

Approved by
the Board of Trustees of
“National Centre for
Professional Education Quality Assurance” foundation
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PROCEDURE

ON FORMATION AND OPERATION OF ANQA ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The current document defines the procedure on the formation and operation of ANQA Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as Committee).
2. The Committee is formed to make a decision on institutional or program accreditation.
3. The Committee is an independent, collegial, permanent body which carries out its authority defined by the Regulation on “State Accreditation of RA Institutions and their Educational Programs” and by the current procedure.
4. The expenses related to the organization of work of the Committee are covered by National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (hereinafter referred to as ANQA).

II. STRUCTURE AND FORMATION PROCEDURE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The Committee consists of ten members.
6. The members of the Committee may be experienced specialists from the spheres of education, science, culture, various sectors of economy and state government, employers as well as students.
7. The Committee’s authorization period is 3 years.
8. Candidates for the members of the Committee are nominated by higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as HEI), employers and other professional associations and the National Students’ Association.
9. The final set-up of the Committee and changes in it are approved by the decision of ANQA Board of Trustees.
10. The Committee has a Chairman and Secretary.

11. The first session is appointed and moderated by the President of ANQA Board of Trustees before the selection of Committee Chairman.
12. During the first session the President of the Committee is elected from the members of the Committee.
13. The functions of Committee Secretary are implemented by ANQA Secretariat.
14. A contract is signed between the Committee members and ANQA.
15. The authorizations of the Committee member can be terminated in the following cases:
 - a) resignation by the member,
 - b) grounding of indolence of the Committee member,
 - c) violation of the requirements of the act of confidentiality,
 - d) death of the member.
16. Vacant position of a Committee member is occupied within a month according to this procedure.
17. The Committee member wanting to quit from the Committee is continuing to implement his/her responsibilities after submitting a resignation letter to the President until a new member is assigned by the Board of Trustees.

III. AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE

18. The Committee makes a decision of accreditation based on HEI's self-evaluation and ANQA conclusion on the results of the expertise.
19. The Committee examines the documentation on the raised issues: HEI's self-evaluation, draft report of the expert panel, HEI's agreement on the expert panel report and remarks (if any), final report of the expert panel and ANQA draft conclusion.
20. The Committee can require additional data and documents for making a decision on challenging issues.
21. The Committee makes suggestions to ANQA for the improvement of accreditation criteria.

IV. DECISION MAKING BY THE COMMITTEE

22. The decisions of the Committee are made through open voting, simply by the majority of votes. The vote of the Chairman is decisive in case of equal votes.
23. The Committee adopts one of the following decisions:
 - a/ the HEI is subject to accreditation if it meets all the accreditation criteria.
 - b/ the HEI is subject to conditional accreditation if the highlighted deficiencies can be fixed in no more than two years.
 - c/ the HEI is not subject to accreditation if the requirements of the aforementioned a/ and b/ points are not met.

24. For each accreditation process an individual decision is made.
25. All the decisions concerning accreditation made by the Committee are published.

V. AUTHORITY OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBER

26. The Committee member has the right to:
 - a) require additional information from expert panel and HEI,
 - b) speak out on any issue under discussion,
 - c) ask questions,
 - d) make suggestions.
27. The Committee member is obliged to:
 1. be aware of the legal acts regulating the accreditation process,
 2. participate in all the sessions of the Committee,
 3. get acquainted with the package of documents on the raised questions, take part in their discussions,
 4. within the frames of issues under discussion perform the tasks issued by the Committee Chairman,
 5. sign the professional confidentiality commitment,
 6. declare self-withdrawal and not participate in the voting in case of being aware of some facts or circumstances about the HEI that may provoke reasonable doubt on his/her impartiality.

The following cases can be considered as grounds for self-withdrawal:

- a. The Committee member has a biased approach to the HEI undergoing accreditation process.
 - b. The Committee member or his/her spouse or a third degree relative is holding an office at the HEI undergoing accreditation process.
 - c. The Committee member is aware that he himself or his/her spouse or a third degree relative has economic interests from the HEI undergoing accreditation process.
28. Each member of the Committee has the right of one vote.

VI. THE AUTHORITIES OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

29. Represents the Committee in relations with third parties during the intervals between sessions.
30. Organizes the work of the Committee and is responsible for the maintenance of the legal base of its activities within the authorities set forth in this procedure.

31. Gives instructions to the members of the Committee, decides their responsibilities within the frames of the Committee's functions.
32. Can make suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of Committee's work or improving the staff.
33. Can completely or partially transfer his/her authorizations to another member of the Committee temporary.
34. Constantly cooperates with ANQA.
35. Signs the decisions and the protocols of the Committee.
36. Presents the annual report of the Committee to ANQA Board of Trustees.
37. Performs other authorities within the frames of this procedure.

VII. THE AUTHORITIES OF THE COMMITTEE SECRETARY

38. The protocols of the Committee's sessions are conducted by ANQA Secretariat staff member selected by mutual agreement of the Committee and the Director of the foundation.
39. Prepares and at least two weeks prior to the session provides the Accreditation Committee members and HEI with the package of documents on the issues to be discussed in the agenda.
40. Notifies the Committee members about the day, place and agenda of the meeting in written form or by e-mail at least two weeks before the meeting.
41. Registers the Committee members attending the session.
42. Organizes the recording of the Committee's sessions in written and digital forms.
43. Prepares and signs the protocols of the Committee's sessions.
44. Provides the protocols of the sessions to all the members of the Committee.
45. Prepares the draft decisions of the Committee together with the Chairman.
46. Presents the Committee's decision and protocol of the session to ANQA.
47. Performs other authorities within the frames of this procedure.

VIII. WORK REGULATION OF THE COMMITTEE, PROCEDURE ON PREPARATION AND CONDUCTION OF SESSIONS

48. The Committee fulfills its authorities through sessions.
49. The sessions of the Committee are held upon necessity at least 4 times a year and their dates are appointed by the Chairman based on ANQA's offer.
50. The sessions of the Committee are valid if at least two-thirds of the members are attending them. The session is postponed in case of the absence of quorum.

51. The sessions of the Committee are prepared by the Chairman and Secretary with the involvement of other Committee members if necessary. The coordinator of the expert panel supports these activities.
52. Sessions of the Committee are lead by the Chairman of the Committee.
53. Besides the members of the Committee, the following people participate in the sessions:
 - 1) a representative from the state authorized body (MoES) having the deliberative vote
 - 2) the members of the expert panel
 - 3) the coordinator of the expert panel
 - 4) the representatives of the particular HEI undergoing the process of accreditation
 - 5) ANQA staff member monitoring the accreditation procedure in the particular HEI.
54. The Committee members can make a suggestion on inclusion of some urgent questions into the agenda, which are put to vote.
55. During the session of the Committee the head of the expert panel briefly presents the results of the expertise and the draft conclusion on accreditation.
56. After hearing all the questions in the agenda the members of the Committee have a close final discussion for making a decision after which voting is carried out. Decision is made on the basis of voting results.
57. All the speeches, questions and answers are recorded.

IX. THE PROTOCOLS OF THE COMMITTEE

58. The sessions of the Committee are recorded in paper and digital forms.
59. The protocols of the Committee include:
 - 1) the year, month, date and place, time of launch and end of the session;
 - 2) the data of the Committee members and other people participating in the session;
 - 3) the agenda of the session;
 - 4) the outline of the speeches, questions, their answers, explanations, requests and announcements within the frames of each issue on the agenda;
 - 5) oral explanations of the expert panel on their conclusions;
 - 6) the results of the voting.
60. The protocol is signed by the Committee Chairman and the Secretary.
61. The process of the session is recorded and notes are taken. Digital recording is stored in a laser medium. The protocol, signed by the Committee Chairman and the Secretary, is also saved.

X. APPEALING THE DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

(chapter X changed 9.06.2015 N1)

62. After having the decision within a month the HEI may appeal the decisions of the Committee to ANQA Board of Trustees according to the appeal format developed by ANQA.
63. After getting the appeal ANQA Secretariat sends it to the President of ANQA Board of Trustees or sends it back (in case the appeal is not signed, the appeal is signed by a person not having that authority or the authorized person hasn't attached the letter of authorization to the appeal, the deadlines of submitting the appeal were not kept).
64. In case of proceeding the appeal the President of the Board of Trustees forms a new expert panel from the database of ANQA experts in order to carry out an additional expertise in the HEI that appealed.
65. The following members are involved in the expert panel:
 - International expert from the sphere of education
 - Local expert having the experience in teaching and/or education management as well as proficient knowledge in legislative framework regulating education sphere
 - Local expert having great teaching experience in one of the spheres of the academic program mentioned in the agreement signed with the HEI.
66. The experts who took part in the previous accreditation procedure cannot be involved in the new expert panel.
67. The composition of the expert panel is agreed upon with the HEI and is approved by the order of ANQA Director.
68. ANQA Secretariat forms the schedule for the implementation of the activities according to accreditation procedure:
 1. *Self-evaluation.* HEI presents current self-evaluation of the criteria that were negatively assessed according to the format defined by the regulation on accreditation. The new self-evaluation should not have references to the self-evaluation, expert-panel report and decision of the Accreditation Committee presented in the previous accreditation procedure. Upgraded appendices can be attached to the self-evaluation.
 2. *Site-visit* to HEI which can last not more than 2 days. The expert panel decides the meetings.
 3. *Expert panel conclusion.* Expert panel report is sent to the HEI for getting remarks and suggestions about the facts mentioned in the report.
69. After the procedure the expert panel presents to ANQA Secretariat a written report about the results of the expertise according to expert panel report format developed by ANQA.

70. ANQA Secretariat sends the whole package of documents of the appeal procedure (letter of appeal, new self-evaluation, expert panel report) to the members of ANQA Board of Trustees for their information.
71. Having got the expert panel report ANQA organizes a session of the Committee in two months' time to make a new decision.
72. The expenses of carrying out additional expertise concerning the appeal are covered by the HEI that appealed according to the tariff approved by ANQA Board of Trustees. Within ten working days after getting the appeal an agreement is signed between ANQA and HEI according to the estimate of the schedule of additional expertise and implementation costs.
73. The decision of the Committee cannot be appealed to ANQA again.

XI. CONCLUDING PROVISIONS

74. Changes or amendments in the current procedure are being made by ANQA Board of Trustees based on the proposal of ANQA Director.