

Substantive Change Report by Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC)

Register Committee

Decision of:	29/09/2021
Report received on:	01/09/2021
Agency registered since:	01/06/2012
Last external review report:	21/07/2017
Registration until:	30/06/2022
Absented themselves from decision-making:	Eltjo Bazen, Jacques Lanarès
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Substantive Change Report 2. Clarification minutes, 26/08/2021

Ref. RC/C67

Ver. 1.0

Date 2021-09-29

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1. The Register Committee considered the Substantive Change Report of 01/09/2021.
2. The Register Committee noted that since its last external review (June 2017) SKVC has introduced the following external QA procedures:
 - *ex-ante evaluation and accreditation of residency studies,*
 - *ex-post evaluation and accreditation of residency studies,*
 - *ex-post institutional review of higher education institutions in exile.*
3. The Register Committee noted that the new activities are defined in the national legal framework and that the procedures and criteria are published in the Lithuanian Register of Legal Acts.
4. The Register Committee noted that the *ex-ante and ex-post evaluation and accreditation of residency studies* follows the criteria of the *ex-ante evaluation of study programmes* covering however fewer evaluation areas.
5. The *ex-post institutional review of higher education institutions in exile* employs the same four evaluation areas as SKVC's *ex-ante institutional review* with a small adaptation of two evaluation areas where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) supplies the required information (ESG 2.1/ESG 2.5).

The Register Committee underlined that the external review of SKVC is expected to consider to what extent the evaluation areas for the newly introduced procedures follow ESG Part 1 and how the agency ensures transparent provision of the requested documentation.
6. In the development of the external QA methodology SKVC held consultations with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the universities which provide medical education, and representatives of students (ESG 2.2).

7. The Register Committee took note that the evaluation process follows SKVC's established procedure, with the difference that site visits for *ex-ante evaluation of residency studies* may last from 1 to 2 days, while the site visits of the *ex-post evaluation of residency studies* may last from 1 to 5 days (ESG 2.3).
8. In the composition of the panel, the same expert selection principles apply to all procedures performed by SKVC, as well as in the organization of the panel's work (ESG 2.4).
9. In case of all three above mentioned external QA activities, the decision making process follows SKVC established procedure (ESG 2.5).
10. The Register Committee noted that SKVC's policy is to publish all reports and noted that SKVC already accredited two study programmes using the *ex-ante* procedure for residency studies (ESG 2.6).
11. The procedures for the *ex-ante evaluation and accreditation of residency studies* and the *ex-post evaluation and accreditation of residency studies* are subject to the general appeals and complaints regulations of SKVC.
12. The appeals on *ex-post institutional review of higher education institutions in exile* may be made based on procedural irregularities. The appeals are forwarded to the Ministry of Education, which is expected to form an ad hoc commission to analyse the case. (ESG 2.7)
13. **The Register Committee underlined that higher education institutions in exile should also be allowed to question the formal outcome of the report with SKVC and not only with the Ministry.**
14. **The Committee also emphasized the need to ensure a separation between the decisions of MoFA, and the are quality-related analyses and decisions of SKVC.**
15. **The Committee expects that the newly introduced external QA activities to be analysed in full as part of SKVC upcoming external review, paying particular attention to the matters raised above.**

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EQAR Substantive Change Report

Reference #	20709778
Status	Complete
Agency #1	The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
Agency acronym	SKVC
Expiry date #1	30/06/2022
Contact #1	Ieva Vaiciukevičienė
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Other organisations?	No
A. Has the organisational identity of the registered agency changed?	No
B. Has the organisational structure changed?	No
C. Changes in EQA activities	1. One or several new external QA activities were introduced
Description new/changed	<p>Several new external QA activities were introduced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) ex-ante evaluation and accreditation of residency studies (the term "residency" includes advanced higher education provision and professional training in veterinary medicine, odontology and human medicine - medical residency);2) ex-post evaluation and accreditation of residency studies;3) ex-post institutional review of higher education institutions in exile. <p>All these activities comply with ESG requirements. The procedures and criteria are published in Lithuanian Register of Legal Acts and are available online.</p>

1. New EQA activity:

1	Ex-ante evaluation and accreditation of residency studies
2	Ex-post evaluation and accreditation of residency studies
3	Ex-post institutional review of higher education institutions in exile
Focus	study programmes or higher education institutions

ESG 2.1

There is continuity between the criteria that are used in evaluation of single study programmes (ex-ante and ex-post study programme evaluation) and current criteria for evaluation of residency studies (ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of residency study programmes), they remain based on ESG 1.1-1.10.

Compared to the currently implemented ex-ante evaluation of study programmes (from 2020), both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of residency studies contains less evaluation areas (five instead of seven). In relation to residency studies, analysis encompasses evaluation areas as follows: 1) residency study aims, intended learning outcomes and curriculum [with four indicators to be met]; 2) implementation of residency studies and student assessment [with nine indicators under it]; 3) staff [with three indicators under it, including both academic and non-academic staff]; 4) material resources for residency studies [with four indicators under it]; 5) quality management and publicity [with four indicators under it].

As to the ex-post institutional reviews of HEIs in exile, the same four evaluation areas as for other types of HEIs are applicable: 1) management [with five indicators under it]; 2) quality assurance [with two indicators under it]; 3) studies and research/art [with two indicators under it]; 4) impact on regional and national development. All indicators are supported with the certain set of criteria. As to the fourth area, though, unlike to all other HEIs, instead of two indicators, one indicator shall be applied, and the competence to determine how this indicator is met instead of being vested into SKVC would fall under the purview of the MoFA which is supposed to supply SKVC with their report. It is then ...

...forwarded to the panel assembled by SKVC to be considered alongside with the evidence on the other three evaluation areas. The same evaluation scale consisting of five points is used both for ex-post institutional review of regular HEIs and ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile.

In case of all three above mentioned procedures, the decision making process of SKVC remains the same as it used to be. Every evaluation report by the expert team is to be reviewed by the SKVC coordinator, a draft is sent to the HEI to comment on factual errors, and after corrections, if applicable, the report is finalised. The report is then submitted to the one relevant advisory body of SKVC, either a commission on studies – in case of ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of residency studies – or a commission on institutions, in case of ex-ante institutional review of HEIs in exile – for their consideration. The only difference for ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile is that SKVC's commission is not considering the MoFA report on impact for the region and a country (i.e. 4th evaluation area). The decision on accreditation by SKVC is based on external evaluation of the three areas which the panel of SKVC would evaluate and on MoFA report on the 4th evaluation area). Upon receipt of advice (“approval of reports”) by the commission concerned, the SKVC Director takes an accreditation decision.

ESG 2.2

Changes are introduced in the scope of external QA procedures and their regulation. The purposes of external QA in general and SKVC's activities specifically remain the same as during our last external review in 2017, they are defined in the Law. Regulations of SKVC have not been changed as well.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MoE) approved the procedure on evaluation and accreditation of residency studies together with the evaluation areas and indicators.

Drafting of the procedure (by the MoE) and methodologies (by SKVC) went in parallel, in frequent consultations between the MoE, the MoH, SKVC, two universities which provide medical education, and representatives of students.

The procedure for ex-ante evaluation of residency study programmes is developed on the basis of the previously existing one, ex-ante evaluation of study programmes. The procedure for ex-post evaluation of residency studies is based on the procedure for ex-post evaluation of study fields

Ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile was also introduced. According to the national law, Lithuanian HEI may obtain a special status of a HEI in exile if it was forced to cease its activities in the country of origin because of political reasons. Such a status is conferred by the resolution of the Government, based on the submission by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

The procedure for ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile is modelled after the ex-post institutional review of all HEIs, launched in 2020. Stakeholders were involved and consulted both formally and informally.

ESG 2.3

1

<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/034e35f01ea011ebb0038a8cd8ff585f>

2

<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/0ba84690361611eb8d9fe110e148c770>

ESG 2.3

The site visits for ex-ante evaluation of residency studies may last from 1 to 2 days, while the site visits under ex-post evaluation of residency studies may last from 1 to 5 days, depending upon the number of objects under evaluation.

In case of ex-post institutional review of HEIs, both for regular HEIs and HEIs in exile visits shall last 2–4 days, depending upon the size of the institution and the volume of its activities.

In response to the Covid-2019 pandemic, visits to HEIs are carried remotely, as stipulated by the Order of the Director of SKVC (originally adopted on 30 March 2020, amended on 1 March 2021). HEIs are expected to provide recorded evidence on their infrastructure and resources for teaching and learning. Upon a panel's request, a physical visit to inspect the infrastructure may be organized; in that case at least one panel member and an evaluation coordinator of SKVC shall visit the institution; however to date this provision has not been used. Experts also have a right to request for a live demonstration of the infrastructure during the remote visit as well.

SKVC intends to keep remote visiting as an exception, rather than as a rule, and once it is safe again, to return to normal physical on-site visits.

ESG 2.4

The same expert selection principles apply to all procedures performed by SKVC, as well as organization of the panel work (both procedures approved by the order No. V-149 by Director of SKVC of 31 December 2019), as reported in our Substantial Changes report of 2020.

ESG 2.5

There is continuity between the criteria that are used in evaluation of single study programmes (ex-ante and ex-post study programme evaluation) and current criteria for evaluation of residency studies (ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of residency study programmes), they remain based on ESG 1.1-1.10.

Compared to the currently implemented ex-ante evaluation of study programmes (from 2020), both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation of residency studies contains less evaluation areas (five instead of seven).

As to the ex-post institutional reviews of HEIs in exile, the same four evaluation areas as for other types of HEIs are applicable. The same evaluation scale consisting of five points is used both for ex-post institutional review of regular HEIs and ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile.

In case of all three above mentioned procedures, the decision making process of SKVC remains the same as it used to be.

Every evaluation report by the expert team is to be reviewed by the SKVC coordinator, a draft is sent to the HEI to comment on factual errors, and after corrections, if applicable, the report is finalised. The report is then submitted to the one relevant advisory body of SKVC for their consideration. The decision on accreditation by SKVC is based on external evaluation, upon receipt of advice (“approval of reports”) by the commission.

ESG 2.6

ESG 2.7

In relation to external evaluation of residency studies (both ex-ante and ex-post procedures) appeals procedure remains basically the same as to any other type of external evaluation that SKVC performs: cases are brought against the Appeals Commission of SKVC (or any other Agency listed on EQAR) and should follow the procedure thereof.

Unlike in other procedures, appeals regarding the evaluation procedures can be submitted to the Centre but the appeals regarding the decision on ex-post institutional review of HEIs in exile can be forwarded to the MoE, which is expected to form an ad hoc commission to analyse the case following the protocol established by the MoE. Procedural irregularities can be the only grounds for appeals. Both decisions of SKVC and the MoE can be brought to the administrative court. To compare, in the ex-post institutional review procedure of all other HEIs appeals are dealt with the Appeals Commission established by SKVC, following the protocol defined by SKVC. Both decisions of SKVC and the Appeals Commission of SKVC can be brought to the administrative court.

ESG 3.4/ESG 3.6

There are no major changes in this respect.

SKVC is in the process for preparing for our third external review against compliance to ESG. Given the changes in Lithuanian external quality assurance system described in the Substantive changes report forwarded to EQAR in 2020 and considering the present one, SKVC plans to cover in our self-evaluation report all external QA procedures in detail, to demonstrate their alignment to the entire ESG Part II (standards 2.1-2.7) and relevant standards of ESG Part III (all standards but 3.2 and 3.3 where our standing remains the same as during the previous external review toward renewed listing in EQAR). It is our intention to undergo a targeted review procedure in 2022.

Should there be a need to provide any other information or documents needed, we are open to that. Thank you very much for your attention and consideration.

D. Activity outside the scope of the ESG	No
File #1	Substantive_changes.pdf (2.72 MB)
Last Update	2021-09-01 15:20:34
Start Time	2021-09-01 14:24:56
Finish Time	2021-09-01 15:20:34
IP	193.219.135.181
Browser	IE
Device	Desktop
Referrer	https://www.eqar.eu/

Application by Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) for Renewal of Registration

Register Committee

Minutes of Telephone Conversation

Ref. A116
Date 2021-08-30
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Date of the conversation:	26.08.2021, online
Representative of SKVC:	Aurelija Valeikiene
Representative of EQAR:	Melinda Szabo

1. SKVC has submitted on 03/08/2021 an application for renewal of registration on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) based on a targeted review.
2. In order to prepare the deliberations of the Register Committee on the eligibility of the application and SKVC's activities within the scope of the ESG, EQAR contacted SKVC via telephone to clarify the following matters below.
3. SKVC agreed to clarify these matters via an online video conference.
4. SKVC explained that the name of the listed activities in EQAR's Register entry is the shorted/cut version, while the name of activities in its application form is the complete version. For consistency the complete naming for all of SKVC's external QA activities will be used. This will also be reflected on the list of activities published on the EQAR website.
5. SKVC issued two types of methodologies for the ex-post and ex-ante evaluation of medical residency study programmes¹ in December 2020. These procedures are planned to be performed at least once in 7 years and may be carried out by SKVC or another EQAR-registered agency. SKVC has so far carried out two ex-ante evaluation of residency (one in medicine and one in veterinary) studies in 2021. The evaluation of ex-post evaluation of veterinary residency studies will begin in 2023, while the ex-post evaluation of medical residency studies has been postponed until the reorganization of the medical studies.
6. In its change report of April 2020, SKVC announced that it will prepare a methodology to evaluate applications by higher education in exile that would want to operate in Lithuania. During the call SKVC confirmed that such a methodology was adopted on November 2020 but stated that no review has been yet carried out and that there are no plans to carry out such a procedure until 2023 or later. The review of higher education in exile may only be carried out by SKVC.

¹the term 'residency' here refers to veterinary medicine, odontology, and human medicine

7. SKVC added that it is in the process of preparing the change reports to EQAR of its newly launched activities: *the (ex-ante and ex-post) evaluation and accreditation activities of residency studies in Lithuania and the ex-post institutional reviews of higher education institutions in exile.*
8. Considering the activity “external evaluation of higher education institution” carried out as part of SKVC’s EU-funded AMIS-3 project, SKVC explained that the activity is not a separate external QA activity. The activity is part of the project that allows the financing of all SKVC’s different types of external QA activities of higher education institutions and their programmes in Lithuania.

Register Committee

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Date 2021-08-30
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