Republic of Latvia

Cabinet

Regulation No. 794

Adopted 11 December 2018

**Regulations Regarding Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Colleges**

*Issued pursuant to*

*Section 9, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and Section 14, Clauses 8 and 10 and Section 27, Paragraph one of the Education Law*

**I. General Provisions**

1. This Regulation prescribes the procedures for the accreditation and extraordinary accreditation of higher education institutions and colleges, as well as the procedures for the revocation and cancellation of the accreditation of a higher education institution and college.

2. The Academic Information Centre (hereinafter – the Centre) shall develop the following documents for the provision of the accreditation of higher education institutions and colleges:

2.1. the methodologies and procedures for the evaluation of higher education institutions and colleges 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;

2.2. the criteria for the evaluation of the requirements referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Regulation and publish such criteria on the website of the Centre;

2.3. the guidelines for the development of a self-assessment report (hereinafter – the guidelines), including a submission form of higher education institutions and colleges for the accreditation of a higher education institution and college, and publish the guidelines on the website of the Centre;

2.4. the guidelines for the development of the joint opinion and publish the guidelines on the website of the Centre.

**II. Procedures for the Accreditation of a Higher Education Institution and College**

3. In order to accredit a higher education institution or college, a higher education institution or college shall submit a submission to the Centre prepared according to the guidelines.

4. The following shall be appended to the submission:

4.1. the self-assessment report of the higher education institution or college developed according to the guidelines;

4.2. a sample study contract;

4.3. documents determining the status and the procedures for the financing of student self-government;

4.4. additional information necessary for the assessment of the higher education institution or college in conformity with the criteria referred to in Sub-paragraph 2.2 of this Regulation and the requirements referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Regulation.

5. The higher education institution or college shall submit the submission in electronic form and shall sign it by using a secure electronic signature in accordance with the conditions referred to in the Electronic Documents Law. The submission and the documents appended thereto shall be submitted in the official language with a translation into English. In the event of disputes, the documents submitted in the official language shall prevail.

6. After receipt of the submission, the Centre shall verify the conformity of the submitted documents with the requirements referred to in Paragraph 4 of this Regulation. If the higher education institution or college has not submitted all the necessary information, the Centre shall request in writing that the higher education institution or college submit the missing information. The higher education institution or college shall submit the abovementioned information to the Centre within 30 days following the request thereof.

7. The Centre shall leave the submission without consideration, informing the submitter thereof, in the following cases:

7.1. payment for the accreditation of the higher education institution or college has not been made within the time period indicated by the Centre;

7.2. not all the information requested in accordance with Paragraph 6 of this Regulation has been submitted;

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

8. The higher education institution or college shall be evaluated by a group of experts consisting of seven experts, including one delegated representative of the sectoral expert board corresponding to the strategic specialisation of the Employers’ Confederation of Latvia or the college, or a delegated representative of the professional sectoral organisation, if an appropriate sectoral expert board has not been established, one delegated representative of the Student Union of Latvia, and at least two foreign experts. Experts for work in the group of experts shall be selected and the composition of the group of experts shall be approved by the Centre. Observers delegated by the Student Union of Latvia and the Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees shall participate in the work of the group of experts without voting rights. The observers shall operate according to the procedures developed by the Centre and shall cover the expenses related to the participation in the group of experts from their own resources.

9. The head of the group of experts may be a person with international experience in the evaluation of higher education institutions. Each expert shall have experience in at least one of the fields referred to in this Paragraph. The Centre shall ensure that, overall, experts of the specific group have experience in the following fields:

9.1. quality assessment experience in the process of accreditation of higher education institutions, colleges, study fields, and study programmes or licensing of study programmes;

9.2. experience in the management of a higher education institution;

9.3. knowledge corresponding to the study fields implemented in a higher education institution or college;

9.4. experience in evaluating quality assurance systems for higher education;

9.5. experience in evaluating the scientific activities of a higher education institution or the work of artistic creation;

9.6. experience in the field of assessment of cooperation between a higher education institution or college and employers’ organisations;

9.7. experience in the development of the European Higher Education Area (the Bologna process) or in other international higher education processes.

10. Within three working days after approval of the group of experts, the Centre shall inform the relevant higher education institution or college regarding the composition of the group of experts. The higher education institution or college may, within three working days, express a written rejection of the members of the group of experts, indicating the reasons for the rejection of each member of the rejected group of experts. Within ten working days after receipt of the rejection the Centre shall examine it and, if the rejection is recognised as justified, approve a new composition of the group of experts.

11. The Centre shall organise the work of the group of experts, including visits of the group of experts to higher education institutions, colleges, the branches thereof, participate in them, as well as ensure the acquisition of the necessary information in accordance with the requirements referred to in this Regulation.

12. The group of experts shall visit a higher education institution or college and the branches thereof (if any), evaluate the higher education institution or college, and submit a joint opinion to the Centre. Upon preparing the joint opinion, the group of experts, taking into account the criteria referred to in Sub-paragraph 2.2 of this Regulation, shall agree on the assessment of the requirements referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Regulation. If the opinion of the group of experts regarding any of the requirements referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Regulation differs, the differing opinion shall be indicated in the joint opinion.

13. If the group of experts does not have sufficient information at its disposal to provide a comprehensive and objective joint opinion, it shall request additional information from the higher education institution or college.

14. The group of experts shall discuss the findings drawn from its visit and the main conclusions with the management of the relevant higher education institution or college, as well as with the representatives of the academic staff and students.

15. The group of experts shall submit the joint opinion prepared according to the guidelines to the Centre within one month after the visit to the higher education institution or college. The Centre shall send a copy of the joint opinion to the relevant higher education institution or college within 10 working days after the receipt thereof.

16. The higher education institution or college may, within 10 working days after receipt of the joint opinion referred to in Paragraph 15 of this Regulation, provide comments regarding the factual errors detected in the joint opinion.

17. Within 10 working days after receipt of the comments from the higher education institution or college on the factual errors detected in the joint opinion, the group of experts may clarify the joint opinion on the basis of the comments from the higher education institution or college and submit the updated opinion to the Centre. The Centre shall submit the updated opinion to the Council of Higher Education (hereinafter – the Council).

18. The members of the Council shall become acquainted with the documents submitted by the higher education institution or college, the joint opinion, the comments of the higher education institution or college referred to in Paragraph 16 of this Regulation regarding the factual errors detected in the joint opinion, if any, as well as, if necessary, with the actual circumstances in the higher education institution or college and other information at the disposal of the Council.

19. The Council shall evaluate in the evaluation process of the higher education institution or college:

19.1. the conformity of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the requirements laid down in the Law on Higher Education Institutions;

19.2. the conformity of the development policy and motivation system of the academic staff of the higher education institution or college with the objectives and tasks stipulated by the higher education institution or college;

19.3. the conformity of the study base, informative base (including the library), the facilities, and the financial base with the conditions for the implementation of a study programme;

19.4. whether in accordance with Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions the higher education institutions or colleges, upon implementation of internal quality assurance systems, guarantee continuous improvement, development, and efficiency of the activity of the higher education institution or college;

19.5. the conformity with the autonomy, financing, and rights of the student self-government;

19.6. whether the data accumulated in the quality assurance system of education of higher education institutions or college attest to the improvement and development of the activity of the higher education institution or college;

19.7. the conformity of the activity of the higher education institution or college with the requirements referred to in the laws and regulations;

19.8. whether violations of the laws and regulations detected by the competent authorities in the activity of the higher education institution or college during the preceding year prior to taking of the decision have been rectified within the time period stipulated by the abovementioned institutions.

20. The Council shall, on the basis of the joint opinion of the group of experts and other information referred to in Paragraph 18 of this Regulation, take a decision on the accreditation of the higher education institution or college or refusal to accredit the higher education institution or college within the time period specified in the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

21. A decision on the accreditation of the higher education institution or college shall be taken by the Council if the higher education institution or college conforms to all the requirements referred to in Paragraph 19 of this Regulation and not less than half of the study fields in which the higher education institution or college is implementing study programmes are accredited on the day of taking of the decision.

22. If the higher education institution or college does not conform to any of the requirements referred to in Paragraphs 19 and 21 of this Regulation, the Council may take a decision on refusal to accredit the higher education institution or college.

23. If the Council has taken a decision on refusal to accredit the higher education institution or college, the higher education institution or college may re-submit the submission not earlier than six months after taking of the abovementioned decision.

24. The Council shall, within 10 working days after taking of the decision on the accreditation or refusal to accredit the higher education institution or college, send the relevant decision to the higher education institution or college and copies of the decision – to the Ministry of Education and Science and to the Centre. If the Council has taken a decision on the accreditation of the higher education institution or college, the Centre shall, within five working days after receipt of a copy of the decision, prepare and send to the Council an accreditation form of the higher education institution or college (Annex). The Council shall, within 10 working days after receipt of the accreditation form of the higher education institution or college, send to the Centre an accreditation form of the higher education institution or college signed by the Chairperson of the Council. The Centre shall register an accreditation certificate and issue it to the higher education institution or college. The Centre shall publish information regarding the accreditation of the higher education institution or college and the joint opinion of experts on the website of the Centre.

25. The decision of the Council on the accreditation of the higher education institution or college or refusal to accredit the higher education institution or college may be contested in the Ministry of Education and Science. A decision of the Ministry of Education and Science may be appealed to a court in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

26. The Council shall decide on making of changes to the accreditation form of the higher education institution or college, if the name or legal address of the higher education institution or college has changed and the higher education institution or college has submitted a corresponding submission to the Council.

27. The costs of accreditation of the higher education institution or college shall be covered, according to the price list approved by the Cabinet, from the funds of the budget of the relevant higher education institution or college.

**III. Procedures for the Extraordinary Accreditation, Revocation of Accreditation and Cancellation of Accreditation of a Higher Education Institution and College**

28. If the Minister for Education and Science has issued an order regarding the extraordinary accreditation and the time for the extraordinary accreditation of a higher education institution or college, the extraordinary accreditation of the relevant higher education institution or college shall take place in accordance with the procedures for the accreditation of a higher education institution or college indicated in Chapter II of this Regulation.

29. In the event of an extraordinary accreditation, the Council shall take a decision to leave the accreditation of the higher education institution or college in effect or take a decision to revoke the accreditation of the higher education institution or college.

30. If the Minister for Education and Science has issued an order regarding revocation of the accreditation of the higher education institution or college, the relevant higher education institution or college may submit a submission not earlier than six months after issuance of the order of the Minister for Education and Science.

31. The Minister for Education and Science shall issue an order regarding cancellation of the accreditation of the higher education institution or college in conformity with the procedures for the issuing of administrative acts specified in the Administrative Procedure Law.

32. If the Minister for Education and Science has issued an order regarding cancellation of the accreditation of the higher education institution or college, the relevant higher education institution or college may submit a submission not earlier than six months after issuance of the order of the Minister for Education and Science.

33. The costs of the accreditation of the higher education institution or college shall be covered, according to the price list approved by the Cabinet, from the funds of the budget of the relevant higher education institution or college.

**IV. Closing Provisions**

34. Cabinet Regulation No. 407 of 14 July 2015, Regulations Regarding the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Fields (*Latvijas Vēstnesis*, 2015, No. 146; 2017, No. 16 and No. 148), is repealed.

35. Submissions for the accreditation of a higher education institution or college and submissions regarding changes to the higher education institution or college accreditation form which have been submitted by 31 December 2018 shall be examined in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 407 of 14 July 2015, Regulations Regarding the Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions, Colleges and Study Fields, and the accreditation form of the higher education institution or college indicated in Annex to this Regulation shall be issued.

36. The Centre shall draw up and publish the documents referred to in Sub-paragraphs 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 of this Regulation on its website until 1 February 2019.

37. Sub-paragraph 19.6 of this Regulation shall come into force on 1 July 2019.

38. 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**

Cabinet Regulation No. 794

11 December 2018

(Large Coat of Arms of Latvia)

**Accreditation form**

Riga

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|  |  | No.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  |  | (registration numberof the accreditation form) |
|  |
| (name of the higher education institution or college) |
|  |
| (legal address of the higher education institution or college and the registration certificate number of the Educational Institution Register) |
|  |
| (branches of the higher education institution or college and the legal addresses of the branches) |

has the right to issue State-recognised diplomas for the acquisition of an accredited study programme following approval of the constitution of the higher education institution in the Cabinet or the *Saeima* or the approval of the college by-laws in the Cabinet

Justification:

Council of Higher Education decision No. \_\_\_\_ of (date)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Minister for Education and Science |  |
|  | (given name, surname) |
| \_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_. |  |  |
| (date) |  |  |

Acting for the Minister for Education and Science, Minister for Welfare Jānis Reirs