



## **JOINT GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWS**

**STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR JOINT INSTITUTIONAL  
AND PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

**EXTERNAL REVIEW  
PROGRAMMES OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **CONTENTS**

1. General provisions.....	3
2. The scale of assessment parameters	
3. Standards and criteria for institutional and programme accreditation of educational programmes.....	5
3.1. Institutional requirements	
3.2. Programme requirements	

## **1. General provisions**

The guidelines are designed to evaluate educational programmes of higher education according to the standards of the National Centre for Public Accreditation (Russia), Independent Global Quality Assurance Label in Switzerland (Switzerland) and Independent Accreditation Agency «Bilim-Standart» (Kyrgyzstan) on institutional and programme levels.

External review of a single study programme as well as of a cluster<sup>1</sup> of study programmes can be carried out within one review procedure.

If the External Review Panel considers that the marks on the standards of certain educational programmes in the cluster significantly differ from the marks of the other programmes, the External Review Panel can exclude such programmes from the cluster without any repercussions for the whole cluster. Educational programmes excluded from the cluster are evaluated separately by the Review Panel and a separate Final Report is prepared on the outcomes of the review.

### *Composition of the External Review Panel*

External review of study programmes is performed by the External Review Panel. The selection process of experts is carried out by the National Centre for Public Accreditation (hereinafter – NCPA), Independent Global Quality Assurance Label in Switzerland (hereinafter –GQA) and Independent Accreditation Agency «Bilim-Standart» (hereinafter – Bilim-Standart).

The composition of the Panel is agreed with the educational institution to avoid a conflict of interest. The educational institution has the right to decline the suggested nominations of experts with the justification of the reasons for doing so (no more than two nominees).

A Review Panel comprises of members who are:

- sufficiently qualified to evaluate QA system in the educational organization, methodological and financial areas;
- holding the managerial positions in the sphere of education or industry;
- capable of evaluating the quality of training of graduates who have completed the programmes undergoing accreditation.

The Review Panel is formed in such a way that the qualification of experts corresponds to the level of education, specialties and (or) field of studies and makes it possible for them to professionally evaluate every educational programme undergoing accreditation.

A Review Panel includes:

- Experts responsible for institutional aspects (Quality management/Quality assurance, Human resource management, Learning and information resources, Management of financial resources, Scientific activities); agreeing with the Review Panel members and approving the Final Report on the external evaluation of the study programmes.
- Experts responsible for programme aspects, responsible for drafting the Final Report on the results of the external review of study programmes.
- Representative of the professional community (an employer) who is to assess whether the quality of students' training meets the requirements of the professional standards and the labour market.

---

<sup>1</sup> A cluster of study programmes is a group of related study programmes (secondary vocational, bachelor's, specialist's, master's, postgraduate), the external review of which can be conducted by one External Review Panel.

- Representative of the student community who is responsible for evaluation of the compliance between the study programmes under review and students' needs and expectations.

The External Review Panel is composed with due regard to gender balance.

Agencies appoint the coordinator from the list of its staff members, who is responsible for coordination of the Panel's work. The educational institution appoints a person in charge of the process of the public accreditation of study programmes (hereinafter – Institution coordinator).

## 2. The scale of assessment parameters

### The scale of assessment parameters

- A. Full compliance. The Review Panel members consider the study programme (a cluster of programmes) under review **fully compliant** with the requirements with regard to a particular criterion (standard). The indicators are clearly determined and related to the mission, regularly reviewed and upgraded. The experience and practices can be recommended for dissemination.
- B. Substantial compliance. The Panel members consider the study programme under review **substantially compliant** with the requirements with regard to a particular criterion (standard). The indicators are determined clearly enough and correlate with the mission and users' requirements.
- C. Partial compliance. The Panel members think that with regard to a particular criterion (standards) **the compliance has been achieved, but the level of compliance is not high enough.** The indicators are determined in a general way and documented, clearly related to the mission. The study programme (programmes) has (have) closely approached the threshold level of compliance with the NCPA Standards.
- D. Non-compliance. The Panel members consider that the study programme under review **fails to comply** with the NCPA accreditation requirements. Activities are carried out at a low or poor level of quality, there are a lot of deficits and problem areas, the indicators are not clearly determined. The deficits have a negative influence on the realization of the programme's mission. The Panel gives necessary recommendations for the correction of the revealed weaknesses.

### **3. Standards and criteria for institutional and programme accreditation of educational programmes**

#### **3.1. INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Standard 1. Quality assurance policy**

Educational institutions should set up a Quality Assurance Policy and quality management system, showing that they meet specific quality management system requirements, which matter to both inside and outside parties.

Educational institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public, is compatible with the strategy of the educational institution's development, and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders (administration, teaching staff, and students) should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes while involving external stakeholders (employers, employer associations, branch ministries and departments).

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research, learning, and teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
1.1.	Strategic and current plans support the mission of the educational organization and meet the needs of different stakeholders. The educational organization needs to create a plan that fits the organization's goals, sets targets, follows the rules, and keeps getting better	
1.2.	Implementation of strategic and current plans, monitoring of the educational organization's activities are carried out to make decisions and changes with the participation of stakeholders	
1.3.	The internal management system operates effectively and contributes to the achievement of the mission of the educational organization	
1.4.	The educational institution complies with the requirements of normative legal acts on regulation of educational activity	
1.5.	Stakeholders have the opportunity to receive information about the results of the educational organization's activities	
1.6.	The educational institution takes actions to improve its academic reputation	
1.7.	The educational institution ensures the safety of the educational environment	

## **Standard 2. Human resource management**

Educational institutions should ensure objective mechanisms and procedures for human resource management, continuous professional development and advanced training of the staff.

Leadership and commitment is crucial to make sure the quality management system works well. They should be accountable for it, make sure everyone understands the plan, and support using a good process and thinking about risks.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
2.1.	The educational institution has transparent and objective mechanisms and procedures for human resource management, including ethical standards of conduct for staff and learners	
2.2.	The educational institution ensures continuous professional development and advanced training of the staff	
2.3.	The educational institution has transparent, objective mechanisms and indicators for assessing staff performance and making decisions on its results	

## **Standard 3. Learning and information resources**

Educational institutions should ensure adequate, readily accessible, and fit-for-purpose learning, information resources and student support services.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
3.1.	The educational institution provides sufficient material and technical resources and information resources and their accessibility to different groups of learners and staff	
3.2.	The educational institution has mechanisms and indicators for improving material and information resources	
3.3.	The material and technical base of the educational organization meets the requirements for the safety of the educational environment	

## **Standard 4. Management of financial resources**

Educational institutions should ensure openness and transparency in financial management, budget execution and sound financial planning, and regularly undergo external financial audits.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
4.1.	The educational institution ensures openness and transparency in financial management, budget execution and sound financial planning	
4.2.	The educational institution regularly undergoes external financial audits	
4.3.	The educational institution is constantly improving mechanisms and procedures of financial resources management	
4.4.	The educational institution provides social support to staff and students	

### **Standard 5. Scientific activity of the educational institution**

Educational institutions should ensure research activity of the teaching staff, implementation of research results in the academic process.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
5.1.	The educational institution conducts scientific and scientific and methodological research	
5.2.	The educational institution has sufficient material and information resources, ensures their availability for scientific research	
5.3.	The educational institution promotes research internships, exchange of scientific results and personnel	
5.4.	The educational institution uses a system of encouragement and indicators on the application of the results of research work of teachers in educational activities and connection with practice	
5.5.	The educational institution takes actions to increase the publication activity of staff and students through scientometric indicators	



## **3.2. PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS**

### **Standard 1. Policy (goals, development strategy) and quality assurance procedures of study programmes**

Educational institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public, is compatible with the strategy of the educational institution's development, and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders (administration, teaching staff, and students) should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders (employers, employer associations, branch ministries and departments).

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
1.1.	Availability of a documented internal quality assurance system providing continuous enhancement of quality in accordance with the developmental strategy of the educational institution	
1.2.	Participation of all stakeholders (administration, teaching staff, students, employers, employer associations, research organisations, branch ministries and departments – key partners in employment of graduates) in developing and implementing a quality assurance policy through relevant structures and processes	
1.3.	Participation of all structural units of the educational institution in quality assurance processes and procedures	

#### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. It supports the development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

Quality assurance policies are most effective when they reflect the relationship between research, learning, and teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach.

Such a policy supports

- establishment of the quality assurance system;
- departments, schools, faculties, university administration, and other units; individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;
- academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud;
- guarding against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against students and staff;
- involvement of external stakeholders (key employers) in quality assurance.

The policy translates into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution. The institution decides how the policy is implemented, monitored, and revised.

The quality assurance policy also applies to any activities performed by third parties under contract with the institution.

## **Standard 2. Educational programmes**

Educational institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and it should refer to the relevant level of the national qualifications framework.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
2.1.	Availability and accessibility of clearly defined, documented, approved and published goals and objectives of a study programme and expected learning outcomes and their correspondence to the mission and goals and objectives of the educational institution	
2.2.	Availability of procedures for design, approval and revision of a study programme (including expected learning outcomes) with the account of the development of science and industry, and also with the consideration of stakeholder opinions (administration, teaching staff, students, employers)	
2.3.	Consideration of the requirements of professional standards (if available) and the labour market	

### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Study programmes are at the core of higher education institutions' missions. They provide students with both academic knowledge and skills, including general cultural competencies, which may influence their personal development and be applied in their future careers.

#### Programmes

- are designed so that overall programme objectives are in line with the institutional strategy;
- have explicit intended learning outcomes;
- are designed with the involvement of students;
- are designed so that they enable personal development and smooth student progression throughout the study programmes;
- define the expected student workload (e.g., in ECTS);
- include well-structured placement opportunities (where appropriate);
- are subject to a formal institutional approval process by external stakeholders;
- content of work placement and pre-graduation practical training is oriented towards the development of students' practical skills required by employers;
- include a research/artistic component, integration in academic and field-specific science in postgraduate study programmes.

### **Standard 3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**

Educational institutions should implement processes of student-centred learning in their study programmes. The methods through which the programmes are delivered should encourage students to take an active part in the learning process.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
3.1.	Consideration of the needs of diverse groups of students and the possibility of offering individual learning paths (course selection, further qualification, modular training, double-degree programmes)	
3.2.	Consideration of non-formal <sup>2</sup> and informal <sup>3</sup> education (if available) when assessing learning outcomes/students' competencies (online courses, further education programmes, microcredentials, startups)	
3.3.	Use of clearly defined criteria and objective assessment of acquired learning outcomes/competences of students corresponding to the expected learning outcomes, goals of the study programmes and their purpose (diagnostic, formative or summative assessment)	
3.4.	Information about study programmes, criteria and procedures for assessment of learning outcomes/competencies, examinations, tests and other types of control	
3.5.	Independent assessment of learning outcomes: certified examinations, Federal Internet Examination for graduates from Bachelor's programmes, Federal Internet Examination in the Sphere of Higher Education", Federal Internet Examination in the Sphere of Professional Education, academic competitions, etc.	
3.6.	Availability and effectiveness of appeals procedure and procedures	

#### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This means careful consideration of the design and delivery of study programmes and the assessment of learning outcomes.

##### Student-centred learning and teaching

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths that allow for course selection, elective modules, completing a further qualification, modular training, double-degree programmes, etc.;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and teaching and learning methods;
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;

---

<sup>2</sup> Non-formal education refers to education that occurs outside the formal school system. (clubs, training sessions, short programmes, etc).

<sup>3</sup> Informal education – is the type of knowledge that one gains through several life experiences at the workplace, from parents or elders, etc. Informal education is gained under the influence of society and the community.

- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- has a system of student information (website, personal account, information booths, etc.);
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

Considering the importance of assessment for students' progression and their future careers, quality assurance processes for assessment take into account the following:

- Assessors are familiar with the existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field;
- The criteria for and methods of assessment are published in advance;
- The assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved;
- Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process;
- Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner;
- Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;
- A formal procedure for student appeals is in place.

#### **Standard 4. Student admission, support of academic achievements and graduation**

Educational institutions should have and consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, support of academic achievements, recognition of graduates' qualifications and graduation.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
4.1.	Systematic carrier guidance targeted at recruiting and selection of applicants should be in place	
4.2.	Adherence to academic integrity (availability of documents on academic integrity, methods to evaluate students' works in an educational institution (for example, "Antiplagiat" - Russian software for detecting text reuse)	
4.3.	Availability and effectiveness of rules and regulations for admission, transfer of students from other educational institutions, recognition of qualifications, periods of study and prior learning	
4.4.	Balance of enrollment and graduation rates (retention, dropouts)	
4.5.	Systematic work to support students' progression	
4.6.	Availability of student information and support in project and research work, academic mobility programmes, students' participation in academic mobility	

#### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Providing the conditions and rendering the support necessary for students to make progress in their academic careers is in the best interests of individual students, programmes, institutions, and systems. It is vital to have relevant admission, recognition and completion procedures, particularly when students are mobile within and across higher education systems.

The educational institution should regularly carry out career guidance aimed at cooperation with students, graduates of schools, and professional educational institutions, contributing to their conscious choice of a field of study. After admission, student initiation should include induction to the educational institution and study programmes; social and psychological adaptation of first-year students should be in place.

It is important that admission policies, processes, and criteria (including employer-sponsored education) are implemented consistently and in a transparent manner; the demand for the study programmes is analysed; the competitive environment is evaluated; regular support of students' academic progress and the integrity of the student body is provided; social and psychological support throughout training is in place.

The educational institution should ensure students' involvement in projects, research and in-bound and out-bound mobility programmes. The educational institution should enable postgraduate students to study or do research at other national and foreign universities or research institutions; to participate in joint research projects.

All stakeholders adhere to the following academic integrity principles:

- documents on academic integrity are available (regulations/rules/code of academic integrity);
- contribution to the enhancement of the quality and theory of academic, research, and other works; methods to evaluate works are in place at the educational institution (for example, "Antiplagiat" - Russian software for detecting text reuse).

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, secondary vocational education qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' academic progress while promoting mobility.

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on:

- cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies, and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' period of study. Educational institutions should provide students with a document on education in compliance with the requirements of national legislation.

## **Standard 5. Teaching staff**

Institutions should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff, which help ensure the sufficient qualification and competency of their teachers.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
5.1.	Availability and compliance with clear, transparent and objective criteria of: – recruitment of the members of the teaching staff from Russia and/or abroad, appointment to a position, promotion, dismissal; – dismissal of the members of the teaching staff as a result of a failure to comply with professional competence requirements.	
5.2.	Compliance with professional competence requirements, relevance of specialisms, degrees and titles and /or practical experience to the profile of the study programmes	
5.3.	Use of best national and international practices as well as current tendencies in teaching	
5.4.	Availability of a mentoring /counseling / support system that takes into account the needs of different groups of students	
5.5.	Research activity of the teaching staff, implementation of research results in the academic process	
5.6.	Employing visiting lecturers from other national and foreign educational/industrial/research institutions	
5.7.	Participation of teachers in joint international projects, internships abroad, academic mobility programmes	
5.8.	A system of financial and non-financial incentives for teachers	
5.9.	A system for career development and professional advancement for teachers	

### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

The teacher's role is essential in creating a high-quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences, and skills. The diversifying student population and stronger focus on learning outcomes require student-centred learning and teaching approach and the role of the teacher is, therefore, also changing.

Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively.

Educational institutions should:

- develop and implement clear, transparent, and fair processes for staff recruitment, appointment for a position, dismissal;
- offer opportunities for career growth and promote the professional development of the teaching staff, taking into consideration the results of student and teacher assessment surveys; the teaching staff of the secondary vocational educational institutions should be encouraged to become certified examiners of the demonstration examination,
- encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage the members of the teaching staff involved in the delivery of postgraduate programmes indicate their research achievements (grant amounts,

- research activity, student involvement in the work of research groups);
- encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;
  - encourage the academic mobility of teachers (internships, project work, visiting-lecturing).

## **Standard 6. Learning resources**

Educational institutions should ensure adequate, readily accessible and fit for purpose learning resources and student support services.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
6.1.	Provision of the study programme with material and technical resources (modern tools, equipment, computers, classrooms, laboratories, art studios, student theatres, small innovative enterprises, research simulation grounds, co-working spaces, etc.)	
6.2.	Availability of internship opportunities, well-equipped facilities and qualified supervisors	
6.3.	Availability of up-to-date library and information resources including those for independent study and research work; availability of e-library, author's textbooks, methodological materials, and e-learning resources	

### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

For the purpose of creating a good higher education experience, institutions provide a range of resources to assist student learning. These vary from physical and academic to human support (tutors, counsellors, and advisors).

An educational institution should provide:

- the necessary material and technical resources (modern tools, equipment, computers, classrooms, laboratories, creative studios, student theatres, small innovative enterprises, scientific simulation grounds, etc.), as well as co-working spaces;
- specialised grounds/facilities for practical training with state-of-the-art equipment and highly qualified supervisors; for secondary vocational education, there should be training workshops, training grounds, multifunctional centres of applied qualifications, and Centers for Demonstration Examinations.

The needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed, and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning, and providing learning resources and student support. Support activities and facilities may be organised in a variety of ways depending on the institutional context.

In accordance with the federal state requirements for the structure of postgraduate programmes, conditions of their implementation, terms of delivery depending on the format of education, teaching methods, and special requirements of certain students, the educational institution should provide the following:

- individual access to the electronic information and educational environment;
- access to research infrastructure in accordance with the postgraduate programme and individual work plan;

- access to educational and methodological materials, electronic resources, a library, information and reference systems, and professional databases, the composition of which is documented in the relevant postgraduate programme and individual work plan.

In delivering support services, the role of support and administrative staff is crucial, and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

### **Standard 7. Collection, analysis and use of information for managing the study programmes and public information**

Educational institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse, and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities. Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, that is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, and readily accessible.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
7.1.	The educational institution should have in place a unified effective IT system in order to collect and analyse information and ensure its effectiveness for the study programmes to be properly managed	
7.2.	Involvement of students and members of the teaching staff in collecting and analysing information for proper management of study programmes; providing access to information related to organisational issues of the educational process	
7.3.	Effective use of the official website of the HEI, publication on the website and in mass media of complete and reliable information about educational programmes, achievements, including objective data on graduates' employment and labour market demand	
7.4.	Content and adequacy of translation of the English version of the website/webpage of the structural unit	
7.5.	Availability of a feedback mechanism for stakeholders (students, teachers, employers, line ministries and departments) on the university website and other sources	
7.6.	Integration in the environment, interaction of the educational institution with major employers, different professional associations and other national and international organisations on industry-specific, regional, national and international levels	

#### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Reliable data is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of their work and making recommendations for improving educational activities. Educational institutions should have procedures for collecting and analysing information about their activities and educational programmes, and use the information obtained in the work of an internal quality assurance system.

The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the institution. The following are of interest:



- Profile of the student population;
- Student progress, achievements, drop-out rate, and graduation;
- Students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- Learning resources and student support;
- Graduates' employment;
- Key performance indicators of a HEI.

Various methods of collecting information may be used. It is important that students and the teaching staff are involved in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Information on institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students as well as for graduates, other stakeholders (mainly employers), and the public (parents of prospective students).

Therefore, institutions provide information about their activities, including, the intended learning outcomes, qualifications awarded, teaching, learning, and assessment methods used, pass rates, and learning opportunities available to students, as well as data on graduate employment.

### **Standard 8. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes**

Educational institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes, employ feedback mechanisms (surveying, interviewing, and questioning students and key employers) in order to assure the achievement of their goals and meet the needs of students and society. The results of these processes should lead to the continuous enhancement of study programmes. Information about the measures undertaken and planned should be available to all stakeholders. The study programmes should undergo external quality assurance procedures.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
8.1.	Documented procedures of monitoring and periodic review of study programmes should be in place	
8.2.	Study programmes should undergo regular external review procedures	
8.3.	Availability of follow-up as a result of an external review of study programmes and consideration of the results of previous external reviews when conducting subsequent evaluation procedures	
8.4.	Availability of results of independent assessment of study programmes (best-edu.ru, programme rankings, academic achievements of students and members of the teaching staff, achievement of study programmes)	

### **Recommendations for the educational institution**

Regular monitoring, review, and revision of study programmes aim to ensure that the provision remains appropriate and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

These include the evaluation of:

- the content of the programmes in the light of the latest research, thus ensuring that the programmes are up-to-date;

- changing needs of society;
- students’ workload, progression, and assessment of the quality of student and graduate training;
- effectiveness of procedures for student assessment;
- student expectations, needs, and satisfaction in relation to the programme;
- learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose.

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly with the involvement of students and other stakeholders (employers, employer associations, line ministries, and departments – key stakeholders in employment). The information collected is analysed, and the programmes are adapted to ensure that they are up-to-date. Revised programmes are published.

External quality assurance procedures allow stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes. They accelerate development and create an environment for new opportunities. They also provide objective information to the public about the quality of the HEI’s activities.

Educational institutions should regularly participate in external quality assurance procedures that take into account the requirements of national legislation. Depending on the context, external quality assurance can take different forms and be implemented at different levels (programme, faculty, or educational institution).

Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with receiving external feedback, writing a report, or follow-up procedures taking place in an educational institution. HEIs should strive to ensure that the progress achieved in the previous external quality assurance procedure is taken into account when preparing for the next quality assurance procedure.

### **Standard 9. Quality assurance of education (online/distance learning)**

Educational institutions should guarantee the quality of education (when changing to an online/distance format) and have appropriate digital resources to support the educational process.

No	Subject of evaluation	Mark
9.1.	Availability of facilities (equipment) in an educational institution necessary to deliver study programmes via e-learning/distance learning technologies	
9.2.	Availability of technical infrastructure for e-learning (access to e-learning environment, sufficient e-library resources, digital security)	
9.3.	Use of electronic/ distance or blended learning technologies in accordance with the objectives of the study programmes, goals of evaluating students’ achievements and due consideration of students’ capabilities and needs	
9.4.	Systematic work meant to support (record) the educational process and students’ academic performance when using e-learning and / or blended learning approaches	
9.5.	Academic and technological support for teachers and students to obtain the necessary digital competencies when delivering or mastering programmes in a distance format	

## **Recommendations for the educational institution**

The educational institutions should create the necessary conditions for study programme delivery in an online/distance format. The e-learning environment includes e-learning information resources, e-learning educational resources, information and telecommunication technologies, and appropriate technological facilities that enable students to complete study programmes to the full regardless of their location.

The educational institution should employ a variety of digital services to support the process, including:

- availability of programmes partially or completely delivered as e-learning or distance learning methods;
- availability of technical infrastructure to compile students' portfolios, availability of personal accounts
- availability of technical infrastructure to ensure the educational process, digital technologies for progress monitoring (testing, proctoring, storing papers, etc.).
- availability of digital services to support teachers (digital signature, digital kit for educational programme design, etc.).

The educational institution is accountable to its students for the quality of education, regardless of whether the online course of another educational organisation is used in the educational programme delivery or not. In order to ensure the quality of the educational service the HEI provides organisational, educational, methodological, and other relevant support to the student all through the online course. The HEI also monitors the knowledge mastered and carries out interim assessment. If a student is not satisfied with the quality of an online course, the HEI is obliged to make up for the shortcomings as part of student support.

In case the HEI shifts to a distance format of study programmes delivery, teachers are required to comply with the curriculum (student workload, number of contact hours, and students' independent work). The tools used for communication between a teacher and students in distance learning should meet the needs and capabilities of both: message exchange via email and messengers, use of online conference systems in workshops, and the electronic educational environment of the university (Learning Management System).

**Table - The scale of assessment parameters of a study programme**

№ п/п	Standards	Assessment of study programmes			
		Full compliance	Substantial compliance	Partial compliance (needs improvement)	Non-compliance
1.	Policy (goals, development strategy) and quality assurance procedures of study programmes				
2.	Educational programmes				
3.	Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment				
4.	Student admission, support of academic achievements and graduation				
5.	Teaching staff				
6.	Learning resources				
7.	Collection, analysis and use of information for managing the study programmes and public information				
8.	On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes				
9.	Quality assurance of education (online/distance learning)				