*: Conflicting interests should be avoided. To avoid a conflict of interests, not a single member of the assessor team should have been involved in consulting the institution under assessment. In addition, after the assessment procedure is over the institution under assessment should not employ any member of the assessor team on a temporary or permanent basis;
- *Appropriate conduct*: Non-professional or unethical conduct of the members of the assessor team towards the institution under assessment is not tolerated, including the misuse of power, financial, psychological and other pressure;
- *Confidentiality*: The members of the team have access to detailed information on the institution under assessment. All information on the work of the team, its meetings, materials submitted to assessment given to the members of the teams members shall be used solely for the purposes of assessment and shall not be made accessible to the institution representatives or other interested persons. All materials submitted to the assessors shall not be copied or otherwise made accessible to the public.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN LITHUANIA

The quality assessment system was set up in the context of major European tendencies and practice. The system has undergone the following stages:

- In 1995 the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education was founded. Its major functions are as follows:
 - Regular assessment of new study programmes in higher education;
 - Detailed assessment of study programmes;
 - Regular assessment of study programmes in accordance with study fields.

- In 1996 the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training was founded. Its major functions are as follows:
 - Ensuring the supply of teaching materials for secondary schools and colleges;
 - Contributing to the maximum employment and effective integration into the European Union in the areas of vocational education and training as well as the development of human resources by concentrating the efforts of all interested institutions.

The key aims of the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training are as follows:

- Assessing the quality of vocational education and training programmes;
- Assessing the performance of vocational schools and colleges;
- Analysing the results of assessment and providing information to the society.

The Methodological Centre is engaged in the quality assessment of non-university higher education studies, the quality assessment of vocational education and training, providing consultations to educational institutions on the issues of implementation of internal quality assurance systems.

Since the year 2001 there have been foreign assessors invited for external assessment. They assisted in assessing study programmes in law, public health, sociology, odontology, pre-primary and primary education, medicine, public administration.

The external assessment of higher education institutions can be of three types:

- Assessment of study programmes (in the period of 8 years all study fields are assessed);
- Assessment of research and applied research (in the period of 8 years all research fields are assessed);
- Assessment of educational institutions (in the period of 8 years).

The external assessment of part of institutions of vocational education and training was carried out in 2004; however, the focus was on the existing material and human resources.

The assessment consists in two parts: self-assessment and external assessment.

To be able to satisfy the national demand for specialists, account is taken of the results of external assessment. The assessment results provide research and study institutions with the basis for improving their programmes and comparing them with similar programmes of other institutions. The final assessment is made public in order to inform the society about the efficiency and effectiveness of the national budget in the process of specialist education.

Assessment of the performance of colleges established in the process of higher school reorganisation.

Assessment is performed in accordance with the description of procedures of quality assessment of college performance approved by Resolution No ISAK-1697 of the Minister of Education and Science dated 28 October 2004. The description is provided in Annex 6.

Goals of assessment:

- To identify if the college has implemented all provisions prescribed by its foundation;
- To identify if the college has implemented the goals set for the college and provided in paragraph 2 of Article 7 of the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania, namely: it has relevant conditions for the students to be able to acquire higher education and professional qualifications, which are in conformity with the demand of the Lithuanian economy and the level of science and modern technologies; if it is engaged in applied research and investigation relevant for the region; if it is engaged in consulting local authorities and companies; if it has provided conditions for continuous education, assists economic entities in arranging their in-service training and re-qualifying; if it is engaged in educating the society which is susceptible to education and culture and which is capable of working in an environment of fast developing information technologies;
- To assess the quality of different fields of college performance.

The purpose of assessing:

- To the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania: to submit the final report on the quality of college performance; proposals on issuing permissions for state colleges to approve regulations and make their self-governing institutions or proposals on their reorganisation or termination; proposals to private colleges on the validity of their licences;
- To inform the society on the quality of the college performance;
- To advise colleges on ways to improve their quality.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN LATVIA

The system of quality assessment in Latvia was first introduced in higher education at the same time as in Lithuania and Estonia—in mid-nineties of the last century.

In accordance with the Declaration on the Cooperation between Baltic Countries in the Area of Quality Assurance, the quality assessment in the three Baltic countries was started with the assistance of assessors from neighbouring and other countries.

Quality assessment in the university and non-university studies is stipulated by the same legislation. The accreditation of higher education institutions is performed in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia on 2 November 1995, where Article 9 identifies the general principles of accreditation of higher education institutions. Only accredited higher education institutions implementing national level study programmes have a right to issue certificates of higher education, which are recognised by the state. The process of accreditation is in accordance with the legislation approved by the Government. Study programmes are accredited at least once in six years. However, accreditation is implemented in different ways, with the accreditation of study programmes being the most frequent. Study programmes are assessed considering their specific aim and objectives. The assessor teams are selected in accordance with the assessment task.

Self-assessment is a pre-requisite and first step towards accreditation. The utmost aim of accreditation is concerned with setting up regular quality assurance and improvement systems based on self-assessment.

Decisions on accreditation are taken by the Board of Higher Education (for higher education institutions) or Accreditation Committee approved by the Minister of Education and Science (for study programmes) after the assessor team recommendations have been discussed. After the decision is taken, the final assessment report is published in the *Izglitiba un Kultūra* or is made accessible on the web: www.aiknc.lv. All documents of self-assessment and the final assessment report are available at the Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre and accessible on the web: www.aiknc.lv.

The non-governmental organisation Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre (HEQEC) is engaged in assessing study programmes in higher education. The stakeholders of the Centre are the Ministry of Education and Science and five higher education institutions: the University of Latvia, Riga Technical University, Riga Stradin University, Daugavpils University and the Business Institute Turība. The Centre is managed by a board of seven elected by the stakeholders.



TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK

Task 1 (for individual work after Session 1)

- 1.1. To study the key legislation stipulating the processes of education and studies which are to be assessed (the full list of legal acts is submitted, the key issues of analysis identified).
- 1.2. To read the materials on the issues of (study) quality assessment.

Task 2 (for workshops of Session 2)

- 2.1. To distribute the functions among the members of the assessor team during their simulated preparatory meeting with the focus on criteria which should help clarify the situation for each member.
- 2.2. To distribute (according to another field of assessment) functions of the representatives of the school under assessment to be able to simulate the site visit.



PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

There are no practical assignments for the current Module.

LITERATURE:

Main literature:

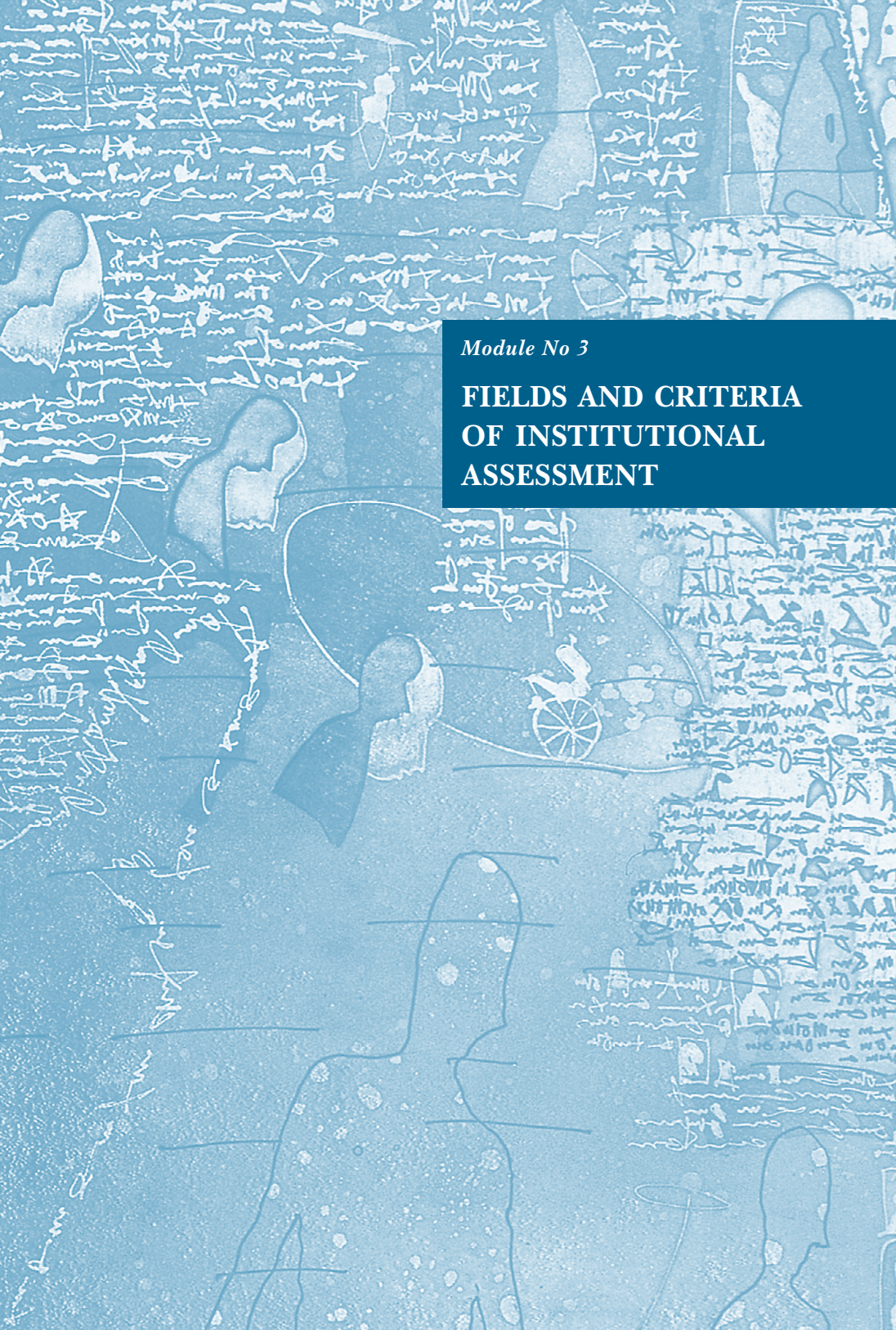
1. Council Recommendation of 24 September 1998 on European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education. *Official Journal of the European Communities*, – 7.10.1998.
2. Developing an internal quality culture in European universities: Report on the Quality Culture Project 2002 – 2003, EUA
3. Evaluation of European Higher Education: A Status Report. Prepared for the European Commission, DG XXII by The Centre for Quality Assurance and Evaluation of Higher Education, Denmark in cooperation with Comité National d’Evaluation, France, 1998. <http://www.enqa.net/docs.lasso?docname=statusreport1.html>
4. Institutional Evaluations in Europe. (An ENQA Survey.) – ENQA, Helsinki, 2001. – 40 p. <http://www.enqa.net/pubs.lasso>
5. Manual of Quality Assurance: Procedures and Practices. – European Training Foundation, 1998. - 91 p.
6. Quality assessment and quality development. – Bonn, 2000. – 41 p.
7. Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Final Report and Project Recommendations. – European Training Foundation, 1998. – 75 p.
8. Quality Assurance in the Nordic Higher Education. (Accreditation like practices.) – ENQA, Helsinki, 2001. – 38 p.
9. Quality Procedures in European Higher Education. (An ENQA Survey.) – ENQA, Helsinki, 2003. – 41 p. <http://www.enqa.net/texts/procedures.pdf>
10. Sallis E. Total Quality Management in Education. – Kogan Page, 2002. – 168 p.
11. The European Dimension of Institutional Quality Management: Final Report and Recommendations. – European Training Foundation, 2000. – 21 p.
12. Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. A pilot project supported by the European Commission in the framework of the Socrates programme. <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TUNINGProject/index.htm>

Additional literature:

1. Education Evaluation around the World. The Danish Evaluation Institute. 2003. – 173 p. ISBN 87-7958-132-3. <http://www.eva.dk>
2. European Pilot Projects for evaluating Quality in Higher Education. Guidelines for Participating Institutions. – Edinburgh, Paris, Copenhagen, Utrecht, 1994. – 24 p.
3. First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education “Globalisation and Higher Education”. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6380&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
4. Institutional Evaluation Programme: 10 Year Anniversary. http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/IEP_anniversary_brochure.1086687063630.pdf
5. Quality Assurance: A Reference System for Indicators and Evaluation Procedures. By François Tavenas, 2004. Prepared for the ELU (Latin European Universities group). http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/ELU_EN.1082042243703.pdf
6. Performance Standards in Education: In Search of Quality. – OECD, Paris, 1995. – 220 p.
7. Progress towards the European Higher Education Area: What Trends reports are telling us... http://www.eua.be:8080/eua/jsp/en/upload/EAIE_spring_issue2004_Trends.1083233978383.pdf
8. Rossi H. Peter, Lipsey W. Mark, Freeman E. Howard Evaluation: a Systematic Approach. – SAGE Publications, 2004. – 470 p.
9. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – Draft Proposals. Material for ENQA General Assembly, 3 June 2004. <http://www.enqa.net/generalass.lasso>
10. Towards Accreditation Schemes for Higher Education in Europe? CRE project, July 2000 – May 2001, co-funded by SOCRATES programme. Validation seminar, 8 – 9 February 2001 Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Oeiras. http://www.aic.lv/rec/Eng/new_d_en/bologna/accred.html
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13. Vroijenstijn A.I. Experiences with External Quality Assessment in Dutch Universities. – Riga, 1995. – 21 p.

Country specific literature:*Latvia:*

1. Law on Higher Educational Establishments. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
2. Accreditation Regulations for Higher Educational Establishments. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
3. Recommendations Concerning Activities of the Evaluation Commission . <http://www.aiknc.lv>
4. Structure and Development of the Higher Education Quality Evaluation System in Latvia. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
5. Use of Standards in Education. <http://www.aiknc.lv>



Module No 3

FIELDS AND CRITERIA OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To provide knowledge to be able to define the concepts of fields, criteria, indicators and evidence of institutional assessment;
- ◆ To introduce some sample fields and criteria of assessment, including national experience;
- ◆ To introduce an assessment model (scheme) of several fields according to selected criteria and indicators.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

The module *Fields and Criteria of Institutional Assessment* covers a theoretical description of the concepts *criterion, indicator, evidence, source of information* and examples. Fields of institutional assessment from other European countries are introduced, the field structure is analysed on the basis of the EFQM model.

When implementing the assessor training in their own countries, trainers should be focusing on quality assessment criteria and indicators which are particularly relevant for the assessment system of that country.

In the **theoretical part** of the expert training programme the main components of the assessment content are introduced; later, the analysis of two selected fields is introduced; main criteria and indicators are identified.

During the **workshops and seminars** learners should be able to identify additional assessment criteria and indicators.

The length of the module *Fields and Criteria of Institutional Assessment* is 6 hours with 2 hours devoted to theory, 2 hours to seminars and workshops and the remaining 2 hours given to the learners' individual work.

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ Identifying assessment fields and criteria. Assessment methods;
- ◆ Assessing a selected field by identifying assessment criteria and indicators;
- ◆ Two selected sample fields and criteria and their analysis:
 - Staff;
 - An internal quality assurance system.

IDENTIFYING FIELDS AND CRITERIA AND THEIR ASSESSMENT

The content of the institutional quality assessment is understood in different ways, depending on the purpose and objectives of external assessment. The main components of quality assessment are as follows: fields, criteria, indicators, evidence and sources of information.

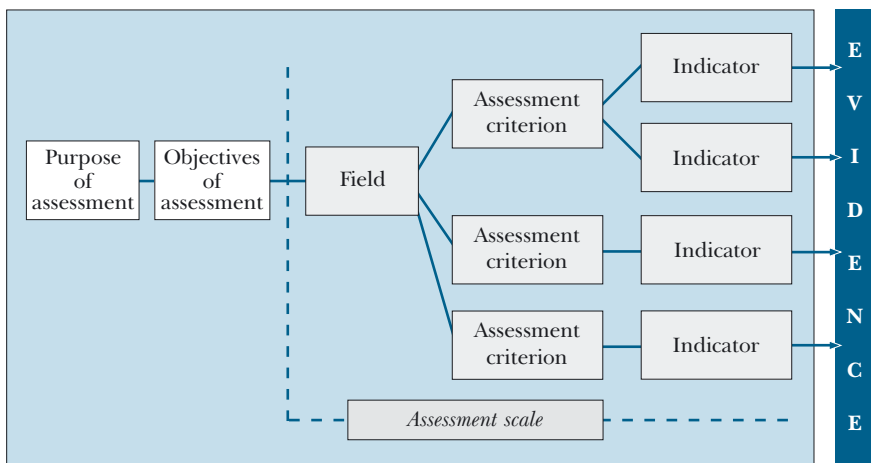


Figure 2. The structure of quality assessment

To be able to assess the quality of the institutional performance, there are fields, criteria and indicators of assessment defined.

A field is a sphere of the institution performance covering the processes taking place in the institution and the results achieved.

- Sample fields: institutional management, staff, material and financial resources, internal quality assurance system etc.

To be able to take into account qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the field in focus, there are criteria distinguished. Dictionaries of Lithuanian and English define a criterion as the basis for assessment, as a measurement, the basis for decision taking. Scholars also emphasise the importance of a criterion as the basis for value identification.

Criteria are measures used by experts for assessing the level of the area performance. They are features or measures to assess the field.

Criteria can be quantitative (expressed in figures and numbers) and qualitative (expressed in characteristics or features).

- Examples of quantitative criteria: number of social partners, frequency of market research etc.
- Examples of qualitative criteria: compliance of the learner's needs to the contents of curriculum; transparency of the institution's policy of quality and its clarity to the members of the community.

To be able to obtain information on each performance field, it is important to have research instruments reflecting the essence and criteria of a particular field. The instruments would help collect the information relevant for taking decisions on the situation of the VET provider in a particular field. Such information is usually referred to as indicators of teaching/study quality.

Indicators are quantitative and qualitative data obtained in accordance with the assessment criteria in order to take a decision on the appropriacy of conditions for developing a person's self-education and obtaining qualifications in a particular institution.

- Examples of indicators: the number of registered quality books in each structural unit of the institution.

Having defined the indicators, it is important to define the meaning of the data obtained. For that purpose, each VET provider should establish their own **standard indicators of teaching/study quality** or identify them according to all given criteria. The standard indicators are the ones to be attained in order for the institution performance to be recognised as conforming to quality standards. The standard indicators are compared to the data (indicators) obtained, which is how it is established if the institution has achieved a sufficient level of teaching/study quality in general or according to fields.

Sources of information refer to documents, procedures, oral information, material resources and anything else leading to obtaining evidence which serves as the basis for defining criteria and their indicators.

Action

- Examples of sources of information: the VET provider's strategic plan, reports of its structural units, minutes of the meetings, summary assessment scales of the students' graduation theses, questionnaires etc.

Evidence refers to facts, figures, other data, opinions and anything else substantiating the strengths of the performance field and (or) points to be improved.

Strengths refer to the institution's achievement of goals; points to be improved are identified when the institution's goal(s) has not been achieved.

- The information on the institution's performance can come in two forms. First, it can be **quantitative**, expressed in figures, obtained by '**hard' measurements**. Any efficiency indicator could serve as an example of such information.
- Another example is concerned with information obtained from inquiries, the so called '**soft measurements**', like the following: are some selected groups of individuals of the institution community satisfied with a particular object under assessment?

Examples of evidence:

- **50% of graduates** were employed in the area of their qualification obtained in the VET provider during the first years after graduation (**qualitative evidence**);
- **The majority of graduates and employers are positive about practical skills of students** (**qualitative evidence**).

In the process of institutional assessment, there is a complex of units of quality measurement to be used:

- **Indicators of institutional input** (a system of staff and material resources selection and its results, a system of applicant selection and its results etc.);
- **Key processes and the quality of the main performance field** (consistency of the system of the study process, purposefulness; rationality of the teaching process etc.);
- **The quality and processes of additional fields** (the quality of the system of student support, efficiency of administration etc.);
- **The processes of supply and co-operation and their quality** concerned with the institution's output and extra processes (e.g. co-operation with trade unions; from the point of view of supply and cooperation management, it is important that the information exchange between the institution and its social partner and the information feedback is ensured);
- **Indicators of the institution output** (the employability percentage of graduates, the proportion between applicants and graduates, assessment results of graduation theses etc.).

A model set up by the **European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)** could serve as another example of clustering assessment criteria. The model is used

by thousands of education institutions in Europe. It consists of nine criteria. Five of them are related to the mission of the institution, i.e. all processes taking place in it; and four pertain to the performance results of the institution. It should be emphasised that the assessment criteria in the EFQM model correspond to the concept of fields of this handbook. Therefore, below are given nine fields and questions reflecting their content.

Table 2. EFQM model assessment criteria

Enablers	Results
<p>1. Leadership. <i>How do the authorities of the institution manage the institution focusing on the implementation of its mission and vision? Do they set values ensuring its long-term success? How is the management system improved and developed?</i></p>	<p>1. Customer Results. <i>What are the achievements of the institution satisfying the needs of its customers?</i></p>
<p>2. Policy and strategy. <i>How does the institution implement its mission and vision, taking into account its shareholders' strategic principles, setting up and implementing plans, goals and procedures?</i></p>	<p>2. People Results (customers of the institution's internal performance results). <i>What are the institution's achievements satisfying the needs of the people?</i></p>
<p>3. People (staff). <i>How does the institution manage, improve and analyse the knowledge and skills of its staff (people) in the context of individuals and the whole institution? How is the institution's staffs plans drawn on the basis of the institution's policy and strategy? How does the institution ensure the efficiency of the processes within the institution?</i></p>	<p>3. Society Results. <i>What are the institution's achievements satisfying the needs of the society locally and internationally?</i></p>
<p>4. Partnerships and Resources. <i>How does the institution arrange and manage external partnerships and its resources, taking into account the policy and strategy and aiming at the efficiency of the implemented processes?</i></p>	<p>4. Key performance Results. <i>What are the institution's achievements in the context of goals and indicators taken altogether?</i></p>
<p>5. Processes. <i>How does the institution arrange and manage all of its processes taking into account the institution's policy and strategy? How does it integrate its increasing achievements for its customers and shareholders?</i></p>	

Whatever the principle of clustering assessment criteria and indicators, it is important that they could serve as the basis for assessing the quality of the institution's performance and provide for an objective assessment of conditions, processes and results when attaining the goals of the institution and implementing its policy and strategy.

The purpose of each assessment at national level is concerned with providing information relevant for ensuring the sustainability of development of the national education system and taking decisions on its improvement. **However, an external quality assessment of the institution may be started to attain specific goals, such as reacting to an official complaint on the violation of some key principles of the institution etc.**

In accordance with the purpose and objectives of assessment, the content of assessment is defined, i.e. fields and criteria of assessment. To attain different objectives/goals and performing the assessment of different levels (quality assessment of curriculum, one or more units or the whole institution), some fields can be defined in the same way; however, their assessment is performed according to different criteria. This principle is reflected in the example below, where assessment is given to the field entitled *Staff*.

Table 3. Comparison of the assessment of levels and criteria in the field 'staff'

Assessment level	Study/teaching programme assessment level	Institutional assessment level
1	2	3
Purpose of assessment	To perform the quality assessment of a particular study/teaching programme and the conditions of its implementation	To perform the assessment of the institution performance taking into account its mission, vision and goals
Performance field	Staff	Staff
Assessment criterion	1. Qualification and experience 2. Academic and auxiliary staff 3. Efficiency and team work 4. Staff development and its overview.	1. Staff policy 2. Staff development and an overview of its career.



1	2	3
<p>Quality indicator</p>	<p>1. Staff development and its overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Procedures and records</i> • <i>Staff employment</i> • <i>Identification of staff needs in in-service training (individual, according to subject field, institutional)</i> • <i>The staff in-service training programme shall be in conformity with the needs identified.</i> • <i>Overview of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Efficiency of individual in-service training</i> – <i>Efficiency of institutional in-service training programmes.</i> 	<p>1. Staff development and an overview of its career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality and sufficiency of staff qualifications</i> • <i>Implementing individual assessment in identifying the needs of in-service training</i> • <i>Compliance of the staff qualifications to the programme and institutional objectives and goals</i> • <i>Direct link with the sector's priorities</i> • <i>Sharing good practice in the process of in-service training.</i>
<p>Documents for collecting evidence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff qualifications and their assessment records 2. Discussion with the staff 3. Staff employment records 4. Assessment of the staff in-service training efficiency 5. Assessment of staff performance 6. Staff in-service training plans and programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Records of staff in-service training and assessment interviews 2. Staff in-service training plans and programmes 3. Assessment of staff in-service training efficiency 4. Records of the staff employment in industry.

SAMPLE FIELDS AND CRITERIA

The material is provided for the learners who aim at gaining more knowledge about institutional assessment. Every country has identified its own fields of assessment. It should be emphasised that the fields identified are not stable and can be subject to alterations depending on the assessment objectives.

The institutional assessment usually aims at improvement: it is expressed in a response of the authorities of education institutions on the institution's strengths

and weaknesses and aims at assisting the institution to attain better results. Sometimes the assessment might also aim at accountability and transparency, i.e. 1) assuring efficiency and transparency of performance; 2) providing information on the achievements of the institution to the institution's community and the society at large. In some countries institutional assessment aims at collecting information for

Table 4. Institutional quality assessment fields of European countries

<i>Fields</i>	<i>Countries</i>	England	The Czech Republic	Estonia	Cyprus	Latvia	Lithuania	France	Finland
Mission			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Institutional management			•	•	•	•		•	•
Decision taking procedure and policy				•	•			•	•
Staff quality	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Students	•		•	•	•	•	•		•
Financing					•	•	•		•
Development, management and arrangement of teaching/ learning processes	•	•	•			•	•	•	•
Quality of teaching	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Research policy and implementation		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Research quality		•	•	•	•		•		
Services to society			•			•		•	•
Processes of quality assurance	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Mission implementation and attaining the objectives				•	•	•	•	•	•
Satisfaction of stockholders	•				•	•			•
External relations							•		

Source: Pukelis, K. & I. Savickienė. A comparative analysis of study Quality assessment systems: international experience. In: *Modelling Study Quality Assurance Systems in the Context of International Experience*. Vytautas Magnus University, 2003. (In Lithuanian)

national purposes in order to be able to assess the situation of vocational education and training according to performance indicators and on the basis of the results obtained, taking decisions on the system improvement.

In the process of institutional assessment, many countries distinguish similar fields of performance, which include institutional management, planning, resources and their distribution, staff, support to students, external relations and the system of internal quality assurance.

The table below gives an overview of the fields of quality assessment by many countries treated as the most important for **institutional assessment**. The filled-in slots of the table refer to fields included by many countries.

Summing up the quality assessment fields in some European countries, it could be pointed out that the main fields cover the mission, management, decision taking procedures and policies, staff, students, development of arranging teaching/learning processes, quality of teaching, research policy and implementation, services to the society, quality assurance processes, implementation of the mission and goal attainment.

A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF TWO SELECTED FIELDS

Having reviewed the contents of institutional quality assessment and prerequisites of its variety, below a detailed analysis of assessment criteria of two selected fields and a list of questions is given.

Table 5. **Field: Staff**

Criteria	Main questions, key statements, quality indicators
1. Compliance of staff composition with the mission of the college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the staff responsibility for the institutional goals and performance? • Does the institution have sufficient academic staff? Does it comply with the objectives of the study programmes implemented in the institution? Please, give evidence. • Does the institution have sufficient auxiliary staff (technicians, librarians)? Please, give evidence. • Is there an efficient co-ordination between the staff employed in their main jobs and the staff employed in their second jobs?

Criteria	Main questions, key statements, quality indicators
2. Staff management (planning, employing procedure, control, incentives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are staff employing and dismissing procedures transparent? • How are the plans of staff development and the development of studies and applied research integrated? Please, give evidence. • Are the staff employing procedures in conformity with the institutional development? Give evidence. • What is the system of work control? How efficient is it? • How are the incentives and work efficiency interrelated?
3. Staff qualifications and a system of improving their in-service training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are subject, professional and teaching qualifications of the teaching staff in conformity with the needs of the study programmes? Give evidence. • How are the qualifications of the teaching staff assessed? Are they assessed on a regular basis? • How is the need of the staff in-service training identified? • What is the procedure of the staff in-service training? How is it documented? • Is the staff in-service training procedure in conformity with the needs of the staff? • Is the staff in-service training procedure in conformity with the development plans of the institution?
4. Staff efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there an assessment system of the staff in-service training output? Why has a particular system been chosen? • What are the results of staff performance? How do they conform to the institution's goals? • What are the results of the teaching staff performance? How do they conform to the institution's goals? • How many teachers employed in their main job have given presentations in seminars and conferences? Have they published any articles? How are these results used for the institutional development? • How many teachers are involved in international projects? How is this field divided among different units of the institution?

Table 6. Field: Internal system of quality assurance

Criteria	Main questions, key statements, quality indicators
<p>1. Rationality of the system</p>	<p>Is the internal system of quality assurance regular and based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditions, good practice? • Management? • Continuous observation? • Implementation? <p>Does the system comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institution’s needs? • Requirements of the external assessment agency? <p>Is the system integrated into the institution’s planning and decision taking process? If yes,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are employees of all units participating in the process? • Has the system been approved by the institution’s authorities? • Have people in charge of the implementation been appointed, deadlines of implementation set? • Have the required material resources and financial sources been planned? • Does it involve all institutional levels from top (managerial staff) to bottom (students)?
<p>2. Level of the legal regulation of the system</p>	<p>Does the distribution of responsibilities for quality assurance as provided in the documents comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality policy, objectives and principles? • General management and implementation structure of the institution? • Is it clear and sufficiently grounded? <p>Are documents on quality assurance implementation and maintenance accessible to all? Is the model of its take-over and acceptance clear?</p> <p>Is the frequency and of the quality analysis of the institution and its units and the variety of methods in compliance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality policy and objectives? • Needs of the institution’s community members? • The institution’s strategic and current plans?



Criteria	Main questions, key statements, quality indicators
3. Effectiveness of the system	<p>Does the system of internal quality assurance contribute to improving the institutions overall performance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the self-assessment contribute to improving the institutional management? • What is the impact of self-assessment on the teaching staff performance? • How does the self-assessment contribute to improving conditions for studies? • How does the self-assessment contribute to improving the compliance of studies with the needs of the labour market?
4. System improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there procedures of monitoring and improving the internal quality assurance in the institution? What are the documents stipulating these procedures? • What has been done to improve the quality system? • What are the results of quality improvement and what is the impact on the process of institutional quality assessment and its results?



TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK

Task 1. Choose a criterion from an assessment field and supplement it with indicators. Give your arguments in support of the efficiency of the indicators considering the selected criterion.

Task 2. Give 2–3 examples illustrating the relationship between indicators from different fields.



PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Teaching based on practical tasks (2 hours per class):

After the theoretical part of Module No 3, learners are divided into two (or four) teams, with 4–5 students in each team. The trainer chooses 1 (2) criterion from the list of criteria given in the guidelines of external assessment and gives 2 criteria for each team. Then the teams are given the following task. On the basis of the criteria and indicators designated in the theoretical part, they have to compile a list of indicators within the criteria of external assessment. The results are then presented and discussed.

LITERATURE

Main literature:

1. Bloom. K. D. Meyers. Quality indicators in vocational education and training.
2. An European Guide on Self-assessment for VET – providers. Final version. (2003). Technical working group on quality in VET, CEDEFOP.
3. CEDEFOP (1997). Indicators in perspective. The use of Quality indicators in vocational education and training. <http://www.cedefop.gr>
4. IAU Internationalisation of Higher Education Task Force Framework for Action. http://www.unesco.org/iau/tfi_framework.html

Additional literature:

1. Copenhagen process (2003). The first report of the technical Working group “Quality in VET”. January 2003-September 2003. European Commission.
2. Campbell, C., Dr. Marijk van der Wende, (2000). *International Initiatives and Trends in Quality assurance for European Higher Education*. Helsinki: The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

Country specific literature:

Lithuania:

1. Laužackas, R. (1999). Sistemos teorinės profesinio rengimo kaitos dimensijos. Kaunas.
2. Laužackas, R. (2000). *Mokymo turinio projektavimas*. Kaunas.
3. Misiūnas, M., Savickienė I. (2002). Studijų kolegijoje kokybės užtikrinimo teoriniai ir praktiniai aspektai (Theoretical and practical aspects of study quality assurance in a college). *Profesinis rengimas. Tyrimai ir aktualijos*, 5, 72-81.

The background is a dense, textured collage of handwritten notes and sketches in white and light blue on a dark blue background. The text is mostly illegible due to being small and overlapping. There are several sketches, including a person in a wheelchair, a person's profile, and various abstract shapes and lines. The overall aesthetic is that of a busy, creative workspace or a collection of ideas.

Module No 4

**INTERNAL
ASSESSMENT.
SELF-ASSESSMENT**

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To introduce the internal quality assurance used in education;
- ◆ To introduce the opportunities of implementing the results of self-assessment in the process of external assessment;
- ◆ To provide conditions to acquire skills in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the institution when analysing the self-assessment report.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

The module *Internal Assessment. Self-assessment* covers the quality assurance system implemented in education, its objectives and accountability, procedures, decisions and implementation.

In the theoretical part of the module the following issues will be introduced: a structure of the self-assessment report; goals of analysing the self-assessment report; issues to be analysed in the draft final assessment prepared in accordance with the institution's self-assessment report.

During seminars and workshops, learners will be analysing the self-assessment report and on its basis will attempt to prepare the draft final assessment.

The length of the module *Internal Assessment. Self-assessment* is 6 hours, with 2 hours devoted to theory, 2 to individual work and 2 to seminars and workshops (analysis of self-assessment report).

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ A system of internal quality assurance used in education:
 - Definition and scheme of quality assurance;
 - Objectives and accountability;
 - Process;
 - Decisions;
 - Implementation.
- ◆ Analysis of institutional self-assessment report:
 - Structure;
 - Aims of analysis.

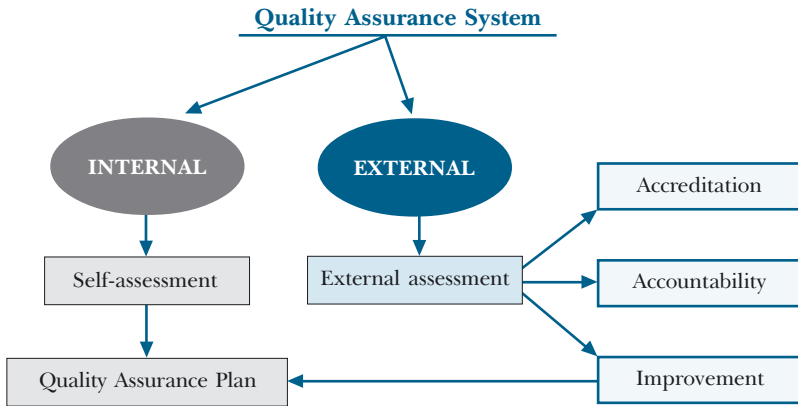


Figure 3. Internal Quality Assurance System Used in Education

The quality assurance system aims at assuring that education institutions and teaching/study programmes of all levels comply with the needs of learners, employers and other interested persons as well as social, intellectual and economic requirements of the society development.

The key quality assurance aim of the institution is concerned with the development of internal quality culture and the teaching/study quality assurance system which would ensure the institution's focus on quality.

Objectives of internal quality assurance

- To implement the statutory obligations;
- To stimulate and improve the quality of all services and teaching;
- To set up a system of observation assuring the quality of all services and performance fields of the institution;
- To ensure the implementation of quality systems and methods as well as their further sustainability;
- To document the process and fields of quality assurance;
- To implement and develop quality assurance systems, strategy and methods;
- To co-operate with other relevant statutory, accrediting and professional boards and organisations;
- To assure the spread of information on the institutional quality assurance;
- To act as the institution's representative on the issues of quality assurance.

The process of internal quality assurance

The identification of the mission and objectives is the first step in the process. Units of internal quality assurance should be set up at all levels of the institution. The co-ordinating unit, consisting of the authorities of the institution, teaching staff, representatives of the auxiliary staff and learners shall observe and manage the process and introduce the mission and objectives of quality assurance into the general strategic plan of the institution. All results of the quality assurance process shall be made public and accessible to the students.

The self-assessment process helps the community of the institution analyse its strengths and weaknesses. In the process of self-assessment the institution shall revise its study programmes and services focusing on the teaching and achievements of the students; also identifies how the programmes and services comply with the goals and mission of the institution.

The greatest benefit of self-assessment for the institution should be its further continuous development. Therefore, the self-assessment would be most beneficial if it becomes a continuous process and helps the institution prepare its regular plans.

To achieve the greatest benefits of self-assessment, in addition to the description and analysis it should also contain reference to the existing plans of the institution.

A good self-assessment identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Key principles of self-assessment

- Selection of the most appropriate model of self-assessment for the institution;
- Involving the institution's community into the process self-assessment;
- Using the process for the preparation of self-assessment report and planning;
- Preparing a final self-assessment report and recommendations;
- Accepting the assessor team to assess the self-assessment of the institution;
- Responding to the final assessment report prepared by the assessor team;
- Adopting the decision of the accrediting institution on accreditation.

A successful process of internal quality assessment consists of five stages:

1. Analysis of the results;
2. Corrective measures;
3. Definition of objectives;
4. Action plan;
5. Assessment of the process itself.

ANALYSIS OF AN INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Structure of self-assessment report

- Institutional management;
- Planning and implementation of study programmes;
- Institutional and regional relations;
- International co-operation;
- Material and financial resources;
- Staff;
- A system of internal quality assurance;
- Assessment of qualifications of graduates;
- Strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

Objectives of the analysis of self-assessment report

- To prepare for the visit to the institution under assessment;
- To prepare to write the final assessment report;
- To identify strengths and weaknesses of the institution;
- To find out if the institution is capable of identifying its strengths and weaknesses;
- To identify if the institution is capable of dealing with its problems on its own.

The self-assessment report is the main source of quantitative and qualitative information on the institution under assessment. The self-assessment report gives an overview of the institution's development, achievements and good practice. The self-assessment report and the information it provides is the main document for assessors to be able to write the final assessment report. The self-analysis report shall be analysed by at least two assessors; later, it shall be discussed at the assessors' meeting. The assessor team analysing the self-assessment report and other documents (if they are submitted) shall prepare a draft final assessment report before their visit to the institution under assessment. The draft final assessment report shall serve as the basis for writing the final assessment report.

When analysing the documents of self-assessment, assessors shall focus on the following issues:

- Does the self-assessment report cover all fields of the institution's performance?
- Has the self-assessment report been prepared by the representatives of various units and social partners?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the institution?
- Has the institution made any progress during the last years? What is the progress?
- Has the institution taken into consideration the recommendations of previous assessments?
- Does the self-assessment report contain evidence on the institution's performance when pursuing the goals of the institution?
- Are different parts of the self-assessment report compatible with one another?
- Are there any issues in the self-assessment report which should be clarified during the site visit to the institution?
- What additional information shall be provided by the institution during the site visit?
- What groups of individuals shall participate in the meetings with assessors during the site visit? How long are the meetings?
- What are the material and teaching resources to be inspected by the assessors during the site visit?
- What documents and evidence identified in the summary self-assessment shall be verified during the site visit?

When analysing the self-assessment document, assessors shall make use of well-defined assessment criteria and the scale of assessment. At the beginning, the facts and evidence is collected substantiating the strengths and weaknesses of the institution under assessment according to each criterion and field of assessment.

Before undertaking the analysis of the self-assessment report, each member of the assessor team shall fill in an assessment form. A sample assessment form is given in Annex No 8.

The assessment form is used during the site visit as a supplementary document.

**TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK**

Task 1 (given for individual work after Session 2, when preparing for the simulated assessment).

- 1.1. Analyse an excerpt from the summary self-assessment, identify the strengths and weaknesses.
- 1.2. Think of questions to be given during the site visit to the institution under assessment.

Task 2 (given for the workshop of Session 3, when the site visit is simulated).

- 2.1. During the first simulated meeting of assessors, adjust and agree on the first draft of final assessment report, compile a priority list of questions to be discussed.
- 2.2. During the first simulated meeting of assessors, find out the actual situation in the institution under assessment (make use of the list of questions).
- 2.3. Write down one point of the draft final assessment report, introduce it to the audience.

**PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS**

(2 hours, during class II)

After the theoretical part and individual work of Session 1 in accordance with the list of literature (documents of internal assessment and self-assessment), after the analysis of performance fields and criteria of institutional assessment, the team of learners are ready for a class aimed at the analysis and assessment of the self-assessment report. Each learner will be given a practical task (for modules No 4 and 5).

The learners are divided into two (or four) teams: A and B, (C and D). All learners shall have the same two excerpts of self-assessment report: excerpt Ea and excerpt Eb (each of them covers one field). Tasks for the teams:

- 1) To get ready for the role of an assessor and assess one assessment field on the basis of the excerpt of self-assessment report and simulated visit to the institution.
- 2) To look through another assessment field (another excerpt from the self-assessment report) and get ready for the role of the representatives of the institution (self-assessment team, teaching staff, students, employers) during the simulated site visit to the institution under assessment, when assessors analyse another assessment field.

Table 7. Arrangement of practical assignments

<i>Team</i>	<i>Excerpt (performance field)</i>	
	<i>For the assessors assessment</i>	<i>For the role of the institution</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Ea</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Eb</i>	<i>Ea</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>Ea</i>	<i>Eb</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>Eb</i>	<i>Ea</i>

During the workshop each team works as an assessor team. The lecturing assessor appoints one of the learners as the chairperson of the assessor team. During the first meeting the learners should divide the assessment fields among themselves. During the workshop, when just one field should be assessed, the learners should divide the assessment criteria and each learner is given two criteria of the field under assessment (the assessor looks through the remaining fields). The roles of the representatives of the institution are also divided among the members of the team.

During the first meeting the learners (with the help of the lecturing assessor) shall analyse the assessment criteria of the field given in the assignment. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed (before looking through the excerpts of self-assessment report). Also the principles of choosing an assessment mark should be discussed; a scale of four marks is recommended (excellent, good, sufficient and insufficient).

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Main literature:

1. European Student Handbook on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. http://www.aic.lv/ace/ace_disk/Bologna/contrib/ESIB/QAhandbook.rtf
2. Self-assessment practices in VET institutions (2002). European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

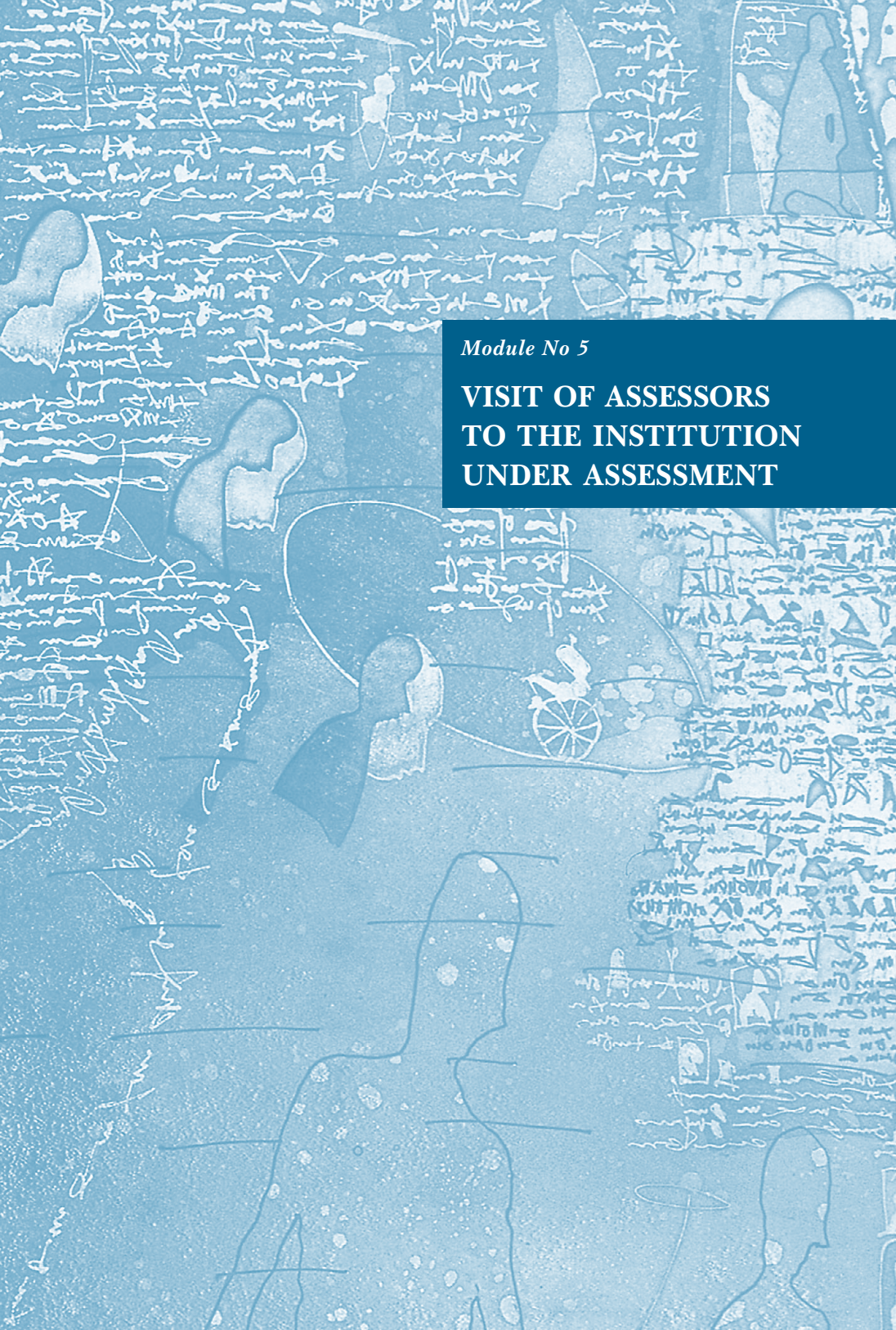
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3. Sallis E. Total Quality Management in Education. – Kogan Page, 2002. – 168 p.

Country specific literature:

Lithuania:

1. Kolegijų, įsteigtų reorganizuojant aukštesniašias mokyklas, veiklos kokybės vertinimo tvarka. http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/Kolegiju_vertinimo_Tvarka.doc
2. Kolegijos veiklos savianalizės suvertinės metodinės rekomendacijos. <http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/kolegijos-savianalizes-rekomendac.doc>



Module No 5

**VISIT OF ASSESSORS
TO THE INSTITUTION
UNDER ASSESSMENT**

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To provide knowledge about the procedure of arranging visits of assessors in a particular country;
- ◆ To introduce and discuss the ethical code of assessors;
- ◆ To assist in acquiring skills for assessing the institution during the visit.

STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

In the module *Visit of Assessors to the Institution under Assessment* the structure of the visit to the institution under assessment is analysed, the key objectives of assessors are defined, practical skills developed.

The length of the module *Visit of Assessors to the Institution under Assessment* is 12 hours with 2 hours devoted to theory, 4 hours to workshops and seminars and 6 hours to individual work.

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ Requirements for assessor work (composition of the team, their impartiality, ethical code, aims of assessment);
- ◆ Preparation for the visit (methodical requirements, analysis of self-assessment report, planning the visit);
- ◆ The proceedings of the site visit (relevant documents, participants of meetings, schedule of the visit, a workshop as a simulated visit);
- ◆ Peculiarities of the assessor visit of external institutional assessment in Lithuania;
- ◆ Peculiarities of the assessor visit of external institutional assessment in Latvia.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSESSOR WORK

The assessor visit aims at assessing the institution of vocational education and training according to different fields of performance, drawing recommendations for improvement and submitting proposals on the institution's further status (accreditation).

Principles of Drawing the Team Members

The team should have at least one representative of an employer (business companies) association, a higher education institution, another institution of vocational education and training. The majority of team members shall have experience in assessor work or have successfully completed the assessor training programme of external assessment. No fewer than half of the team members should have experience in educational management. One of the members is appointed the team chairperson.

The following categories of people are not eligible to work as members of the assessors' team:

- If they have expressed their opinion on the institution under assessment in public;
- If they have worked or tried to be employed by the institution under assessment;
- If they are closely related to the authorities of the institution under assessment;
- If they have participated in the self-governing bodies of the institution under assessment;
- If they have graduated from the institution under assessment not earlier than during the last five years.

To achieve impartiality, each team member shall sign *a declaration on the absence of conflict of interests with the institution under assessment*. The declaration is kept at the institution arranging the quality assessment (in Lithuania, it is kept at the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training).

The number of assessors in the team depends on the size of the institution under assessment:

- 5 assessors and the agency administrator, if the institution has fewer than 5000 students;
- 7 assessors and the agency administrator, if the institution has more than 5000 students.

Ethical principles of assessor's work

- **Objectivity.** The assessor shall perform the assessment in the framework of the task and criteria, give an objective assessment to the information provided, provide facts in support of the arguments with no advantage for him/her or the institution, which is the assessor's employer.
- **Impartiality.** The assessor shall declare his/her interests towards the assessed and step aside if a conflict of interests arises.
- **Appropriate conduct.** The assessor shall communicate with the representatives of the institution under assessment with due respect and correctness, without prejudice, shall not accept presents etc.
- **Confidentiality.** The assessor shall not give the information to the third parties, shall not make the issues/content of confidential meetings accessible to other persons during or after the meetings. The assessors shall obey the laws and other legal acts, shall not act as representatives of any other institution, except for the institution in charge of assessment, shall carry personal responsibility for the opinion expressed, for its conformity with legal acts, rules, code of ethics, if any of these are applicable. The assessors shall be open to innovations, consider the social and regional needs as well as the needs of the institution under assessment, unless they exert a harmful effect towards the quality.

Assessors shall inform the assessing institution on any conflict of interests. Those involved in the conflict of interests shall abstain from expressing their opinion and suspend their participation in the assessment team. They shall respect and promote the freedom of thought and speech, but shall not exert influence on other members of the team. They shall respect the intellectual property of others.

Assessors shall always aim at improving their qualifications in the field of study quality assurance, follow all new developments in the field in their own country and abroad, share their knowledge and experience with others, assist in developing the institutional culture of quality and aim at the best possible results of their work.

Main aspects of decisions taken by the assessor's team

One of the key goals of the assessor's team is to assess the performance of the institution, identify if it conforms to the goals and objectives set by the institution. Quality assessment covers the assessment of teaching procedure and its content, methods of teaching and teaching control, material resources used for the teaching process (libraries, laboratory equipment, and research equipment), social security of the staff as well as institutional management.

Note 1. The teaching institution shall be in conformity with the laws and legal acts of the country; however, assessors shall not be obliged to focus solely on legal prob-

lems. Assessors in the final assessment should be able to express their views on legal discrepancies or financial problems.

Note 2. Institutions of vocational education and training and their long-term plans shall be in conformity with the requirements of other international organisations.

PREPARATION FOR THE VISIT

The visit to the institution under assessment usually takes from 1 to 4 days. At the initial stage of the visit the assessors' team is engaged in the analysis of self-assessment summary received from the educational institution. The team member or a representative of the quality assurance agency (administrator of the assessors' team) shall visit the institution under assessment to check the details of the oncoming visit (ca. 4 weeks in advance of the visit) and is in charge of the following arrangements:

- Setting the date of the team visit;
- Discussing the programme of the visit;
- Drawing the draft agenda of the visit;
- Providing the list of material resources, identifying the rooms where lectures and classes are held (or arranging that the list is received);
- Providing the list of persons to attend the meetings with the assessors' team.

Before the visit, the assessors of external assessment shall arrange a preparatory meeting or exchange information by electronic mail, telephone, video conferencing etc. Thus they would co-ordinate the main topics, issues for discussion during the meetings with different categories of people. After the discussion the assessors shall make a list of issues for the visit. All the issues shall be clear and related to the self-assessment summary as well as to the goals and objectives of the institution of vocational education and training.

An introductory meeting (before the visit) is recommended but not obligatory.

Goals of the meeting:

- Identification of functions and responsibilities of each member of the assessor' team;
- Preparation of common issues to be discussed after the analysis of individual proposals after the summary of self-assessment has been introduced;
- Identification of the main strengths of the institution under assessment and the main aspects to be improved; identification of aspects to be clarified;
- Identification of the environment of the institution under assessment, i.e. its relations with the national and regional needs, goals of economic and social development;

- Discussing and approving the agenda of the visit. The agenda is afterwards submitted to the institution under assessment;
- Submitting a list of documents to be inspected by the assessors during the visit (at its initial stage);
- Compiling a list of the community members of the institution under assessment who are to participate in the visit;
- Compiling a list of methodological and material resources which should be made available to the assessors during their visit;
- Discussing the procedure of the visit: the administrator clarifies the practical issues of the visit: trip arrangement, accommodation, agenda etc.

The institution in charge of assessor assessment shall receive the information of a requested format from the institution under assessment and then shall:

- Analyse the information and keep it confidential;
- Request no further information than is necessary for the assessment;
- Make use of the information submitted by the institutions to other agencies in accordance with the minutes of the agencies;
- Provide information to the assessors' team;
- Require from all who were given access to the information to keep it confidential.

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE SITE VISIT

Preliminary arrangements:

The co-ordinator of the visit (administrator of the assessors' team) or any other person in charge of arranging the assessment process shall discuss with the institution under assessment the issues of catering, accommodation and work; also, shall adjust all the details of the visit.

During the visit the assessors' team shall have a room for themselves where they have access to computers and the internet.

Assessors may obtain evidence to support their decisions in the following ways:

- By observing the teaching process;
- By studying the documents submitted by the teaching institution;
- By visiting students on site: in rooms and auditoria, libraries, companies where they acquire practical skills;
- By discussing with the institution's administrative staff, students, teaching staff, employers and other partners.

The programme of the visit

The visit lasts from one to four days. All members of the team arrive all together and participate in all meetings.

The assessment is performed either in the local language or in any language determined in advance as the working language of the visit (e.g. English, French, German) and acceptable for both parties. If necessary, all relevant documents shall be translated; during the meetings translation from other languages into the working language of the visit shall be ensured.

The assessors' team meets with the institution authorities, administration, teaching staff and students, social partners and the whole team of self-assessment. All meetings are held during the visit.

The groups of persons who are to meet with the assessors' team shall be invited by the administration of the institution under assessment.

During the visit, upon agreement between the assessors' team administrator (or any other person in charge of all arrangements of the assessors' team) and a representative of the institution under assessment, the agenda of visit may be subject to amendment.

The meetings of the assessors' team and different groups of persons aim at:

- Obtaining additional information from different groups of persons;
- Assessing the evidence given in the self-assessment report;
- Taking preliminary decisions;
- Identifying the problematic issues to be solved;
- Assessing how the decisions are related to the information given in the self-assessment summary, the relevance of the information; its importance for the decisions taken by the assessors.

During the meetings with specified groups of persons the chairperson of the team shall:

- Start by introducing the team members;
- Clarify the goals and scope of the visit, key features of the assessment process;
- Ensure that assessors are familiar with the self-assessment summary of the institution under assessment and other documents submitted to the assessors.

The assessors shall identify the key issues to be clarified or discussed during the visit.

Recommendations for assessors

- Part of the issues should be discussed with several representative groups of the institution under assessment, e.g. administration, teaching staff, students, in order to identify the whole range of approaches and expectations on the same issues and to substantiate the final report objectively and in more detail;

- Questions from a specific field should be addressed to the institution representatives who are directly in charge of the field under discussion, i.e. questions on the strategy of the educational institution should not be discussed with the students who are only indirectly involved in it;
- Questions should be addressed to the members of the community of the institution under assessment on an equal basis between the interlocutors trying to avoid any demonstration of superiority;
- Questions should be focused on the key issues so that the answers received would help decide if the aspect under analysis is a strength or a weakness of the institution. Political questions and questions of national strategy whose answers do not directly depend on the purposes and objectives of the institution should be avoided;
- No more than one question should be given at a time;
- The questions should be given in an open way;
- Questions should be impartial, i.e. they should not express the opinion of the speaker. An example of the incorrect question: *I think that... What do you think?*
- Questions should not be given in an evaluative form. An example of the wrong question: *It is no good that you do not have... Do you think you are going to have it in the future?*
- After a question is given, no attempt should be made by the team to answer it;
- After a question is given, the team should listen to the answer; if the information is relevant, it should be recorded.

It is important that during the site visit assessors should not be giving their opinion on the institution under assessment. The opinion will be given in the final assessment report. Assessors are expected to be able to identify, discuss and assess the evidence related to the assessment of the institution performance. It is important that assessors exchange their views and the evidence they obtain and finally arrive at an opinion based on common approach and reflected in the recommendations, proposals and decisions of the assessors' team.

Below are given descriptions of sample meetings of a typical visit.

Central level

- *Introductory meeting with the head of the institution.* The meeting should start with the introduction of the assessors and the introduction of the rector/president/dean. In the course of the meeting the following issues should be introduced: objectives of external assessment, duly authorised responsibilities of the team members. The questions concerned with the mission and aim of the institution should be discussed.

- *Meeting with the authorities of the institution:* After the introductory meeting, a meeting with all authorities of the institution should be held. The meeting should focus on the issues concerned with the mission and goals of the institution as well as quality assurance.
- *Meeting with the self-assessment team:* In the course of the meeting the assessors may ask to clarify the procedure of self-assessment, give comments on how widely the self-assessment report was discussed in the institution. The assessors may give questions on the issues not sufficiently well disclosed in the self-assessment report.
- *Meeting with the chief administrators:* The meeting should focus on the aspects of administrative and strategic planning and quality management, such as financial sources, distribution of funds, internal quality assurance etc.
- *Meeting with regional authorities and other interested persons (public figures):* The meeting should focus on the issues of co-operation between the institution and interested persons, the institution adapting to the needs and developments in the society.

Institutional strategy implementation in different units (faculties)

To be able to identify how institutional quality strategic principles are implemented in different units of the educational institution, assessors shall assess the performance of the units and their plans.

Assessors do not attempt to look for shortcomings of different units; rather, through samples of their performance they should try to understand how the central administration and lower units are related. In each of those units the following meetings may be held:

- *Meeting with the authorities of the unit:* the main topic of the meeting is a relationship between the decision taking managerial unit and the unit under discussion, management of the teaching quality in the unit.
- *Meeting with the teaching staff of the unit:* assessors may ask an opinion of the staff about staff employment procedure and in-service training, management of the teaching quality.
- *Meeting with the students/learners of the unit:* learners are an important source of information about the methods of teaching and the staff; assessor meetings with them should be strictly confidential; assessors shall not comment on the student's opinions, identify or point out some of their features or peculiarities.
- *Introduction of material resources:* during the visit some time is devoted to an overview of teaching resources. Assessors may visit auditoria, (class) rooms, libraries, laboratories etc.

Meetings of assessors' teams

- Are held at the initial stage of the visit (after introductory conversations with the administration) and at the end of each day of the visit;
- Are meant as preparation for the meetings with the members of the institution under assessment and for the inspection of the methodological and material resources;
- In the meetings each team member shall introduce his/her findings and conclusions to other team members;
- Draft decisions shall be analysed and discussed by all members of the team;
- Recommendations on quality improvement are adjusted and then finalised and then the final assessment report is prepared;
- The draft assessment report is discussed.

The final stage of the visit

- After all planned meetings *one hour* could be left free, which is given to the teaching staff or students to be able to approach assessors individually. The institution shall take care that the community of the institution is informed on the issue in advance and the time is specified;
- *The final meetings of assessors:* at the end of the visit a sufficient amount of time should be left for the meetings, i.e. about half a day. In the course of the meetings each assessor shall verbalise part of the final assessment report, whereas a draft final assessment should be discussed by the whole assessors' team;
- *The final meeting of the team with the authorities of the institution:* It aims at two major issues: thanking the organisers for hospitality and identifying any discrepancies that were left (if applicable). *The final assessment report is given orally:* the chairperson of the team introduces the draft assessment report in a general meeting of the faculty, whereas the representative of the assessment agency introduces further procedures pertaining to editing and proof-reading.

After the assessment is completed, the work of the assessors' team is assessed by:

- The chairperson of the assessors' team – s/he is in charge of the quality of assessor work of the assessors' team as well as the quality of the work of the administrator;
- The administrator of the assessors' team – s/he is in charge of assessing whether the work done by the team members complied with the principles and procedures identified in the Manual;
- Authorities of the institution under assessment – they assess different organisational and content aspects.

The above assessment of the assessors' team members is assessed in the form of a questionnaire with its results summarised by the administrator of the team.

PECULIARITIES OF THE VISIT OF EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT ASSESSORS IN LITHUANIA

The assessor visit to the institution under assessment is arranged after its members have studied the summary of self-assessment. For that purpose, one or two months are given. The agenda of the visit is sent to the institution under assessment at least one week before the visit. The visit may last from one to four days. The length of the visit very much depends on the size of the institution.

Before the visit assessors are recommended to prepare the first draft of the final assessment report.

After an assessor agrees to work in the assessment team, s/he shall submit information on all possible conflicts of interests (in writing). In case of a conflict of interest involving at least one of the institutions, the assessor shall step aside from the assessment of the institution. For the position of the chairperson of the team a person with no conflicts of interest shall be invited.

PECULIARITIES OF THE VISIT OF EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT ASSESSORS IN LATVIA

The team members are proposed by the Latvian Higher Education Quality assessment Centre (HEQEC). The final decision on the composition of the Assessment Team shall be taken by the Latvian Higher Education Council (for the institutional assessment) and the Latvian Accrediting Committee (for the assessment of study programmes). Assessors shall declare all possible conflicts of interest. Before the visit they shall sign an assessment contract. The contract specifies that the assessor has no conflicts of interest with the institution under assessment.

The assessor visit to the institution under assessment is arranged after its members have read and studied the summary of self-assessment. For that purpose, one or two months are given. The agenda of the visit shall be received by the assessors at least one week before the visit. The visit may last from one to four days. The length of the visit depends on the size of the institution and the number of programmes to be assessed.

Before the visit, the assessors are recommended to prepare the draft final assessment report and recommendations.



TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK

- Task 1.** What is the most important information to be obtained during the site visit? What are its sources?
- Task 2.** What are the ways of verifying the information obtained during the visit and after it?
- Task 3.** What decision is to be taken, if the information obtained is contradictory?
- Task 4.** What are possible conflicts of interests and what are the ways to avoid them?
- Task 5.** What information about the institution is considered confidential?
- Task 6.** Please, compile the agenda of the visit. What are the ways to amend it?



PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Workshops (6 hours at home before class III and 4 hours during class III).

The learners shall fill in the form of draft final assessment report at home (before Session III), after having read and studied the fields of the institution performance according to the excerpts from a self-assessment report:

FINAL ASSESSMENT DRAFT		
Institution.....		
Performance field under assessment.....		
Assessor.....		
Criteria	Final assessment <i>(strengths and weaknesses)</i>	Questions to the institution
A preliminary assessment of the selected performance field: excellent, good, sufficient, insufficient <i>(one mark is to be selected, others should be crossed out)</i>		
Signed by the assessor		
Date.....		

On the basis of a self-assessment report, the learners shall identify strengths and weaknesses of the institution. When it is obvious that the information is insufficient, the learner shall identify questions to be given in the course of the visit. The questions should be addressed to particular groups: self-assessment team, students, teaching staff, heads of units and employers. Any other relevant documents may be requested.

The learner shall have access to the excerpt of the self-assessment report and prepare for the role of an institutional representative.

During Session 2, a site visit to the institution is simulated. First, during the first hour, part of the learner team (A) 'go on a visit' to the other part of the team (B) (alongside, the same procedure is applicable for teams C and D); then, at a fixed time, whenever another field of performance is selected, team B goes on a visit to team C (alongside, the same procedure is applicable for teams D and A). During the last two hours all participants shall discuss and assess all stages of the visit as well as the behaviour of the learners/learners during the simulated visit.

LITERATURE:

Main literature:

1. Developing an internal quality culture in European universities: Report on the Quality Culture Project 2002 – 2003, EUA
2. Assessment of European Higher Education: A Status Report. Prepared for the European Commission, DG XXII by The Centre for Quality Assurance and Assessment of Higher Education, Denmark in cooperation with Comité National d'Assessment, France, 1998. <http://www.enqa.net/docs.lasso?docname=statusreport1.html>
3. Institutional Assessments in Europe. (An ENQA Survey.) – ENQA, Helsinki, 2001. – 40 p. <http://www.enqa.net/pubs.lasso>
4. Manual of Quality Assurance: Procedures and Practices. – European Training Foundation, 1998. – 91 p.
5. Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Final Report and Project Recommendations. – European Training Foundation, 1998. – 75 p.
6. Quality Procedures in European Higher Education. (An ENQA Survey.) – ENQA, Helsinki, 2003. – 41 p. <http://www.enqa.net/texts/procedures.pdf>
7. The European Dimension of Institutional Quality Management: Final Report and Recommendations. – European Training Foundation, 2000. – 21 p.

Additional literature:

1. Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education. – UNESCO/Council of Europe. <http://www.aic.lv>
2. Convention On The Recognition Of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education In The European Region. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
3. Education Assessment around the World. The Danish Assessment Institute. 2003. – 173 p. ISBN 87-7958-132-3. <http://www.eva.dk>
4. European Pilot Projects for evaluating Quality in Higher Education. Guidelines for Participating Institutions. – Edinburgh, Paris, Copenhagen, Utrecht, 1994. – 24 p.
5. First Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education “Globalisation and Higher Education”. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=6380&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
6. Institutional Assessment Programme: 10 Year Anniversary. http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/IEP_anniversary_brochure.1086687063630.pdf
7. Quality Assurance: A Reference System for Indicators and Assessment Procedures By Francois Tavenas, 2004. Prepared for the ELU (Latin European Universities group). http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/ELU_EN.1082042243703.pdf
8. Performance Standards in Education: In Search of Quality. – OECD, Paris, 1995. – 220 p.
9. Progress towards the European Higher Education Field: What Trends reports are telling us... http://www.eua.be:8080/eua/jsp/en/upload/EAIE_spring_issue2004_Trends.1083233978383.pdf
10. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Field – Draft Proposals. Material for ENQA General Assembly, 3 June 2004. <http://www.enqa.net/generalass.lasso>
11. The perfection of the state accreditation system of educational institutions and educational programmes in Russian Federation. – Moscow, 2000. – 15 p.
12. The competency Standards Project: Another Approach to Accreditation Review. – Washington, 2000. – 75 p.
13. The National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: a position paper; 2000. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>
14. Towards Accreditation Schemes for Higher Education in Europe? CRE project, July 2000 – May 2001, co-funded by SOCRATES programme. Validation seminar, 8 – 9 February 2001 Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Oeiras. http://www.aic.lv/rec/Eng/new_d_en/bologna/accred.html
15. Trends 2003: Progress towards the European Higher Education Field. By Sybille Reichert and Christian Tauch. Funded by the programme Socrates of the European Commission. <http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Trends2003final.1065011164859.pdf>
16. Vroeijsstijn A.I. Experiences with External Quality Assessment in Dutch Universities. – Riga, 1995. – 21 p.
17. White Paper on Education and Training. Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society. – Luxembourg, 1996. – 88 p.

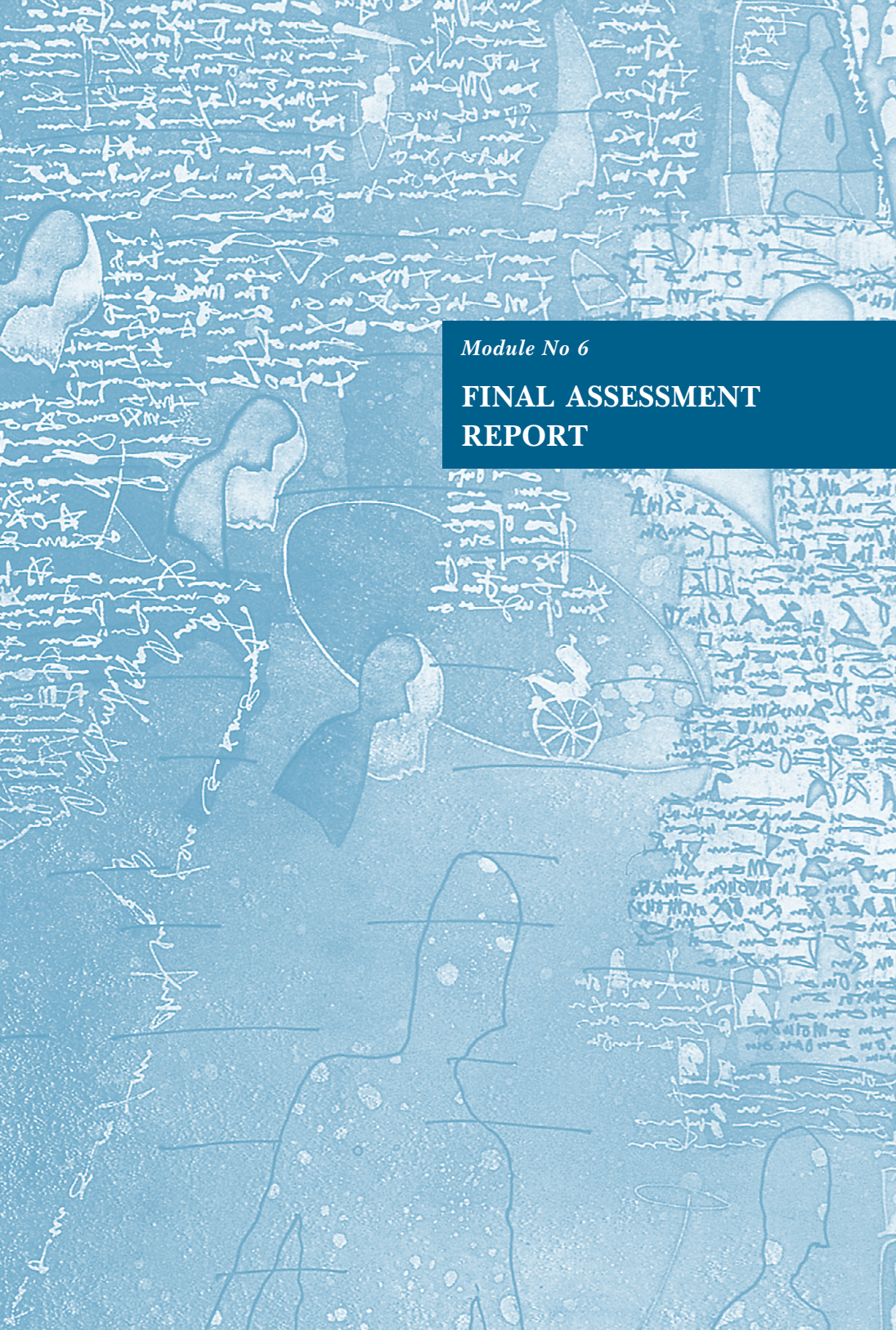
Country specific literature:

Lithuania:

1. Laužackas, R. (1999). Sistemoteorinės profesinio rengimo kaitos dimensijos. Kaunas.
2. Laužackas, R. (2000). *Mokymo turinio projektavimas*. Kaunas.
3. Kolegijų, įsteigtų reorganizuojant auksšesniašias mokyklas, veiklos kokybės vertinimo tvarka. http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/Kolegiju_vertinimo_Tvarka.doc
4. Išorinio kolegijų veiklos kokybės vertinimo metodika. <http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/isorinio-kolegiju-vertinimo-met.doc>

Latvia:

1. Accreditation Regulations for Higher Educational Establishments. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
2. Recommendations Concerning Activities of the Assessment Commission. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
3. Structure and Development of the Higher Education Quality assessment System in Latvia. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
4. Use of Standards in Education. <http://www.aiknc.lv>



Module No 6

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

- ◆ To provide knowledge on the principles of writing and structure of the final assessment report;
- ◆ To give access to the international experience in writing the final assessment report and presenting them orally;
- ◆ To provide conditions to acquire skills important for writing the final assessment report and preparing recommendations.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MODULE

The module *Final Assessment Report* introduces the structure of the final assessment report, principles of writing decisions, recommendations to the institution and the assessment agency. Workshops are intended for writing the final assessment report. The length of the module *Final Assessment Report* is 8 hours, with 2 hours devoted to the theory, 2 hours – to individual work and 4 hours – to seminars and workshops.

MAIN TOPICS

- ◆ Structure of the final assessment report;
- ◆ Decision making;
 - Methodology of decision making;
 - Recommendations to the educational institution;
 - Proposals on accreditation;
 - Recommendations to the agency in charge of assessment and state institutions;
 - Decision implementation.
- ◆ Writing the final assessment report in Lithuania;
- ◆ Writing the final assessment report in Latvia.

STRUCTURE OF THE FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Recommended structure of the final assessment report

1. Introduction
(Objectives of expert assessment, introduction of the team members, proceedings of the external assessment)
2. Introduction of the institution under assessment
(A short description of the institution written in the basis of the self-assessment summary)
3. Performance fields of the institution under assessment
(Each subtopic in this part shall consist of the following items:
 - *A summary of evidence and data* (based on the self-assessment report, other documents of the institution, discussion with the administration, staff, students etc.; the assessor team draws conclusions on the assessment field
(A list of main ideas is given);
 - *Achievements of the institution and its progress or innovations* (optional);
 - *Proposals for improvement* (optional advice);
 - *Recommendations* (actions of the institution ensuring its further development).
 - 3.1. Institutional management;
 - 3.2. Planning and development of study programmes;
 - 3.3. Interaction between the institution and the region;
 - 3.4. International cooperation;
 - 3.5. Material and financial resources;
 - 3.6. Staff;
 - 3.7. A system of internal quality assurance;
 - 3.8. Assessing the skills of graduates.
4. Recommendations to the institution
(A summary of all recommendations and proposals)
5. Recommendations to the agency in charge of assessment and state institutions
(Decisions on accreditation, decisions on the institution's further improvement)

The chairperson of the assessor team shall assume the responsibility for writing the final assessment report; its first draft shall be prepared immediately after the visit. The chairperson shall base the report on the comments made by the team members; however, the report shall not be written in the form of an article or identical to the comments made by the assessors. The report shall include all major issues reflecting the opinions of the team members.

The final assessment report shall ensure that they are based on the self-assessment report with due emphasis given to the main issues rather than details.

The most important issues pertain to major achievements and critical problems of the institution, small details should be avoided.

After the visit, the administrator/secretary of the assessor team shall prepare a draft of the final assessment report, which should be based on the decisions taken by assessors and minutes of the meetings (the minutes shall be prepared by the administrator/secretary during the meetings and discussions).

All assessors shall have access to the draft of the final assessment report and shall amend it in due form.

After the final assessment report is amended and agreed upon, it is sent to the institution under assessment. The institution is requested to correct and amend factual errors. It is important to draw the attention to the fact that often the error correction and the opinion of the institution overlap; therefore, the assessors shall have to take their own decision on what from the institution's commentary should be taken into consideration.

DECISION MAKING

The final assessment report is a document prepared after the visit of the external assessment team to the institution under assessment.

Decision making

Assessors base their decisions on the following principles:

- They collect evidence, verify the concepts and facts.
- They select all possible solutions on the basis of a variety of evidence.
- They have a discussion.
- They decide on the impact of each piece of evidence or fact on teaching and learning.

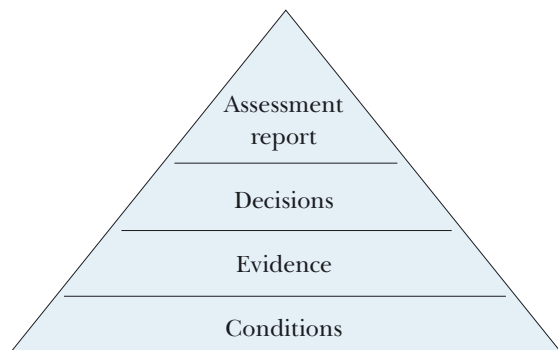


Figure 4. Relationship between decisions and evidence

In the above diagram, each higher level is based on the lower. The results of assessment express decisions. They, in their turn, are based on evidence collected at the initial stage of assessment. Some evidence can only be collected during the site visit, e.g. for the assessment of material resources.

*If evidence is reliable, the decision will be reliable too.
If decisions are reliable, the final assessment will be reliable too.*

In order to write the final assessment report of sufficiently high standards, the assessor shall go through **three** main stages.

Analysis aims at identifying the needs, the actual situation and the most reasonable strategy.

Planning and assessment aim at setting up a plan of action for writing the final assessment report, the analysis of evidence and substantiating the decisions.

Final assessment report is concerned with taking decisions on the fields to be improved and major strengths.

When writing recommendations and assessment decisions it is important that:

- The evidence collected during the meetings with teachers, students and others as well as the documentary evidence is sufficient for taking a decision;
- Decisions shall be related to the evidence, whereas the general conclusions reflect a common opinion (a variety of different opinions) of assessors;
- The presentation of the final assessment report in writing and orally shall be clear, based on the evidence collected before and during the site visit and easily proved;
- All positions shall be supported by arguments, based on facts, quantitative and qualitative indicators and an analysis of their development during the period of assessment;

- The report shall be written in a clear, succinct, correct and unambiguous language;
- It is recommended that insulting comments and reference to concrete names of people should be avoided.

A four-level assessment system is recommended* :

A – Very good;

B – Good;

C – Sufficient;

D – Insufficient.

Grades A, B and C are positive; D is negative.

Table 8. Sequence of taking assessment decisions

Period of external assessment	Decision taking		Giving decisions and arguments in the assessment documents	Notes
	Field assessment	General assessment of institution performance		
<i>Day 1</i>	+	+	Preliminary institutional assessment form A summary of the preliminary institutional assessment report	<i>The preliminary assessment is performed</i> on the basis of the information provided in the self-assessment report and annexes.
<i>Day 2</i>	-	-	Comments of assessors	Collecting additional evidence
<i>Day 3</i>	+	+	Final institutional assessment form A summary of the final institutional assessment report	Additional evidence is collected and the final decision is taken on the basis of the information of self-assessment report and its annexes as well as extra evidence collected during the site visit
<i>Day 4</i>	-	-	Draft of final assessment report	<i>Final decisions, arguments and recommendations are provided in the form of the final assessment report.</i>

* There are cases when a three-level system is applied.

WRITING THE FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT IN LITHUANIA

When assessing the performance of education institutions, the current situation is compared with the situation several years ago (on the basis of the periodically submitted information), with the final assessment results of previous external assessments (if applicable) and with action programmes which had to be prepared after the previous assessment.

Recommendations given at the end of assessment, among other things, aim at initiating its own actions to remove the drawbacks.

When preparing the final assessment report assessors should seek common opinion; otherwise, the final assessment is approved by the simple majority of votes and giving different opinions (including all arguments and signed) at the end of the report.

The objectives of the assessor team should be reflected in the assessment report:

- The quality of the education institution is assessed in accordance with the designated fields and assessment criteria;
- A decision is taken on the implementation of designated conditions;
- A decision on the conditions provided to the learners to acquire education and professional qualifications is taken in conformity with the needs of Lithuania's economy and the level of modern technologies;
- A decision is taken on the applied research and scientific investigation required by the region, consultations to local authorities and economic entities;
- A decision is taken on conditions provided for life-long education, on assistance provided to economic entities when arranging in-service training and re-qualification;
- A decision is taken on educating the society susceptible to education and culture, able to work under the conditions of rapid technological development;
- Final assessment and recommendations on improving the quality of performance are prepared;
- The report concludes with a proposal to the authorities on the purposefulness of the institution under assessment.

The assessors shall send to the institution under assessment the draft of the final assessment report (with no final decision on the assessment). Within 10 days the institution may identify factual errors and suggest arguments for changes/amendments in the final assessment report and recommendations. After the comments are received by the assessors, they prepare the final assessment report and submit it to the institution in charge of assessment.

WRITING THE FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT IN LATVIA

The institution shall be assessed by at least three assessors – one from Latvia and the other two from other countries (for the evaluation of colleges all three assessors can be from Latvia). Each assessor shall prepare his/her individual assessment report and participate in preparing the final draft of the common assessment report. A single assessment team shall only be involved in assessing one institution; however, it may assess several programmes of the same institution.

Writing the final assessment report

The recommendations for assessors have no reference to the compulsory structure of the final assessment report; therefore, it can be freely chosen by the assessors. The assessors are recommended to make use of a questionnaire. Each topic of the questionnaire may serve as a structural part of the final assessment report. Topics given in three recommended questionnaires (for assessing study programmes, for institutional assessment and assessment of fields) are put in Internet (www.aiknc.lv) and enumerated in annexes.



TASKS FOR INDIVIDUAL WORK

Task 1. What is the correct wording of claims/statements in the final assessment report?

Task 2. What is the evidence to be included into the final assessment report?



PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENTS

Workshops – 4 hours during class III

The final assessment report is prepared in the framework of the draft final assessment report (provided in Module No 5 and filled in at home). All positions should be correct and based on evidence and arguments.

During the workshops after a simulated visit the learners should fill in the Final Assessment Form (the same as the draft final assessment form). The assessment includes all positions (statements) of the draft final assessment report (amended, if relevant) and new observations from site visits. If the final assessment differs from the previous assessment, the learners should provide arguments for the differences.

Each team shall prepare the final assessment report of different performance fields of the institution: first, the learners who were assessing one and the same field of performance should discuss it in a group and compare their observations and afterwards write parts of the final assessment report. Then all of them shall discuss and approve the report (by voting, if relevant) and write the Final Assessment Report. They shall vote for the final draft of the Report.

All learners discuss the Final Assessment Report produced in different teams and compare their findings. The strengths and weaknesses of the Final Assessment Report are identified.

LITERATURE:

Main literature:

1. Handbook for enhancement-led institutional review: Scotland. http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/scottish_hbook/scottish_hbook_preface.htm
2. Handbook for accreditation. <http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org/resources/handbook/Handbook03.pdf>
3. Guidelines of the FH Council for the Evaluation in the Austrian FH Sector: FH Council Evaluation Guidelines. <http://www.fhr.ac.at/english>
4. Handbook for conducting and hosting an evaluation visit. <http://www.msache.org>

Additional Literature:

1. Office for standards in Education (2002). Handbook for Inspecting Colleges. May, 2002.
2. The Danish Evaluation Institute (2003b). Education Evaluation around the world. An international Anthology.

Country specific literature:

Lithuania:

1. Kolegijų, įsteigtų reorganizuojant aukštesniąsias mokyklas, veiklos kokybės vertinimo tvarka. http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/Kolegiju_vertinimo_Tvarka.doc
2. Išorinio kolegijų veiklos kokybės vertinimo metodika. <http://www.pmmc.lt/Skelbimai/isorinio-kolegiju-vertinimo-met.doc>

Latvia:

1. Agreement On The Academic Recognition Of Educational Qualifications In The Baltic Educational Space. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
2. Agreement on the Creation of a Common Educational Space in General Upper Secondary Education and Vocational (up to Higher Education Level) Education within the Baltic States. <http://www.aiknc.lv>
3. Education Law. <http://www.aiknc.lv>

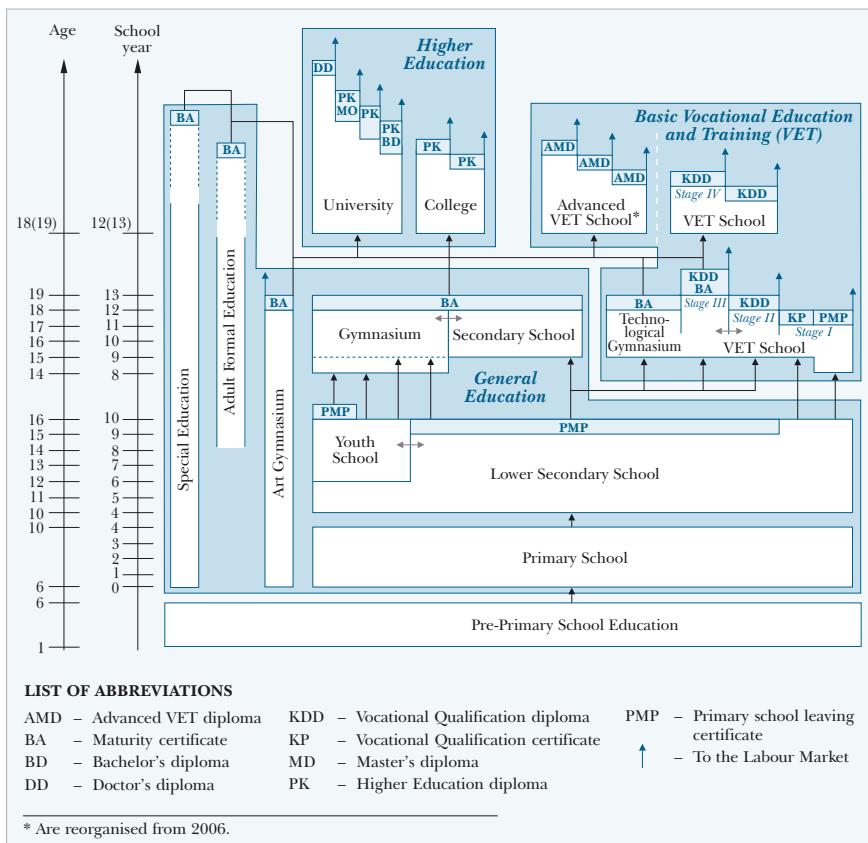
4. Law on Higher Educational Establishments. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*
5. Accreditation Regulations for Higher Educational Establishments. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*
6. Recommendations Concerning Activities of the Evaluation Commission. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*
7. Higher Education in Latvia – Scheme of Higher Education System of Latvia. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*
8. Structure and Development of the Higher Education Quality Evaluation System in Latvia. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*
9. Use of Standards in Education. *<http://www.aiknc.lv>*



ANNEXES

Annex No 1

**THE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE
IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**




GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION	
<i>Primary Education</i>	Consists of 4 years schooling (forms 1-4). Children not younger than 6 years old are accepted.
<i>Lower secondary education</i>	The curriculum of lower secondary education is targeted at two stages: forms 5-8 and 9-10. The aim of education at the first stage is integrity providing all-round foundation of knowledge, abilities and skills. The curriculum of forms 9-10 aims at developing abstract thinking as well as summarizing the knowledge and abilities acquired.
<i>Youth schools</i>	The alternative schools providing basic education are offered for pupils lacking learning motivation and failing to adapt to other types of schools. The Youth schools provide both initial work skills as well as general education knowledge.
<i>Secondary school</i>	Two-year secondary education programme leads to acquisition of secondary education, preparation for further education or gaining profession qualification.
<i>Special education school</i>	Cater for the needs of pupils who due to serious physical dysfunction or impaired development are unable to attend general education schools.
VOCATIONAL TRAINING	
<i>Stage I vocational training programmes</i> <i>ISCED 2</i>	To provide training to pupils of at least 14 years of age who have not finished basic general education school and wish to acquire simple qualifications. Normally the training lasts 2-3 years. Those willing are given the opportunity to acquire basic general education and receive an appropriate certificate. Successful completion of this option leads to a Level 2 CEDEFOP qualification with an appropriate certificate.
<i>Stage II vocational training programmes</i> <i>ISCED 3</i>	Are aimed at those pupils who have finished basic school (10 forms) and only wish to obtain a vocational qualification. The duration of studies is 2 years. The curricula under this option lead to a Level 3 CEDEFOP qualification and a diploma of a qualified worker.
<i>Stage III vocational training programmes</i> <i>ISCED 3</i>	Are aimed at those pupils who have finished basic school and wish to acquire both a vocational qualification and a secondary school certificate. The course of study lasts for 3 years and leads to a Level 3 CEDEFOP qualification. Successful completion leads to a diploma of a qualified worker and a secondary school-leaving (maturity) certificate. The latter provides an opportunity to continue education at an advanced school, college, or university. ↗

<p>Stage IV vocational training programmes ISCED 4</p>	<p>Are aimed at pupils who have finished a secondary school or gymnasium (have obtained a maturity certificate) and wish to acquire a vocational qualification. Depending on the complexity of the chosen occupation, the studies last from 1 to 2 years and lead to a Level 3 CEDEFOP qualification and a diploma of a qualified worker.</p>
<p>HIGHER EDUCATION</p>	
<p>College ISCED 5</p>	<p>Higher non-university education is provided by colleges that admit individuals having a maturity certificate. Studies at colleges where theoretical studies are combined with professional practice, last 3-4 years. Upon completion non-university studies graduates acquire a vocational qualification and a higher non-university education.</p>
<p>University ISCED 5-6</p>	<p>Higher university education can be acquired at state or private higher education institutions. The system of studies consists of two levels: after completing one's undergraduate studies, which last four years, a student acquires a Bachelor's degree, after one and a half or two years of study – a Masters's degree. The students having a Master's degree or integrated study are allowed to apply for Doctoral studies.</p>

Annex No 2

REGULATED LEVELS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA

(adopted on 11 May, 2001)

Level of vocational education	Characteristics of levels of vocational education		
	1	2	3
Level I	Ability to perform specialised work not requiring important autonomous decisions or to carry out simple, routine work operations.		labour market vocational training
Level II			basic vocational 
Level III	Ability to perform fairly complicated work in areas requiring responsible and independent decisions.		

1	2	3
<i>Level IV</i>	Ability to perform complicated work requiring personal responsibility in specific areas of activity. Leads to ability to carry out planning, organisational, administrative, and control functions independently.	advanced VET
<i>Level V</i>	Ability to perform complicated creative work in broad, new areas of activity; ability to engage in autonomous vocational activity based on thorough knowledge. Leads to ability to plan and assess the work of others and to assume managerial functions.	higher non-university education

Annex No 3

STAGES OF PROGRAMMES OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

<i>Type I ISCED* 2</i>	Initial (basic) vocational training. Pupils no younger than 14, who have not graduated from a lower secondary school but seek to acquire the most basic professions, are taught here for two to three years. Any who so desire are given the opportunity to acquire a lower secondary general education..
<i>Type II ISCED 3</i>	Secondary level vocational training is for pupils with a lower secondary general education. Education lasts for three years, resulting in only a vocational qualification. Pupils' age from 15/16 to 17/18.
<i>Type III ISCED 3</i>	Secondary level vocational training is for graduates of lower secondary schools who wish to acquire a vocational qualification together with a maturity certificate. Education lasts four years with pupils between ages 15/16 – 19/20..
<i>Type IV ISCED 3-4</i>	Post-secondary level vocational training is intended for secondary school graduates interested in a vocational qualification. Pupils enroll at age 18/19 and graduate by age 20/21. The duration of the education depends on the complexity of the profession (from one to two years).

* ISCED 1997 – International Standard Classification of Education

*Annex No 4***SELF-ASSESSMENT***Text for the practical task***NXX COLLEGE***(excerpts)***Performance Field 6. TEACHING STAFF****6.1. Effectiveness of personnel structure. Compliance with college goals**

The majority of the teaching staff have been working for the school for a long time, ever since the school was preparing specialists with lower qualifications. Specialist training fields have not changed for about a decade. Therefore, lecturers of all disciplines are experts in their own fields. While preparing for the training of specialists with higher qualifications, about 10 % of the former teaching staff (most of them of older age) were dismissed, and scientists and specialists with considerable practical experience were recruited instead. It was impossible to employ them full-time because of the shortage of teaching hours. The salary of a lecturer was not sufficient to attract people working successfully elsewhere. Therefore, most of them were employed part-time. The present composition of the teaching staff is presented in Tables 6.4 and 6.5 at the end of this chapter.

In the near future it will not be possible to recruit permanent experienced teaching staff for each study programme. The school has an idea to pay more attention to the upgrading of qualifications of the teaching staff: at present three lecturers are doing their doctoral studies, and four are studying for a Master's degree. This may help to solve the problem of ageing staff that the school is facing.

6.2. Staff management (planning, recruitment, supervision, motivation)

A large part of the teaching staff for the study programmes has already been recruited. However, the problem of forming a nucleus of own full-time teaching staff remains. The teaching institution has undertaken to support the presentation of new study programmes in accordance with the staff development scheme (procedures for designing a new study programme were approved by the decree of the Director on 21 May 2002).

The recruitment of teaching staff is competition-based (the competition rules were approved by the decree of the Director on 12 October 2001). Unfortunately, very rarely there are more than one applicant for a post. Therefore, the school

administration is aware that the necessity to look for potential employees is their never-ending task. Each candidate (if s/he has no teaching experience) is tested before accepting him/her for the main job.

Every lecturer is appraised for a period no longer than five years (appraisal regulations were approved on 25 November 2003). The departments are encouraged to analyze the activity of every lecturer (or groups of lecturers) in a certain field every year. When the Academic Council of the college analyses the activity of the structural units of the college in a certain field (two or three units every year), the lecturers from those units are assessed as well. The school uses questionnaires to collect student opinions which are partly taken into consideration when assessing or motivating lecturers.

The incentive system for the teaching staff is still being developed; it will include measures that are already being used: awards for the best methodological works, competition of the best student groups (including assessment of group tutors).

6.3. *Qualification and upgrading of staff*

The school aims to strengthen the staff, first of all, through the upgrading of qualifications of its teaching staff. Lecturers who are successfully upgrading their qualifications are granted additional privileges (reduced teaching-load, sabbaticals, bonuses, etc.). Table 6.1. presents the data on qualification upgrading for the past four years.

Table 6.1.

Field of studies	Doctoral studies		Master's studies		Courses	
	completed	in progress	completed	in progress	1 month or more	1-3 weeks
Education	–	1	4	3	2	2
Education-related	1	2	–	1	3	4

6.4. *Productivity of staff*

Student/lecturer ratio for all study programmes at the college is presented in Table 6.2. The last two columns prove that the teaching staff comprise too many persons. Unfortunately, the efforts of the school to attract the necessary specialists with a larger teaching load were not successful. Specialists who would be useful for the school are too busy (working in other jobs), and those who can be persuaded are not always sufficiently competent. The school is aware of the necessity to have lecturers with greater teaching experience and is seeking for effective personnel structure.

Table 6.2.

Study programme	Number of students	Number of lecturers	Number of lecturers' posts	Average student/lecturer ratio	
				persons	posts
Banking	68	15	5	4.5	13.6
Accounting	125	13	7	9.6	17.9
Mechanical technologies	62	14	5	4.4	12.4
Electronic technologies	69	15	5	4.6	13.8
College	324	32	22	10.1	14.7

Creative activity of the main teaching staff for the past five years is presented in Table 6.3. This activity is constantly increasing. In order to stimulate this activity, the school provides funding for the lecturers' participation at conferences and seminars. Owing to the efforts of the school's teaching staff, the study programmes are fully equipped with all teaching and methodological aids. This is the main trend of the lecturers' creative activities.

Table 6.3.

Creative activities of full-time lecturers	2000	2001	2002	2003
Published research works	–	1	1	3
Published methodological works	2	3	1	–
Methodological and teaching aids prepared	4	8	9	6
Presentations at scientific conferences	1	2	2	1
Research and pedagogical seminars at the college	–	1	2	2
Participation in projects:				
<i>International</i>	–	–	–	1
<i>National together with other institutions</i>	–	1	1	2

Scientific publications:

- J.G., Financial Systems of European Union. *Economics*, vol. X, 2001. 88–93.
- A.B., Review of Business Statistics Concepts. *Lithuanian Mathematical Proceedings*, vol. N, 2001. 36–45.
- B.G., Office-work and correspondence in autoservice enterprise. *Studying automechanical technology*. NXX College, 2003. 5–17.

- *C.J.*, Application of AUTOCAD programme. *Studying automechanical technology*. NXX College, 2003. 18–29.
- *A.D.*, Electric circuits in autocars. *Studying automechanical technology*. NXX College, 2003. 30–37.

The teaching staff of the college, specialists of accounting and banking, started providing consultations to financial officers of small enterprises. The timetable of individual consultations is announced; a seminar analysing current accounting problems was held for the past two years. The consultations have become so popular that for some a fee is charged which increases the budget of the college.

Specialists of electronic technologies produce electronic devices and provide other electronic services to the population of the region. Students are also involved in this activity, which provides them with more practical skills. The division of labour between lecturers and students in creating electronic devices for laboratories is valuable.

6.5. Strengths and weaknesses of staff

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
1. All lecturers have a large amount of knowledge and skills in their discipline and can teach students.	1. Questionnaires reveal positive feedback from students. Methodological works prepared by lecturers are good.
2. Good communication among lecturers allows the upgrading of staff qualifications and study programmes.	2. Banking specialists provide assistance to lecturers of accounting, specialists of electronic technologies to specialists of mechanical technologies.
3. Consulting activities strengthen the practical aspect of studies bringing students and lecturers closer to practical matters.	3. Experience gained during consulting activities allows the upgrading of the content of certain disciplines.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Possible difficulties</i>
1. The need to attract more full-time teaching staff for the college study programmes.	1. Salaries of the teaching staff are not sufficient to attract good specialists to teach at the college (especially to teach banking).
2. The need to take action in training new teaching staff to substitute for the retiring staff.	2. Young specialists do not have enough experience.

Table 6.4. List of lecturers

No.	Name, surname	Age	Degree	Educational background	Subject taught	Practical work experience in the subject field (years)	Full-time (F), part-time (P)
1	A.B.	56	Doctor	Mathematics	Statistics, mathematics	28	F
2	A.C.	48	Doctor	Construction engineering	Technical mechanics	18	P
3	A.D.	58	Master	Electric engineering	Electric technology, sources of electric current, electromagnetic fields and waves	32	F
4	A.N.	32	Master	Mechanical engineering	Labour and environment safety	–	
5	A.M.	41	Master	Transport engineering	Maintenance of auto mechanical systems	12	P
6	B.D.	50	Master	Economics	Business economics, preparation of a business plan	11	P
7	B.G.	31	Bachelor	Russian philology	Foreign language for professional purposes, business correspondence	–	F
8	C.G.	29	Bachelor	Informatics	Information technologies, programming, banking information technologies	2	F
9	C.J.	27	Bachelor	Mechanical engineering	Physics, engineering graphics	–	F
10	C.K.	47	Master	Economics	Taxes, marketing	2	P
11	C.P.	46	Master	Economics	Financial analysis of banking, services market structure	13	P
12	D.A.	36	–	Informatics	Database management systems	1	P
13	D.B.	59	Master	Economics	Banking audit, audit	6	P
14	D.E.	34	Master	Electronic engineering	Computers and microprocessors, technological equipment of banks	2	P
15	D.G.	41	Master	English philology	English language	15	F

16	D.K.	62	-	Mechanical engineering	Metal processing equipment, mechanical technologies	6	F
17	D.Y.	55	Master	Electronic engineering	Electronic materials, electronic devices	10	P
18	E.U.	46	Master	Law	Law, business law, civil and commercial law	17	F
19	E.Z.	53	Master	Electronic engineering	Electronic measurements, signals and schemes	-	P
20	G.G.	36	Master	Chemistry	Applied chemistry	6	P
21	G.K.	46	Master	Mechanical engineering	Management, sociology, leadership psychology	-	F
22	G.L.	42	Master	Economics	Bank account administration	12	P
23	H.K.	29	Bachelor	Economics	Bank finance and management, state finance, central banking	-	F
24	J.G.	57	Doctor	Economics	Commercial banking, international finance, international banking operations	18	F
25	J.M.	51	Master	Economics	Budget accounting, estimates of budget institutions	12	P
26	J.P.	60	Master	Electronic engineering	Design of electronic devices, auto electronic devices	6	F
27	J.Z.	39	Master	Economics	Insurance, insurance accounting, insurance statistics, philosophy	-	F
28	K.L.	63	Master	Transport engineering	Automobile equipment, production automation	20	F
29	L.T.	51	Master	English philology	English language	19	F
30	L.U.	53	Master	Economics	Financial market and the basics of institutional accounting, market structure, micro- and macroeconomics	6	F

Table 6.5.

Study programme	Number of lecturers			Lecturers teaching practical courses with over 3 years of practical work experience, percentage
	Total	Full-time	Doctors	
Banking	15	9	2	62
Accounting	13	6	1	64
Mechanical technologies	14	9	2	83
Electronic technologies	15	8	1	43
Total in the College	32	16	3	61

Performance field 7. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

7.1. Rationality of the system

In order to improve activities in all fields and at all levels the school is developing an integral quality management model which is formed on the basis of total quality management (TQM), benchmarking and ISO quality management principles.

The presumption followed while implementing the internal quality assurance system is that possibilities of providing high-quality services depend, first of all, on regular identification, understanding and satisfaction of the needs and expectations of the users (students, lecturers, employers etc.) of services provided by the school. Following the principles of total quality management, self-assessment is carried out on a regular basis which provides an opportunity for the members of school community using generally agreed methods to analyse and assess their activities according to certain criteria and carry out an annual quality cycle. Taking into account the results of previous assessments, identified priorities and recommendations, lecturers, heads of departments, the Study Quality Agency, administration, and self-governing structures/units are planning their activities, organising surveys among graduating students, lecturers and social partners. They also collect and store information and evidence using other ways, analyse the results of their activities, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make quality improvement proposals.

In the year 2000 the Study Quality Agency was established at school. The head of the Study Quality Agency is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the quality management system and is directly accountable to the Director. At the faculties persons responsible for the implementation of quality management system have been appointed.

Discussion and evaluation of self-assessment reports in accordance with the set evaluation scale goes on at different management levels and provides feedback. Lecturers discuss their work with heads of the departments, heads of departments with deans of the faculties. Heads of general departments discuss their work with the deputy director for academic activities. Deans of the faculties submit their reports to Academic Councils of the faculties and the Director, the Study Quality Agency submits its report to the Director and the School Academic Council. Deputy Directors for economic activity and non-academic units report to the Director, the Director reports to the School Academic Council and the school community. During the discussion of the self-assessment report the achievement of goals set in different plans as well as strengths and weaknesses and their causes are assessed, priority fields for improvement and examples of good practice are set, recommendations for improvement are presented.

The quality management activity at school is planned. On the basis of the strategic plan of the school the Study Quality Agency prepares annual quality system development plans. After the submission and evaluation of the annual performance report at the Academic Council, the strategic plan is improved and recommendation are presented for the planning of activities for the coming year. Other divisions of the school and self-governing structures/units make their annual plans taking into consideration the weaknesses and priorities identified in self-assessment reports and evaluating the recommendations presented by external assessors during the institutional and study programme assessment. In turn, lecturers also plan their work for the coming year.

In order to discuss the quality management system development plans, to set priorities as well as to ensure monitoring, the Quality Assurance Council has been established, to which representatives of the school's self-governing structures/units, academic units and administration are delegated. Members of the faculties participate in the activities of the faculty, the Academic Council and various working groups of the school. Joint meetings of the school administration, student representative office and group monitors are organised in order to analyse the satisfaction of student needs, as well as requests and proposals related to the quality of studies.

In order to introduce a quality management system, training seminars are organised for the teaching staff of different divisions.

The main principles of quality management are sufficiently clear. However, rapid development of the school, lack of experience in self-assessment and lack of quality management culture prevent from the deep understanding and full implementation of the principles of quality management system. Sometimes the inability and/or evasion of certain persons to identify weaknesses is not helpful.

7.2. Level of system regulation

In order to design the policy of the school, in the year 2000 a working group was set up which, on the basis of the vision and the mission, outlined the framework of implementation of the quality management system. The aims and objectives of the quality policy were formulated in the Quality Assurance section of the Strategic Plan and the Quality Handbook. The Strategic Plan was approved at the extended meeting of the Academic Council on 15 January 2001 and the School Council meeting on 14 May 2001. The Quality Handbook was approved in 2004.

The introduction of quality management at school is taking place in accordance with regulations and guidelines outlined in the following documents:

- School strategy for 2000-2004;
- Plans of school units for 2000-2004;
- Guidelines for school units on self-assessment report preparation;
- Regulations for the Study Quality Agency;
- Regulations for the Study Quality Assurance Council;
- Procedure for the internal accreditation of study programmes;
- Timetable for the implementation of ISO quality management system;
- Annual Plans of the Study Quality Agency and Council;
- Job descriptions for the employees of the Study Quality Agency;
- Methodological recommendations of the self-assessment summary for activities of 2000-2004;
- Quality Handbook;
- Director's decree No. 895 of 13 December 2000 *Concerning the composition of the Quality Assurance Council*;
- Director's decree No. 57 of 25 January 2000 *Concerning the approval of the school strategy for 2000-2004*;
- Director's decree No. 74 of 20 January 2004 *Concerning the approval of the new composition of the Quality Assurance Council*
- Director's decree No. 645 of 2 July 2004 *Concerning the composition of the subgroups for the preparation of the school self-assessment report.*

7.3. Efficiency of the system

Since the year 2000, when the establishment of the study quality system started at school, on the basis of annual self-assessment, *Quality Improvement Plans* have been prepared which reflected aspects to be improved as revealed in self-assessment. The planning experience gained and the information collected were used when designing the school strategy for 2005-2010 (see Appendix 5).

A quality improvement plan usually reflects all aspects to be improved which were identified during self-assessment. However, every year 3-4 priorities are highlighted which receive greater attention. For example, in 2000-2001 priority was given to the efficiency of school management and activity of self-governing structures, in 2002 priority was given to staff and international cooperation issues, in 2003 to the issue of how well study programmes offered meet economic requirements and correspond to social dialogue, in 2004 to the issues of the quality of graduation theses and final assessment of the competence obtained by students. More detailed information about the quality development activities and results achieved is provided in Quality Improvement Plans and reports of the Study Quality Agency of the respective years. In the Quality Improvement Plan for 2005 (see Appendix 7) special attention is given to the following aspects of school performance:

- Organisation of students' independent work (Field *Planning and implementation of study programmes*);
- Using opportunities provided by the EU Structural Funds (Field *Material and financial resources*);
- Development of quality culture (Field *Internal quality assurance system*).

7.4. Development of the system

The work of the Quality Agency, implementation of quality assurance objectives and priorities for the coming year are discussed at the Quality Assurance Council. Every year at the meetings of administration and self-governing structures reports of the Study Quality Agency and annual self-assessment reports of the school are discussed, proposals for the improvement of the quality management system and adjustments for plans are presented.

While analysing the efficiency of the quality system, we have noticed that the school's internal system of study quality assurance based on self-assessment does not sufficiently reveal the relationship of tendencies of changing school results to the ongoing processes within the country and abroad. Therefore, steps were taken to create a database of leading schools in various fields, which would allow to monitor the correspondence of development tendencies of the school and its divisions with the general tendencies of change, would allow to observe the progress of the school in the general context of study sector development. Since 2003 comparative research has been carried (e.g., in 2003 the study *Trends of development of the study quality system in Lithuania and abroad* was done) and benchmarking principles are being implemented in the school's quality assurance system.

While implementing the measures of quality system, we identified that the quality system is not sufficiently documented at school, activities and functions of differ-

ent units are not fully coordinated, and the structure lacks clarity. It is difficult to explain to social partners what kind of quality system the school is using to improve its activity. In order to achieve not only local, but also international recognition of the school's quality system, to eliminate the lack of coordination of administrative functions and the lack of documentation, to create the nonconformity prevention mechanism, in 2004 the school started implementing the ISO quality management system, and a Quality Handbook was prepared.

In order to improve the school's quality management system, to coordinate activities, to assess achievements and to inform the community, the Quality Assurance Council was set up (Director's decree No. 895 of 13 December 2000 *Concerning the composition of the Quality Assurance Council*). Self-governing structures, administration and faculties delegated their representatives to the Quality Assurance Council. In 2004 the Quality Assurance Council consisted of 9 persons (the list of the members of the Council is presented at the end of the chapter).

Research devoted to the improvement of school activities is carried out on a regular basis. School activities are analysed, discussed and improved at all levels. The research is organised by the Academic Council, Student Council, school's divisions, the Study Quality Agency. Research results are presented to the school community. For example, the Study Quality Agency carried out research in the following fields: in 2000-2001—organisation of distance learning; in 2001-2002—organisation of practice periods and their quality; in 2002-2003—school management. The fact that school employees are researching quality development problems—K.L. is writing a PhD dissertation on the subject of *Coordination of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Assessing the Quality of Studies*—is also useful for the quality improvement at school.

The school is extensively cooperating with other Lithuanian vocational training institutions and foreign partners (see sections *Relationship between the Institution and the Region* and *International Cooperation* of this report). The school also participated in quality assurance project ALLEGRO of Leonardo da Vinci programme, during which the methodological aid *Quality Control and Good Pedagogical Practice for Internet/Intranet Course Development and Delivery* was prepared.

7.5. *Strengths and weaknesses of the quality system*

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
1. Integral system of quality management.	1. Total quality management, benchmarking, ISO quality management principles are applied in the school quality assurance system.
2. Cooperation with other national and foreign institutions and other organisations in implementing an integral quality management system.	2. Cooperation with Vytautas Magnus University, Alytus, Šiauliai, Utena, Vilnius colleges, and EURASHE.
3. Dissemination of best practice in national and foreign educational institutions.	3. A series of seminars for directors and lecturers of Lithuanian colleges and vocational schools, participation in ALLEGRO project of Leonardo da Vinci Programme.
<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
1. Development of quality culture (objectivity, openness, reliability, documentation, analytical depth of various levels of self-assessment).	1. Lack of openness, unwillingness to disclose one's weaknesses when preparing self-assessment reports.
2. Uneven implementation of benchmarking system.	2. So far the benchmarking principle is applied only in a small part of the school. Clear assessment criteria are not formulated.

7.6. *The composition of the Quality Assessment Council:*

1. A.K., Deputy Director for Studies—Chairperson
2. K.L., Head of the Study Quality Agency—Vice-chairperson
3. S.B., Dean of the Faculty of Economics
4. N.L., Chairperson of the School Student Council
5. K.M., lecturer, English Philology
6. N.O., Head of the Accounting Department
7. D.R., lecturer, Electronic Engineering
8. S.T., Head of the Library
9. B.Ž., lecturer, Economics

Annex No 5

SELF-ASSESSMENT

In assistance to the lecturer checking and assessing Learners' work with the school's self-assessment

Questions to be Raised

by the learners after they get acquainted with the self-assessment report (Annex No 4)

Performance Field 6. TEACHING STAFF

Why are 2 lecturers missing in Table 6.5. (this Table lists 30 lecturers, while Table 6.2. lists 32)?

The list only gives the lecturers of the English language. What will be taught to students with basic German or French?

Is any consulting activity carried out in the field of mechanical technologies?

Do other colleges use teaching and methodological aids prepared and published by the teaching staff of this college?

Would it be desirable (for visiting lecturers) to have all teaching and methodological materials presented (for possible assessment of the creative potential of the teaching staff)?

Performance Field 7. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

In which divisions of the school and for which aspects of activity is the benchmarking principle applied? What is taken as a recognised quality model in those cases? The self-assessment report does not mention how widely this principle is applied by the school. Insufficient application of this principle is identified as one of the weaknesses of the quality assurance system.

Has the establishment of the Study Quality Agency been justified in a school with only 2 faculties? How many employees work for this Agency? The self-assessment report does not provide any concrete data about the Study Quality Agency.

In what specific ways do students participate in the quality assurance process? Student participation in quality management is mentioned in a formal way. There is only one student representative in the Quality Assurance Council.

What decisions of the Quality Assurance Council were implemented? The report implies that the Council plays an important role in quality management. However, no evidence of the importance of the Council's decisions is presented.

Strengths and Weaknesses which could (should) be Identified

by the learners/trainees after they get acquainted with the self-assessment

Performance Field 6. TEACHING STAFF

The school has a sufficient number of teaching staff working full-time in each programme. Part-time lecturers teach only practical disciplines. Nevertheless, five of them (31%) do not have enough practical work experience.

In a sense, the teaching staff structure according to age is rational. Young lecturers work with older colleagues. However, it is not easy for heads of departments to look for specialists with practical experience for both technological programmes. Lecturers in those programmes (A.D., D.K., J.P., K.L.) are approaching retirement, and one of them (D.K.) does not have any degree (perhaps not even a higher education diploma).

Among the lecturers teaching practical subjects as many as 61 % have sufficient experience of practical work (Table 6.4.), but in the electronic technologies programme only 43% have enough practical experience.

When very different programmes are presented, one lecturer is given (in order to provide sufficient teaching load) many different disciplines to teach. This does not ensure good quality of teaching. Unacceptable is also the fact that philosophy is taught by an economist (does this evidence support the first strength mentioned in the self-assessment summary that all lecturers have sufficient knowledge and skills in their discipline?).

The school is aware of the necessity to attract lecturers for more intensive teaching – it is expressed in the commentary to Table 6.2. However, the school's achievements in this field are poor, especially in banking and both technological programmes.

In the list of publications (below Table 6.3.) only the first two items count as scientific publications. The other three are methodological aids for students.

Performance Field 7. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

On the one hand, the school pays considerable attention to the development of quality system and has achieved quite a lot in this field. Attempts are made to create an integral quality management model which would combine the advantages of several systems used in quality management. Research is widely used in the quality system development. The school's Quality Handbook has already been prepared.

After the acquaintance with the self-assessment material, doubts arise concerning the following matters:

- The composition of the Quality Assurance Council is very similar to the composition of the Academic Council. Such a Council can hardly adequately represent the interests of the whole school community.
- Too little attention in self-assessment is given to the aspects to be improved. They are mentioned only in one place – end of Section 7.1. No information is presented concerning the weakness indicated in Table 2.
- The school community does not seem to be actively involved in quality management. First of all, the role of students in this process is not revealed.

*Annex No 6***EXAMPLES OF 8 PERFORMANCE FIELDS
AND THEIR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA****1. Institution Management**

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Mission of the institution</i>	<p>What is the institution's mission? How could it be developed?</p> <p>What are the institution's teaching objectives? How does the institution define its position within the national and international academic community? How does the institution define its position in the social environment? Has a strategic plan been drawn up for the implementation of the institution's mission?</p>
<i>Decision making procedures, competences and responsibilities</i>	<p>What are the institution's decision making procedures, competences and responsibilities? Is the teaching staff involved in decision making concerning teaching and research? How many (in percentage) students are involved in decision making concerning teaching/learning?</p>
<i>Human resources</i>	<p>Does the institution have sufficient academic, administrative and technical staff in order to achieve the goals set? What are the priorities in this field and how are they reflected in the distribution of funding?</p>
<i>Organisation structure</i>	<p>Is the institution functioning as a system? How is cooperation among different divisions encouraged?</p>
<i>Financial and material resources</i>	<p>Has the institution prepared a financial plan? Does it have all the necessary material resources? Do they match the institution's goals and priorities? Does the institution's budget match its goals and strategic plan? What are the priorities in this field and how are they reflected in the distribution of funding?</p>

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Sources of funding</i>	<p>What are the main sources of funding for the institution and on what conditions are the funds supplied?</p> <p>Do the conditions and sources of funding in any way restrict the institution's possibilities of making decisions in the fields of teaching and research?</p> <p>Did the institution undergo a financial audit?</p>
<i>Internal quality assurance system</i>	<p>Has an internal quality assurance system been established at the institution? What are its principles?</p> <p>What quality assurance methods are used by the institution?</p> <p>What is the relationship between the quality assurance goals and strategies and general goals and strategy of the institution?</p> <p>What is the distribution of responsibility for quality activities at the institution?</p>
<i>Gender equality</i>	Does the institution ensure equality between sexes?

2. Planning and implementation of study programmes

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Demand for study programmes</i>	<p>Does the institution analyse the demand for study programmes? What is this analysis like?</p> <p>Who supplies data for analysis?</p> <p>What measures are used to increase the demand for study programmes?</p> <p>What external and internal factors determine different demand for study programmes?</p>
<i>Rationality of the study programmes as a whole</i>	<p>What are the employment indicators for graduates of recent years?</p> <p>What is the relation between the study programmes carried out by the institution?</p> <p>Is the rationality of programmes analysed systematically?</p> <p>What is the influence of social partners and employers on study programmes?</p>




Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Rationality of the study programmes as a whole</i>	<p>The issue of the uniqueness of different study programmes: why cannot similar study programmes be treated as specialisations?</p> <p>How many different groups of persons take part in analysing the teaching process and its changes (closure of unnecessary programmes)? Is this process regular?</p>
<i>Efficiency and advantages of study planning</i>	<p>Is the study development strategy chosen adequately?</p> <p>Are the programmes regularly updated?</p> <p>Is study planning coordinated with the research in demand for specialist training?</p> <p>What is the teacher/student ratio?</p> <p>Does theoretical and practical teaching meet personal needs and programme requirements?</p> <p>What kind of support is given to students?</p> <p>What is the student 'drop-out' rate?</p> <p>What are the modes of studies: full-time, part-time (evening classes, distance learning)?</p> <p>Are there possibilities for individual studies?</p> <p>Is credit transfer possible within the institution?</p>
<i>Efficiency of practice periods</i>	<p>What is the nature and duration of practice periods?</p> <p>How are placements chosen?</p> <p>What is the procedure for documenting practice periods?</p> <p>What are the results of assessment of practice periods?</p>
<i>Evaluation of study programmes</i>	<p>How is internal assessment of study programmes carried out?</p> <p>What are the results of external assessment of study programmes?</p> <p>Is the community of the institution introduced to the results of evaluation?</p> <p>What kind of actions is taken by the institution after the external assessment?</p>

3. Relationship between the institution and the region

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Cooperation with national educational and research institutions</i>	<p>Does the strategy of cooperation with national partners meet the institution's vision, mission and goals? If yes, provide some examples of such cooperation.</p> <p>How is the network of cooperation with other national educational and research institutions formed?</p> <p>How did the number of national educational and research institutions and forms of cooperation change during the past 4 years? What were the causes of those processes?</p> <p>What are the results of cooperation with other national educational and research institutions? Do they correspond to the general goals of the institution?</p> <p>How will this cooperation be developed?</p>
<i>Level of cooperation with employer organisations and other organisations</i>	<p>How was the network of cooperation with employer organisations and other organisations formed?</p> <p>How did the number of employer organisations and other organisations and forms of cooperation change during the past 4 years? What were the causes of those processes?</p> <p>What are the results of cooperation with employer organisations and other organisations? Do they correspond to the general goals of the institution?</p> <p>How will this cooperation be developed?</p>
<i>Benefit of external relations for the studies</i>	<p>What is the benefit of external relations for achieving the institution's general goals?</p> <p>What is the benefit of external relations for the development of study programmes?</p> <p>What is the benefit of external relations for the development of material resources?</p> <p>What is the benefit of external relations for the organisation of practice periods?</p>

4. International cooperation


Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<p><i>Level of international cooperation</i></p>	<p>How is the institution's international cooperation integrated into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institution management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institution's strategic plan; – Institution's support for students and lecturers; – Support for students and lecturers of other countries; – Provision of services for international students; – Administrative division promoting international cooperation; – Fund raising; – Possibility for foreign students to receive information about admission requirements. • Academic activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Study programmes of international level; – Possibility for lecturers and students of having their studies, work abroad, etc. recognised. • Out-of-class activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting international clubs and out-of-class activity, involving students and lecturers of the institution in this activity; – Involving lecturers and students in international seminars and conferences.
<p><i>Influence of international relations on the studies</i></p>	<p>What is the influence of experience gained during international cooperation on the studies?</p> <p>Are studies abroad or part of them recognised?</p> <p>What is the influence of international cooperation on lecturers: introduction of new methods of work, preparation of joint modules with partners, etc.?</p> <p>Is the institution ready to accept foreign students?</p> <p>Could the lecturers of the institution teach in foreign languages?</p> <p>What is the impact of international relations on material resources?</p> 

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Participation in international projects</i>	<p>The number and nature of international projects in which the institution participates (has participated during the past 4 years).</p> <p>The significance and scale of projects (the importance and number of participants, the duration of the project, the usefulness of results for the institution's activity).</p> <p>What projects has the institution prepared but has not started implementing yet?</p> <p>What is the influence of international projects on different study programmes and the performance of the college on the whole?</p>
<i>Student and teacher exchange programmes</i>	<p>What is the benefit of international exchange to the institution?</p> <p>How many students and lecturers have participated in international exchange during the past 4 years?</p> <p>How many foreign students and lecturers have participated in international exchange during the past 4 years?</p> <p>The variety of study fields according to which students and lecturers participated in the exchange.</p> <p>How is the institution developing and encouraging active participation of students and lecturers in international exchange?</p>

5. Material and financial resources

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Management of material and financial resources</i>	<p>Are material resources of the institution used efficiently?</p> <p>What is the system of material resources management like?</p> <p>What is the system of financial resources management like?</p> <p>What are the measures encouraging innovative management of material resources?</p> <p>What is the structure of budgetary funds? How are these funds used?</p> <p>What are the sources of non-budgetary funds? How are these funds used?</p>



Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Quality of material resources</i>	<p>Do the material resources allocated to studies meet modern teaching/learning requirements and employers' requirements for specialist training?</p> <p>Are the employers acquainted with teaching/learning resources at the institution? How does the institution react to employers' comments about material resources?</p> <p>Are studies carried out in a safe and healthy environment?</p> <p>Does the institution have the equipment and use materials which meet modern industrial standards?</p> <p>How much funding per year is allocated for updating material resources?</p>
<i>Availability of material resources</i>	<p>Are there sufficient facilities for studies (classrooms, laboratories, etc.)? What is the condition of these facilities? How effectively are they used in different study programmes?</p> <p>What possibilities lecturers and students have of using the available premises and teaching equipment and materials?</p> <p>Are available material resources adapted for use by disabled students?</p> <p>How much funding per years is allocated for the development of material resources?</p> <p>What software is available: is it easily accessible, useful and properly chosen? Are instructions provided on how to use the available software? Is technical support available if needed?</p>
<i>Methodological aids</i>	<p>Do the teaching/learning materials meet the goals of the programmes carried out?</p> <p>Are methodological aids prepared by the lecturers of the institution? Is there a possibility of updating them regularly?</p> <p>Do students receive methodological aids? If yes, what aids?</p> <p>Are employers acquainted with the methodological aids prepared? Are employers involved in working groups preparing methodological aids?</p> <p>Have methodological aids for self-study been prepared yet? Do they meet the goals of the study programmes carried out at the institution?</p> 

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Library</i>	<p>Provide data on the activity of the library: how much funding is allocated to the library every year? What part of this funding is allocated for stock expansion and renewal, for periodicals and CD-ROMs?</p> <p>How often stock-taking is carried out in the library?</p> <p>Does the library have a long-term plan?</p> <p>Do publications at the library meet the aims of the programmes carried out by the institution?</p> <p>How many working places are there in the library's reading rooms? Compare this number to the number of students at the institution.</p> <p>Does the library have an Internet connection? Can students use it? Is there access to electronic databases, full-text documents?</p>

6. Staff

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Rationality of staff structure and its conformity to the college mission</i>	<p>In what ways is staff responsible for the institution's goals and activity?</p> <p>Is the number of academic staff sufficient, do they conform to the goals of the study programmes carried out by the institution? Provide evidence.</p> <p>Is the number of auxiliary staff (technical assistants, librarians) sufficient? Provide evidence.</p> <p>Is coordination of activities of full-time and part-time staff rational?</p>
<i>Staff management (planning, recruitment, supervision, motivation)</i>	<p>Is staff recruitment and dismissal open and transparent?</p> <p>How are plans of staff development and study and applied research development coordinated? Provide evidence.</p> <p>Does staff recruitment match institutional activity development? Provide evidence.</p> <p>What is the balance between motivation and staff efficiency?</p> <p>What is the system of work supervision like and how rational it is?</p>

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<p><i>Staff qualification and the system of qualification upgrading</i></p>	<p>Do the disciplinary, professional and teaching qualifications of staff meet the requirements of the proposed study programmes? Provide evidence.</p> <p>How is the qualification of the teaching staff assessed? Is this assessment carried out on a regular basis?</p> <p>How is the need for staff qualification upgrading identified?</p> <p>What is the procedure of staff qualification upgrading and how is it documented?</p> <p>Does the procedure of staff qualification upgrading meet the needs of the staff?</p> <p>Does the staff qualification upgrading conform to the institutional development plans?</p>
<p><i>Productivity of staff activity</i></p>	<p>Is there an institutional productivity assessment system for the staff qualification upgrading? Why was this particular system chosen?</p> <p>What are the results of the professional activity of the staff? How do they conform to the institutional goals?</p> <p>What are the results of the teaching activity of the staff? How do they conform to the institutional goals?</p> <p>How many full-time lecturers have made presentations at seminars or conferences or have written articles? How are these results used for institutional development?</p> <p>How many lecturers participate in international projects? How is this activity distributed among the units of the institution?</p>

7. Internal quality assurance system

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<i>Rationality of the system</i>	<p>Is the institution's internal quality assurance system regular and based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditions, good practice; • Management; • Regular observation; • Implementation? <p>Does this system meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional needs; • Requirements of the external assessment agency? <p>Is the system integrated into the planning and decision making process of the institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff of all divisions take part in this process; • The system is approved by the institution's management; • Responsible persons are appointed and deadlines are set; • The necessary material resources and sources of funding are planned; • Includes all institutional levels – from the top (management) to students?
<i>Effectiveness of the system</i>	<p>Do assessment reports of internal quality assurance system represent all quality indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality control; • Assessment regularity, administration efficiency; • Documentation, delegation of responsibility, system of quality indicators; • Analysis of student opinion (questionnaires)?

8. Evaluation of the graduates' qualifications

Criteria	Main questions, important statements, quality indicators
<p><i>Conformity of graduation theses and final examinations to the requirements.</i></p> <p><i>Reliability of the assessment system for graduation theses and final examinations</i></p>	<p>Do topics of graduation theses and final examination tasks meet the requirements?</p> <p>What are the principles applied to the composition/structure of graduation theses and final examinations assessment boards?</p> <p>Do representatives of employers participate in this board?</p> <p>How are graduation theses and final examinations assessed?</p> <p>What is the analysis of assessment of graduation theses and final examinations and what are the results of this analysis?</p>
<p><i>Level of graduation theses and final examinations</i></p>	<p>What assistance is provided to students writing their graduation theses and preparing for their final examinations?</p> <p>What is the analytical level of final papers?</p> <p>What is the practical importance of graduation theses?</p>

Annex No 7

**PRELIMINARY INSTITUTIONAL
QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM**

1. Field of assessment:

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the assessment field:

Strengths of the field	Arguments for the strengths	Title of document submitted by the institution	Page No
Weaknesses of the field	Arguments for the weaknesses	Title of document submitted by the institution	Page No

3. Progress made by the institution in the assessment field:

Progress made	Impact of progress on the results of the institution performance	Evidence on the progress

4. Assessment of the institution’s action plan on quality improvement:

Weakness to be corrected	Measures for quality improvement	Assessor assessment of the measure aimed at correcting an adequacy weakness

5. Field assessment according to its criteria:

No	Assessment criteria	Assessment scale			
		Very good	Good	Weak	Inadequate
1.	Assessment criterion 1				
2.	Assessment criterion 2				
n.	Assessment criterion N				
<i>General Area Assessment:</i>					

6. Clarifying questions, additional information for the visit:

Assessment criterion to be clarified	Questions for clarifying field quality assessment during the visit according to a selected criterion	Other relevant documents for the clarification of quality assessment according to a selected criterion

7. Other comments by the assessor:

(Date)

(Assessor's first name, surname, signature)



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci



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