Republic of Latvia

Cabinet

Regulation No. 793

Adopted 11 December 2018

**Regulations Regarding Opening and Accreditation of Study Fields**

*Issued pursuant to*

*Section 55.3, Paragraphs five, seven, and twelve of the Law on Higher Education Institutions*

**I. General Provision**

1. This Regulation prescribes:

1.1. the procedures for opening study fields;

1.2. the procedures for the accreditation and extraordinary accreditation of study fields;

1.3. the requirements for the assessment of a study field and study programmes appropriate thereto;

1.4. the procedures for the assessment of a study field and study programmes appropriate thereto;

1.5. the requirements for the accreditation of a study field and study programmes appropriate thereto;

1.6. a sample accreditation form of a study field;

1.7. study fields in higher education;

1.8. the rights and obligations of the institutions involved in accreditation.

**II. Institutions Involved in Accreditation, Their Rights and Obligations**

2. The Higher Education Quality Commission which has been established in accordance with the procedures laid down in the laws and regulations regarding the licensing of study programmes:

2.1. shall take the decision on the accreditation of a study field or refusal to accredit a study field, taking into account the application for the accreditation of a study field and the documents attached thereto, the joint opinion of a group of experts, and other information at the disposal thereof;

2.2. shall decide on making changes in the accreditation form of a study field;

2.3. shall decide on the admissibility of the changes made in a study field by a higher education institution or college after the higher education institution or college, if it intends to make changes in a study field, has submitted the relevant application requesting to approve changes in a study field. The Academic Information Centre shall approve one expert for assessing the changes referred to in this Sub-paragraph. The changes in a study field referred to in this Sub-paragraph shall be as follows:

2.3.1. changes in the name, code, place of implementation, type, form of implementation of the study programme appropriate to a study field, language of implementation of the study programme, vocational qualification or degree to be awarded;

2.3.2. conformity of a study programme with a study field is subject to change;

2.3.3. changes in the requirements specified upon commencing the acquisition of a study programme appropriate to a study field;

2.3.4. the changes made in the accreditation period of a study field with regard to the duration or scope of the study programme appropriate to such study field exceeds 20 per cent of the amount in credit points of the study programme appropriate to the study field specified in the application for the accreditation of a study field;

2.3.5. deterioration in qualifications of the academic staff employed in the respective study field or study programme appropriate to the study field at a higher education institution or college since the previous accreditation of the study field, if such deterioration applies to at least 20 per cent of the total number of the academic staff employed in the respective study field or if at least 50 per cent of the total volume of academic work at the higher education institution or college in the respective study field (without covering free elective parts of a study programme, implementation of training and final examinations) is no longer ensured by the academic staff elected at the respective higher education institution or college;

2.4. shall take the decision referred to in Section 55.3, Paragraph ten of the Law on Higher Education Institutions within the scope of extraordinary accreditation of a study field;

2.5. shall decide on the inclusion of such study programme on the accreditation form of a study field which has been licensed after accreditation of a study field, if within two years after commencing the implementation of the licensed study programme the higher education institution or college has received the assessment of the study programme from two experts approved by the Academic Information Centre, whereof one is a foreign expert, in accordance with Paragraph 17 of this Regulation. Until the date of taking the abovementioned decision, the conformity of a study programme appropriate to an accredited study field with the condition referred to in Section 1, Clause 1.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions shall be attested by the licence issued to the respective study programme;

2.6. may visit a higher education institution and college, including branches, to familiarise with the factual circumstances at the higher education institution and college, while assessing the accreditation of a study field or admissible changes in an accredited study field;

2.7. may request additional information from higher education institutions and other institutions required for taking decisions.

3. The Appeals Commission which has been established in accordance with the procedures laid down in Cabinet regulations regarding licensing of study programmes shall examine the applications for contesting the decisions by the Higher Education Quality Commission and shall take a decision in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

4. The Higher Education Quality Commission in the process of the accreditation of study fields and the Appeals Commission while examining the application for contesting the decision by the Higher Education Quality Commission shall exercise the rights laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

**III. Procedures for Opening Study Fields**

5. Study fields in higher education are specified in Annex 1 to this Regulation.

6. If a higher education institution or college wishes to license a study programme in a new study field for the higher education institution or college, prior to submitting an application for licensing a study programme:

6.1. a State-founded higher education institution or college shall submit the application for opening a new study field to the ministry specified in Section 55.3, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter – the sectoral ministry);

6.2. other higher education institutions or colleges shall request the founder to take the decision on opening a new study field.

7. A State-founded higher education institution or college shall append the following to the application for opening a new study field:

7.1. the development strategy of the State-founded higher education institution or college where the State-founded higher education institution or college has included the objective of the development of the new study field, including information regarding the established and planned partnership with other Latvian and foreign institutions and organisations for the implementation of the study field;

7.2. information regarding the plan for the development of study programmes, indicating the degree and vocational qualification to be awarded, as well as the type, form, and language of the implementation thereof;

7.3. a list of all members of the teaching staff to be involved in the implementation of the study field. The list shall indicate the professional qualifications, planned positions, professional, academic or scientific degrees of the teaching staff, including the scientific publications of the last six years related to the study field in peer-reviewed publications, or achievements of research or artistic creation, as well as the study courses and study modules to be implemented;

7.4. information regarding the facilities, financial base and informative resources necessary for the implementation of the study field in accordance with the plan for the development of study programmes referred to in Sub-paragraph 7.2 of this Regulation, as well as the plan for the provision of resources and the base;

7.5. information regarding the financial investments made and planned for the development of a study field;

7.6. the following opinions:

7.6.1. the opinions of the Ministry of Economics, the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre, the Council of Higher Education and those ministries the competence of which conforms to the study field to be opened on the conformity of the new study field of a State-founded higher education institution or college with the Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia, the National Development Plan and other development planning documents, including evaluating the required human resources in the relevant field and the professional competence thereof based on what specialists will be prepared within the framework of the new study field upon implementation of the planned study programme;

7.6.2. according to the competence, the opinion of the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia on the necessary human resources in the relevant field and their professional competence according to which specialists will be prepared within the framework of the new study field upon implementation of the planned study programme;

7.6.3. the opinion of the Ministry of Education and Science on the issues referred to in Sub-paragraph 7.6.1 of this Regulation, including the usefulness of opening the study field, on the basis of the data for monitoring the quality of education;

7.7. the decision taken by the senate of a State-founded higher education institution or college council on the introduction of the study field.

8. The sectoral ministry shall verify whether the information referred to in Paragraph 7 of this Regulation has been appended to the application for opening a new study field. If a higher education institution or college has not submitted all the necessary information, the sectoral ministry shall request in writing the missing information.

9. The sectoral ministry shall submit a draft legal act to the Cabinet regarding the opening of a new study field or regarding refusal to open a new study field in a State-founded higher education institution or college. The opinions of the institutions referred to in Sub-paragraph 7.6 of this Regulation shall be appended to the abovementioned draft legal act.

**IV. Procedures for the Assessment of a Study Field**

10. Prior to the submission of the application for the accreditation of a study field, a higher education institution or college shall submit to the Academic Information Centre or quality assurance agency included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter jointly – the agency) the application for the assessment of a study field and the documents specified by the agency.

11. If a higher education institution or college has submitted the application for the assessment of a study field to the quality assurance agency included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (hereinafter – the foreign agency), the higher education institution or college shall inform the Academic Information Centre (hereinafter – the Centre) within 10 working days regarding the foreign agency whereto it has submitted the abovementioned application.

12. When selecting the assessor of a study field, a higher education institution or college shall request a written certification from the foreign agency regarding the capacity to assess the study field in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and in this Regulation. The higher education institution or college and the agency, by mutual agreement, shall enter into a contract on the assessment of a study field. The contract shall stipulate the rights, obligations, responsibilities of the higher education institution or college and the agency and the payment procedures for the service. The agency shall determine the procedures for entering into the abovementioned contract. A higher education institution may enter into a tripartite contract between the higher education institution, the agency, and the Centre. The Centre shall publish the guidelines for drafting the content of the contract.

13. The agency shall assess a study field according to the developed methodologies and procedures which conform to the standards and guidelines developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education for the quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, concurrently ensuring conformity with the procedures laid down in this Regulation.

14. The agency, considering the number of study programmes appropriate to the study field and the implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field in the branches of a higher education institution or college, shall approve at least five experts for the assessment of study programmes appropriate to the study field. Observers delegated by the Student Union of Latvia and the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees shall participate in the work of a group of experts of higher education institutions or colleges without voting rights. The observers shall operate according to the procedures established by the agency and shall cover the costs from their own resources.

15. The agency shall ensure that, within the scope of the assessment of a study field, a study field is assessed according to the following requirements:

15.1. whether higher education institutions or colleges, while implementing internal quality assurance systems in accordance with Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, shall guarantee constant improvement, development, and efficiency of the study field;

15.2. conformity of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level of science and artistic creation (if applicable);

15.3. co-operation implemented within the scope of the study field with various Latvian and foreign organisations ensures the achievement of the objectives of the study field;

15.4. elimination of the discovered deficiencies and shortcomings and implementation of the recommendations provided during previous assessment of the study field, if such has been carried out.

16. The agency shall ensure that within the scope of the assessment of a study field each study programme appropriate to the study field is assessed according to the following requirements:

16.1. conformity of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations;

16.2. conformity of the study base, scientific base (if applicable), informative base (including the library), facilities, and financial base with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of study results;

16.3. conformity of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the laws and regulations;

16.4. the study programme for the acquisition of a master’s or doctoral degree based upon achievements and findings of the respective field of science or artistic creation.

17. The agency shall ensure that each study programme appropriate to the study field is assessed as follows:

17.1. “excellent” – if the study programme conforms to the requirements referred to in Paragraph 16 of this Regulation;

17.2. “good” – if insignificant deficiencies are discovered while assessing the conformity of the study programme with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 16 of this Regulation;

17.3. “average” – if deficiencies and shortcomings to be eliminated within the scope of the accreditation term of the study field are discovered while assessing the conformity of the study programme with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 16 of this Regulation;

17.4. “unsatisfactory” – if significant deficiencies are discovered while assessing the conformity of the study programme with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 16 of this Regulation and the deficiencies and shortcomings discovered in the implementation of the study programme cannot be eliminated within the scope of the two-year accreditation term.

18. The agency shall, within six months from the date of receipt of the application for the assessment of a study field, ensure that after assessment of the study field and the study programmes appropriate thereto a group of experts draws up a joint opinion of the group of experts. The opinion shall include the assessment of the requirements referred to in Paragraphs 15 and 16 of this Regulation and the assessment indicated in Paragraph 17 of this Regulation.

19. The agency shall ensure that the joint opinion of the group of experts and information regarding the results of measures after assessment of the study field are available to the public.

**V. Procedures for the Accreditation of a Study Field**

20. For accreditation of a study field, a higher education institution or college shall submit to the Centre an application for the accreditation of a study field (hereinafter – the application) signed by the rector of the higher education institution or college director.

21. The following shall be indicated in the application:

21.1. the name of the higher education institution or college;

21.2. the name of the study field;

21.3. names of study programmes appropriate to the study field and codes thereof according to the Latvian Classification of Education;

21.4. duration and scope of the implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field;

21.5. the address of the place of the implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field (higher education institutions, branches of a higher education institution or colleges, branches of a college), language, type and form of the studies, including distance learning;

21.6. the requirements specified upon commencing the acquisition of study programmes appropriate to the study field;

21.7. degrees, vocational qualifications, or degrees and vocational qualifications to be awarded in study programmes appropriate to the study field;

21.8. the given name, surname, and position of the person who has been authorised by a higher education institution or college to handle all issues relating to the accreditation of the study field.

22. The documents submitted to the agency which assessed the study field, the joint opinion of the group of experts, and the contract referred to in Paragraph 12 of this Regulation regarding the assessment of the study field entered into by the higher education institution or college with the agency shall be appended to the application. Data regarding the higher education institution or college which are necessary for the accreditation of the study field and are included in the national registers and registers of the Ministry of Education and Science shall be requested and received by the Centre from the respective registers.

23. The higher education institution or college shall submit the application in electronic form and shall sign it by using a secure electronic signature in accordance with the requirements of the Electronic Documents Law.

24. The application and the appended documents shall be submitted in the official language, appending documents in the foreign language in which they were submitted to the agency which assessed the study field, and the joint opinion of the group of experts in the foreign language in which it was drawn up.

25. The Centre shall examine the application and the documents appended thereto and, if necessary, shall request in writing the missing information. The higher education institution or college shall submit the abovementioned information to the Centre within 20 days following the request thereof.

26. The application shall be left without examination, informing the applicant thereof, in the following cases:

26.1. failure to submit all the information requested in accordance with Paragraph 25 of this Regulation;

26.2. the documents have not been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the laws and regulations regarding the drawing up of documents.

27. The Centre shall request the State Education Quality Service to submit within 10 working days information regarding the infringements discovered in the previous accreditation period of the study field while implementing a study programme appropriate to the study field of the higher education institution or college, the measures taken by the higher education institution or college for elimination of such infringements, and the decisions taken by the State Education Quality Service with regard to complaints received in relation to the implementation of the study programmes appropriate to the respective study field, and the measures taken by the higher education institution or college to resolve them. If the study programmes appropriate to the study field are related to the field of military defence, the Centre shall request the Ministry of Defence to submit the assessment of the study programme appropriate to the study field within 10 working days. If the study programmes appropriate to the study field prepare specialists in regulated professions, the Centre shall request the certification institution to submit within 10 working days an opinion which includes the assessment of the conformity of the relevant study programmes with the laws and regulations of the regulated professions.

28. The coordinator for the recognition of professional qualifications shall, within one month following receipt of the request of the Centre, provide an opinion on the study programme appropriate to the study field related to the regulated profession. If there are study programmes within the study field that are related to the regulated profession, the coordinator for the recognition of professional qualifications has the obligation to participate in the meetings of the Higher Education Quality Commission in the status of an observer.

29. The Higher Education Quality Commission, considering the joint opinion of the group of experts, the documents submitted by the higher education institution or college, the information of the State Education Quality Service, the opinion of the certification institution and the Ministry of Defence, if there is such, and other information at the disposal of the Higher Education Quality Commission, shall take the decision on the accreditation of a study field and shall indicate in the decision the individual assessment of each study programme. The Higher Education Quality Commission shall take one of the following decisions.

29.1. the decision on the accreditation of a study field for a period of six years if significant deficiencies preventing qualitative implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field in accordance with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation are not discovered and none of the study programmes appropriate to the study field has received an unsatisfactory assessment;

29.2. the decision on the accreditation of a study field for a period of two years if such deficiencies and shortcomings are discovered which prevent qualitative implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field in accordance with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation and ought to be eliminated within the accreditation period of the study field. The decision on the accreditation of a study field for a period of two years shall be taken not more than twice consecutively, if this is a new study field which has not been accredited previously;

29.3. the decision on the accreditation of a study field for a period of two years if such deficiencies and shortcomings are discovered which prevent qualitative implementation of the study programmes appropriate to the study field in accordance with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation and ought to be eliminated within the accreditation period of the study field, but not more than once consecutively, if the study field has been previously accredited for a period of six years;

29.4. the decision on refusal to accredit a study field if significant deficiencies preventing qualitative implementation of study programmes appropriate to the study field in accordance with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation are discovered and they cannot be eliminated within the accreditation period of the study field or two or more study programmes included in the study field have received an unsatisfactory assessment;

29.5. the decision on refusal to accredit a study field if the study field accredited in accordance with the procedures laid down in Sub-paragraph 29.2 of this Regulation cannot be accredited for a period of six years;

29.6. the decision on refusal to accredit a study field if the study field accredited in accordance with the procedures laid down in Sub-paragraph 29.3 of this Regulation cannot be accredited for a period of six years.

30. Such study programmes appropriate to the study field which have received the grade “excellent”, “good”, and “average” shall be regarded as conforming to the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and included in the accreditation form of a study field (Annex 2).

31. The Centre shall send the relevant decision to the higher education institution or college within 10 working days after taking the decision by the Higher Education Quality Commission and a copy of the decision – to the Ministry of Education and Science. If the Higher Education Quality Commission has taken the decision on the accreditation of a study field or changes in the accreditation form of a study field, the Centre, concurrently with the decision by the Higher Education Quality Commission, shall submit to the higher education institution or college the accreditation form of the respective study field signed by the chairperson of the Higher Education Quality Commission.

**VI. Extraordinary Accreditation of a Study Field**

32. In accordance with Section 55.3, Paragraph ten of the Law on Higher Education Institutions the Minister for Education and Science is entitled to decide on extraordinary accreditation of a study field.

33. The decision on designating extraordinary accreditation of a study field shall include information regarding the agency which would assess the study field within the scope of the process of extraordinary accreditation of the study field. The certification referred to in Paragraph 12 of this Regulation shall be taken into consideration in selection of the agency.

34. Extraordinary accreditation of a study field shall take place in accordance with Chapters IV and V of this Regulation.

35. The Higher Education Quality Commission:

35.1. shall take the decision to revoke accreditation of a study field of the respective higher education institution or college if the study field does not conform to the requirements referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation or is partly conforming and at least one of the study programmes appropriate to the study field has received the grade “unsatisfactory”;

35.2. in other cases shall take the decision to maintain accreditation of the study field of the respective higher education institution or college.

36. The costs related to the assessment of a study field with regard to extraordinary accreditation of a study field shall be covered from the budget resources allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science.

**VII. Closing Provisions**

37. The condition referred to in Sub-paragraph 7.6.3 of this Regulation with regard to the data for monitoring the quality of education shall come into force on 1 July 2019.

38. The applications for the accreditation of a study field and applications for changes in a study field or in the accreditation form of a study field submitted by 31 December 2018 shall be examined in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 407of 14 July 2015, Regulations Regarding Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Fields.

39. This Regulation shall come into force on 1 January 2019.

Prime Minister Māris Kučinskis

Acting for the Minister for Education and Science,

Minister for Welfare Jānis Reirs

**Annex 1**

Cabinet Regulation No. 793

11 December 2018

**Study Fields in Higher Education**

1. Education and Pedagogy.

2. Arts.

3. Religion and Theology.

4. History and Philosophy.

5. Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes.

6. Translation.

7. Psychology.

8. Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology.

9. Economics.

10. Information and Communication Sciences.

11. Management, Administration and Management of Real Property.

12. Law.

13. Wildlife Sciences.

14. Geography and Earth Sciences.

15. Chemistry, Chemistry Technologies, and Biotechnology.

16. Physics, Material Science, Mathematics, and Statistics.

17. Information Technology, Computer Hardware, Electronics, Telecommunications, Computer Management, and Computer Science.

18. Mechanics and Metal Processing, Heat Power Engineering, Heat Technology, and Mechanical Engineering.

19. Power Industry, Electrical Engineering, and Electrical Technologies.

20. Manufacture and Processing.

21. Architecture and Construction.

22. Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, and Food Hygiene.

23. Veterinary Medicine.

24. Health Care.

25. Social Welfare.

26. Hotel and Restaurant Service, Tourism and Recreation Organisation.

27. Transport Services.

28. Environmental Protection.

29. Internal Security and Civil Protection.

30. Military Defence.

31. Seafaring.

32. Sports.

Acting for the Minister for Education and Science,

Minister for Welfare Jānis Reirs

**Annex 2**

Cabinet Regulation No. 793

11 December 2018

(Large Coat of Arms of Latvia)

**Accreditation Form of a Study Field**

Riga

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | No. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | (registration number of the accreditation form) |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| (name of the higher education institution or college) |

has the right to implement the accredited study field

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| (name of the study field) |

and study programmes appropriate to the study field which are indicated in annex to the accreditation form of a study field No. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and to award the respective degrees, degrees and vocational qualifications, or vocational qualifications

The study field has been accredited until \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_

Justification:

The Higher Education Quality Commission meeting of \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, decision No. \_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chairperson of the Higher Education Quality Commission |  |
|  | (given name, surname) |
| \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ |  |  |
| (date) |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Annex to the study field |  |  |
|  | (name of the study field) |  |

accreditation form No. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Study Programmes

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Name | Code | Amount in credit points | Type and form of implementation, indicating distance learning in particular | Place of implementation | Degree / vocational qualification to be awarded | Language of implementation of the study programme | Assessment of the study programme |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Chairperson of the Higher Education Quality Commission |  |
|  | (given name, surname) |
| \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ |  |  |
| (date) |  |  |

Acting for the Minister for Education and Science,

Minister for Welfare Jānis Reirs