

Requirements and Procedure for Accreditation of Continuing Education Training Programme

Approved by the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education on 17.06.2026.

I. General provisions

1. These Guidelines establish the requirements and the procedure applied by the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter *HAKA*) for the accreditation of continuing education training programme (hereinafter *training programme*). The accreditation is intended for a training programme offered by any provider of continuing education (hereinafter *provider*), whether a higher education institution or a non-formal continuing education provider.
2. The purpose of accreditation of continuing education training programme is to determine whether: the objectives of the training programme are clear and appropriate; the teaching methods and tools used in teaching facilitate the achievement of planned learning outcomes; sufficient resources are available to implement the training programme; the studies are organised in a professional manner; the provider regularly analyses the level of achievement of the objectives of the training programme and, if necessary, plans improvement activities.
3. HAKA shall assess the training programme in five assessment areas: training programme and training programme development, learning and teaching, teaching staff, resources and quality management (hereinafter *assessment areas*), and based on the assessments make an accreditation decision.
4. The accreditation of training programme is conducted according to the timetable drafted by HAKA and approved by the institution providing the training programme (hereinafter referred to as *provider*).

II. Requirements for accreditation of training programme

5. In the case of accreditation of a foreign provider in addition to ESG, the requirements arising from the legal framework of the respective country are also taken into account, and if necessary, procedures, requirements, standards, criteria and/or indicators are supplemented accordingly.



6. Training programme and training programme development

- 6.1. Educational needs of (different) target groups as well as results of educational and societal trends and market research are used for developing educational offers.
- 6.2. Objectives, expectations and requirements of stakeholders are identified and defined. The goals and content of the learning offer are relevant to the target group; they are tailored to the needs of learners.
- 6.3. Relevant stakeholders – for example, current and former learners, educators and funders – are involved in the development of the educational offer. The training programme development takes into account feedback from learners, employers, and other stakeholders.
- 6.4. Learning outcomes, including transversal skills, are clearly defined, match the educational goals and, if applicable, are linked with current or future professional practice. The learning outcomes must be coherent with the set EQF level.
- 6.5. The training programme includes its title, EQF level, learning outcomes, entry requirements, total study volume, description of the learning process, description of the learning environment, completion requirements, description of issued documents, educator qualifications and, if applicable, a list of learning materials.
- 6.6. The content and structure of the training programme are consistent with its objectives and learning outcomes regardless of the mode of delivery (on-site, blended or online).
- 6.7. Different parts of the training programme are logically integrated and form a coherent whole.

7. Learning and teaching

- 7.1. The objectives of the training programme, learning outcomes, teaching methods, principles of assessment and feedback, and principles and good practices for digital learning and teaching (online, blended, technology-enhanced learning) are explained to learners before or at the start of the course.
- 7.2. Content and process of learning and teaching are research-based.
- 7.3. Modern teaching methods with a strong learner orientation are used in teaching and are designed for the achievement of learning outcomes across delivery modes (on-site, blended, online).
- 7.4. The learning process considers learners' expectations, needs, existing competences; the educator plans the process based on learners' levels and specific characteristics.



- 7.5. Teaching content and learning process are linked to the learning outcomes on the respective level of the EQF, if applicable.
- 7.6. Teaching and learning materials (including e-learning materials) are up-to-date and appropriate to achieve learning outcomes.
- 7.7. Assessment of learning outcomes (including recognition of prior learning and work experience if applicable) is transparent and objective. Where relevant, digital technologies, among other means, are employed in a reliable manner, with safeguards in place to ensure integrity and prevent misuse of AI.
- 7.8. Educators support learners in taking responsibility for their own learning and learning outcomes.
- 7.9. During the learning process, learners receive constructive and forward-looking feedback that supports the achievement of learning outcomes.
- 7.10. Clear conditions for the achievement of learning outcomes and for issued documents are established in the training programme.
- 7.11. Issued documentation includes information about the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, content, level and status (continuing education/micro-credential) of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

8. Educators

- 8.1. There are educators with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the training programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of learning and teaching.
- 8.2. Practitioners participate in teaching the training programme.
- 8.3. Educators have adequate teaching and digital competences to support the autonomy of learners and ensure adequate professional supervision.
- 8.4. Educators periodically receive feedback on their performance and update their professional, pedagogical and digital skills.
- 8.5. Where learning is partially or fully delivered online, educators have the necessary digital competences to design and deliver online learning, including selecting, creating, managing, protecting and sharing digital resources; facilitating teaching, guidance, collaboration and learner engagement through digital technologies; supporting self-regulated learning; ensuring accessibility, inclusion and personalisation; and using digital tools for formative and summative assessment, analysis of learner progress and targeted feedback.



9. Resources

- 9.1. Adequate physical and financial resources support the achievement of objectives in the training programme.
- 9.2. The provider ensures a safe and accessible learning environment (on-site, blended or online) and provides learning tools that support the achievement of learning outcomes.
- 9.3. The provider supports educators in developing and conducting the training programme.
- 9.4. The provider offers support services that are tailored to the needs of learners and educators.
- 9.5. Resource development is sustainable.

10. Quality Management

- 10.1. The provider has publicly available principles and system for internal quality assurance to ensure the quality of its courses.
- 10.2. The provider systematically collects feedback from learners, graduates, educators and other relevant stakeholders, analyses it, and uses it to improve training programmes and teaching.
- 10.3. The provider publishes clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and accessible information about both its quality assurance outcomes and its activities, including the training programme(s), the mode of delivery and educators' qualifications.
- 10.4. The provider has a system for evaluating subject-specific and adult educator competences of the educators as part of the recruitment procedures.
- 10.5. The performance of educators is regularly evaluated, and their development needs are identified, taking into account, among other things, feedback from learners. Opportunities are provided for educators to develop their subject-specific, adult education and digital competences.

III. Necessary documentation and requirements for training programme

11. The provider shall conduct self-assessment and prepare a report according to the template provided by HAKA, following the guidance of HAKA online materials.
12. The provider shall submit its self-assessment report in electronic format to HAKA no later than three months prior to the agreed assessment visit.



13. HAKA shall review the self-assessment report within two weeks after receiving it and, if necessary, return it to the provider for amendments. The provider shall send the enhanced report back to HAKA within two weeks.
14. HAKA assessment coordinator (hereinafter *coordinator*) shall send the self-assessment report to the committee no later than two months prior to the assessment visit.
15. Along with the self-assessment, the provider shall forward HAKA the following documents:
 - 15.1. The training programme that includes:
 - 15.1.1. the title,
 - 15.1.2. EQF level,
 - 15.1.3. learning outcomes,
 - 15.1.4. entry requirements,
 - 15.1.5. total study volume (minimum of 1 ECTS or 26h of student workload),
 - 15.1.6. description of the learning process,
 - 15.1.7. description of the learning environment,
 - 15.1.8. completion requirements,
 - 15.1.9. description of issued documents,
 - 15.1.10. educator qualifications,
 - 15.1.11. list of learning materials.
 - 15.2. Example of a feedback form used to collect feedback from learners.
 - 15.3. Documents regulating organisation and internal quality assurance of continuing education.
 - 15.4. Documents regulating provision of continuing education in the respective country, if applicable.

IV. Formation of expert panel

16. An expert panel (hereinafter referred to as *the panel*) shall have at least three members.
17. The formation of the panel is based on the following principles:
 - 17.1. At least one member shall be familiar with the functioning of the continuing education system, the legislation that regulates it in the respective country, and trends in continuing education worldwide.
 - 17.2. At least one member shall have the competencies of an adult educator.



- 17.3. At least one member shall have management and/or development experience in the area of the given training programme.
 - 17.4. At least one member shall have undergone training related to external quality assessment and shall preferably have experience in external assessment of education.
 - 17.5. At least one member is a learner or a recent graduate (within one year of graduation at the time of the formation of the panel).
 - 17.6. All panel members shall have the necessary teamwork skills to conduct the assessment.
 - 17.7. All panel members shall be proficient in English as the working language of the assessment.
18. Members of the panel shall be independent, they shall not represent neither the interests of their employer/the educational institution they are enrolled in, nor the interests of any other third parties.
19. Members of the panel shall confirm by signature the obligation to maintain the confidentiality of information that has become known to them through their membership in the panel and the lack of conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest is presumed to be present in the following cases:
- 19.1. A panel member has an employment or other contractual relationship with the provider at the time of the assessment or has had an employment relationship with the provider within three years prior to the beginning of the assessment.
 - 19.2. A panel member participates in the work of a decision-making or advisory body of the provider at the time of assessment.
 - 19.3. A panel member is enrolled as a learner at the provider or graduated from it less than three years prior to the assessment.
 - 19.4. The staff or affiliated bodies of the training programme of the provider include a person closely related to a panel member – spouse, partner or a family member.
20. Duties of members of the panel include the following:
- 20.1. Reviewing the self-assessment report of the provider.
 - 20.2. Examining documents that regulate the accreditation of a training programme.
 - 20.3. Completing an assessment training provided by HAKA.
 - 20.4. Participating in the meetings and discussions of the panel.



- 20.5. Participating in assessment discussions.
 - 20.6. Contributing to the drafting of the assessment report before the assessment visit.
 - 20.7. Participating in the drafting of recommendations and the assessment report.
 - 20.8. Examining the comments of the provider on the assessment report and considering them when drafting the final assessment report.
 - 20.9. Performing other tasks related to assessment activities according to the division of tasks among the members of a panel.
 - 20.10. Adhering to the agreed deadlines.
21. Duties of the chairperson of a panel include the following:
- 21.1. Chairing the meetings of the panel.
 - 21.2. Dividing tasks among members of the panel.
 - 21.3. Chairing the panel during the meeting.
 - 21.4. After the assessment discussions, providing the provider with preliminary feedback from the panel.
 - 21.5. Ensuring that the opinion of the panel is well-reasoned.
 - 21.6. Preparing and approving the assessment report.
22. The provider has the right to present its position on the composition of the panel.
23. The final composition of the panel is approved by the Director of HAKA, who also appoints the chairperson and the assessment coordinator (hereinafter referred to as *the coordinator*). The panel members are contracted for their duties.
24. The coordinator is a support person of a panel and an administrator of the assessment process whose main duty is to ensure the smooth functioning of the assessment process based on the requirements and the timeframe provided in this document.

V. Organisation of the work of expert panels

25. The provider shall appoint a contact person, who ensures smooth communication between HAKA and the provider.
26. In addition to the submitted documentation and the assessment report, an assessment visit forms part of the assessment process.
27. The assessment visit will consist of discussions with provider's leadership responsible for administrating continuing education, educators teaching in the training programme under evaluation, and other relevant stakeholders.



28. The assessment visit may be conducted either with on-site observation at the provider's premises or as an online assessment visit by video conference.

28.1. As a rule, the assessment visit includes on-site observation at the provider's premises. An on-site assessment visit enables the panel to gain direct insight into the provider's learning environment and infrastructure, engage with learners, staff and other stakeholders, and develop a broader understanding of the provider's academic and organisational culture. Such observation and engagement may be carried out by all members of the panel or by one or more panel members, or another person designated by HAKA for this purpose, while other participants may attend remotely.

28.2. In justified cases, the assessment visit may be conducted fully online. Such cases may include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) the provider holds a valid institutional accreditation, accreditation of the relevant field of study, or an equivalent external quality assurance outcome granted by an agency listed in EQAR; (2) the provider delivers continuing education wholly online; (3) the provider does not have permanent premises of its own and uses premises arranged according to the needs of individual courses; (4) other circumstances where an online assessment visit would allow the panel to achieve the objectives of the assessment in a reliable and proportionate manner.

28.3. The mode of the assessment visit shall be decided by HAKA in consultation with the provider, taking into account the objectives of the assessment, the provider's circumstances, and the need to ensure a reliable evaluation of the learning environment, infrastructure and educational provision.

29. The assessment visit shall last one to three days. The coordinator shall prepare a schedule for the assessment visit in cooperation with the provider and the chairperson of the panel.

30. Where the assessment visit is held on site, the provider shall make an adequately furnished room available to the members of the panel.

31. During the assessment visit, the provider shall enable the panel to:

31.1. Access statutes and normative documents which provide for and govern the activities of the provider and its structural units.

31.2. Interview employees and learners enrolled in the training programme at the choice of experts.



- 31.3. Access information related to teaching, learning and learners on the training programme(s); educational materials; and the study information system.
 - 31.4. Access to learning environments, including digital learning environments.
 - 31.5. Access information related to the teaching staff concerning their CVs, workload, methodological work and research activities.
 - 31.6. Examine the internal quality assurance system for learning and teaching.
 - 31.7. Examine the condition of the infrastructure of the provider.
 - 31.8. Access regulations and guidelines related to the content of teaching and learning.
 - 31.9. If necessary, obtain other information related to teaching and learning.
32. The panel shall assess a training programme in all five assessment areas.
 33. The assessment report shall include an analysis of the assessment areas, areas of improvement and recommendations as well as strengths.
 34. As a result of outcomes of an assessment area, an expert panel shall determine whether the assessment area under evaluation:
 - 34.1. Conforms to requirements
 - 34.2. Partially conforms to requirements or
 - 34.3. Does not conform to requirements.
 35. HAKA shall forward the first draft of the assessment report to the provider no later than four weeks after the assessment visit.
 36. The provider has the right to provide comments to the draft assessment report within two weeks of receiving the draft report.
 37. The panel shall analyse the comments submitted by the provider and formalise the final report within one week of receiving the comments.
 38. It is recommended that assessment areas of the report shall be adopted by consensus. If consensus is not reached, the decision shall be made by simple majority of the panel members, and any dissenting views, together with the reasons for them, shall be included in the assessment report.
 39. HAKA shall forward the final report of the panel and the comments of the provider to the HAKA Quality Assessment Council (hereafter *the Council*). The Council shall adopt an assessment decision within two months of finalisation of the assessment report.



VI. Final assessment by the HAKA quality assessment council

40. The Council shall adopt a final assessment decision on a training programme at its session.
41. The Council shall base its final assessment on assessment of the five assessment areas presented by the panel, and the comments by the provider received within the specified time, as well as additional materials submitted at the request of the Council.
42. In the case of contradictions in assessments of the five assessment areas by the panel or inadequate justification, the Council shall have the right to return the assessment report to the panel to be reviewed and clarified; the panel shall review the assessments within two weeks after their receipt and return them with additional explanations and reasons to HAKA.
43. The Council shall make the final decision on training programme accreditation based on the following principles:
 - 43.1. If all five assessment areas are deemed to “conform to requirements”, the Council shall decide to accredit the training programme for a period of five years.
 - 43.2. If at least one of the assessment areas is deemed to “not conform to requirements”, the Council shall decide not to accredit the training programme.
 - 43.3. If all the five assessment areas are deemed to “partially conform to requirements”, the Council shall analyse the strengths and areas of improvement of the training programme and decide to accredit the training programme for a period of three years, or not to accredit the training programme.
 - 43.4. If three or four of the assessment areas are deemed to “partially conform to requirements”, the Council shall decide to accredit the training programme for a period of three years.
 - 43.5. If one or two assessment areas are deemed to “partially conform to requirements, the Council shall analyse the strengths and areas of improvement of the training programme and decide to accredit the training programme for a period of five years or for a period of three years.
 - 43.6. If the Council weighs between two accreditation decisions and finds that if the provider were to satisfy certain conditions, a more positive decision would be



possible, the Council may adopt a decision with a secondary condition, as defined in § 53 of the Administrative Procedure Act¹.

43.6.1.If the Council adopts a decision that contains a secondary condition, the Council shall list in its decision the specific shortcomings underlying the imposition of the secondary condition and shall set a deadline by which the provider shall submit a report on the progress on the shortcomings underlying the secondary condition.

43.6.2.HAKA shall conduct an assessment of progress made on the secondary condition within two months of the deadline set in the Council's decision. The Council may request involving experts to assess the progress made on the secondary condition.

43.6.3.Experts assessing the progress made on the secondary condition, shall judge in their report whether the shortcomings identified in the secondary condition have been 'fully eliminated'; 'substantially eliminated'; 'partially eliminated'; or 'have not been eliminated'.

43.6.4.If all shortcomings have been fully or substantially eliminated, the Council shall adopt the decision that the secondary condition has been met. If all shortcomings have been partially eliminated, the Council shall analyse the gravity of the shortcomings and shall adopt the decision, that the secondary condition has not been met; or shall adopt the decision that the secondary condition has been met. If at least one of the shortcomings has not been eliminated, the Council shall adopt the decision that the secondary condition has not been met.

43.6.5.If the Council adopts the decision that the secondary condition has not been met, the Council can, based on §53 (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act¹, repeal the primary assessment decision; or impose a new secondary condition. According to §66 (2) and (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act¹, an administrative act which was lawful at the moment of issue may be retroactively repealed if an additional duty was related to the administrative act and the person has failed to perform it.

44. HAKA shall forward the assessment decision by the Council to the provider and the members of the panel within ten working days from its adoption.

¹ [Administrative Procedure Act–Riigi Teataja](#)



45. The assessment report together with the accreditation decision will be published within three weeks after its adaptation on the HAKA website and DEQAR² (applicable only where the training programme corresponds to EQF level 6, 7 or 8).

VII. Follow-up activities

46. HAKA assumes that the responsibility for eliminating shortcomings pointed out in the assessment report and for continuous improvement activities lies with the provider. HAKA requests that, one year after the accreditation decision was adopted by the Council, the provider who was granted accreditation for five years submit a written overview of its activities, planned, and implemented based on the recommendations made in the assessment report, along with the results of such activities.

47. The Council will provide feedback to the provider on their written overview within 3 months of receiving.

VIII. Contestation of assessment proceedings conducted by haka and final assessments by the assessment council

48. If a person concerned has a doubt that HAKA or an expert panel has not followed the rules described in these Guidelines when organising and conducting an assessment, they may file an appropriate request for clarification or memorandum with the Director of HAKA who shall provide a reasoned written response within 30 days of the date of registration of the request.

49. A person who finds that their rights have been violated or their freedoms have been restricted by assessment procedures conducted by HAKA or by a decision made by the Council may file a challenge pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act¹. The challenge shall be filed with the Council within thirty days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding.

50. The Council shall forward the challenge to the Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the challenge within ten days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals

² [The Database of External Quality Assurance Results](#)



Committee. If the challenge needs to be investigated further, the deadline for its review by the Council may be extended by a maximum of thirty days.

51. The decision by the Council may be challenged within thirty days after the delivery of the final decision, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court³.

IX. Financing of accreditation

52. HAKA shall charge the provider a fee to meet the full costs of the accreditation. This includes the expert fees, a fee for the coordination and administration of the accreditation process, and travel and accommodation expenses. The expert fees and administrative overhead are determined by HAKA; travel and accommodation expenses are charged at cost. The approximate total of the whole review is payable by the provider to HAKA upon the signing of the contract. HAKA shall not undertake any further preparations for the accreditation review until the payment has been received.

53. The travel costs and the accommodation costs will be paid as actual costs. Should the real travel and accommodation costs be lower than the amount paid in advance for these purposes, the provider will be reimbursed the difference. Should the real travel and accommodation costs exceed the amount paid in advance for these purposes, the provider shall pay the difference to HAKA.

54. Translation and interpretation shall be provided, and the corresponding costs are covered by the provider. The interpreter shall be qualified in providing consecutive/simultaneous interpretation in the respective languages. The interpreter shall not have an employment relationship with the provider nor study at the provider.

55. If the Council shall accredit the training programme with a secondary condition, the provider is obliged to cover the costs of the second review according to the scope of conditions set by the Council.

³ [Code of Administrative Court Procedure–Riigi Teataja](#)

