

Procedure for formation of the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education and the Appeals Committee

Approved by the Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation on 10.06.2015

Amended on 28.09.2016

1. COMPOSITION OF ASSESSMENT COUNCIL

- 1.1 The Assessment Council has 13 members. The Assessment Council shall elect the chairman and the deputy chairman from among its members by a simple majority of the members present.
- 1.2 The Assessment Council is comprised of experts in the fields of higher education and quality assurance of higher education.
- 1.3 Members of the Assessment Council shall be independent in their activities. Members of the Assessment Council shall not represent in the Assessment Council either the interests of the organisation who presented their candidacy or the interests of their employer. Members of the Assessment Council shall confirm the obligation to maintain the confidentiality of information that has become known to them by reason of their membership in the Assessment Council and the lack of conflicts of interests by signing a relevant declaration.

2. FORMATION OF ASSESSMENT COUNCIL

- 2.1 The Assessment Council is formed and its membership approved for three years by the Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation.
- 2.2 The Archimedes Foundation shall announce in public the presentation of candidates for the post of member of the Assessment Council. It is possible to present candidates within three weeks of the date of the public announcement of the presentation of candidates.
- 2.3 Candidates for the post of member of the Assessment Council may be presented by universities, institutions of professional higher education, research and development institutions, registered professional associations, associations of employers, and associations of Student Bodies.
- 2.4 A candidate presentation letter shall include the justification of the suitability of the candidate for member of the Assessment Council, and the CV of the candidate.
- 2.5 The Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation shall, from among the candidates presented, select the members by at least a 3/4 majority taking into consideration that:
 - 2.5.1 the Assessment Council shall include at least one expert from each broad group of studies;

- 2.5.2 no more than two members from the same university, institution of professional higher education, research and development institution, registered professional association, association of employers or association of Student Bodies may belong to the Assessment Council. If a member of the Council during the election period concludes an employment contract with an institution that is already represented by two members of the Council, he or she is obligated to resign the position of the member of the Council. A public contest shall be organised to fill in the vacant position.
 - 2.5.3 a member of the Assessment Council cannot be the rector or the vice rector of a higher education institution nor an official of the Ministry of Education and Research;
 - 2.5.4 no person may be a member of the Council more than six years.
- 2.6 Upon selecting the members of the Assessment Council, a candidate's previous work in promoting Estonian higher education shall be considered and, if possible, the following principles shall be followed:
- 2.6.1 The candidates whose previous activities have been serving the purpose of improving the quality of Estonian higher education as a whole shall be preferred;
 - 2.6.2 Preference is given to candidates with previous experience in external quality assurance of higher education;
 - 2.6.3 As a result of the election of the members of the Council, at least 1/3rd of the present members of the Council shall be replaced and at least 1/3rd of the members shall continue their work in the Council;
 - 2.6.4 Both universities and institutions of professional higher education are represented in the Council;
 - 2.6.5 At least one employer and one student member belong to the composition of the Council;
 - 2.6.6 Gender balance is maintained in the Council.
- 2.7 The Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation shall approve the composition of the Assessment Council and shall make it public on its homepage within 10 days of the approval of the composition of the Assessment Council.

3. COMPOSITION, FORMATION AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE APPEALS COMMITTEE

- 3.1. The task of the Appeals Committee is to provide the Assessment Council with an unbiased opinion regarding the validity of the challenges filed upon the administrative decisions and measures taken by the Council.
- 3.2. The Appeals Committee is comprised of four members and four alternate members.
- 3.3. The Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation shall form the Appeals Committee, taking into consideration the following principles:
 - 3.3.1. The member of the Committee is familiar with the principles and procedures of external quality assurance of higher education, the rules of procedure of the Assessment Council, and the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and has previous experience in external quality evaluation of higher education;

- 3.3.2. One member and one alternate member of the Committee shall be presented by the Estonian Rectors' Conference;
 - 3.3.3. One member and one alternate member of the Committee shall be presented by the Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences of Estonia;
 - 3.3.4. One member and one alternate member (from outside the higher education institutions) of the Committee shall be presented by the Estonian Employers' Confederation;
 - 3.3.5. One member and one alternate member of the Committee shall be presented by the Federation of Estonian Student Unions.
 - 3.3.6. The limitations described in clause 2.5.3 of the present regulation also extend to the composition of the Appeals Committee.
- 3.4. The Appeals Committee is formed for three years by the Supervisory Board of the Archimedes Foundation. The composition of the Committee shall be made public on EKKA's homepage
 - 3.5. The work of the Appeals Committee is organized by the EKKA office. The Appeals Committee shall be summoned by the Director of EKKA after a challenge has been filed upon administrative decisions or measures taken by the Assessment Council.
 - 3.6. A session of the Appeals Committee has attained a quorum if at least three members of the Committee are present.
 - 3.7. If a member of the Appeals Committee is associated with the higher education institution participating in the challenge proceedings, the alternate member shall participate in the Appeals Committee.
 - 3.8. Members of the Appeals Committee shall adhere to the obligations to maintain the confidentiality of information that has become known to them by reason of their membership in the Appeals Committee, and the lack of conflicts of interests. Members of the Appeals Committee shall not represent in the Committee either the interests of the organisation who presented their candidacy or the interests of their employer.
 - 3.9. The Appeals Committee shall within five days of the receipt of the challenge provide the Assessment Council with an unbiased opinion regarding the validity of the challenge. The Appeals Committee shall approve its opinion by open vote by a simple majority of the members present at the session of the Committee.