

Rule on Selection of Experts for Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes, their Activities and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool

Chapter I. General Provisions

Article 1. Scope of Regulations

This rule regulates the issues for selection of experts (hereinafter - experts) of authorization of higher education institutions and accreditation of higher education programmes, their activities and suspension and termination of membership of the expert pool of LEPL - National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (hereinafter - Center).

Article 2. Goal of the Rule on Selection of Experts for Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes, their Activities and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool

The goals of the Rule (hereinafter- Rule) on Selection of Experts for Authorization of Higher Education Institutions and Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes, their Activities and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool are as follows:

- a) Ensuring consecutive and comprehensive evaluation of the process of authorization of higher education institutions (hereinafter -authorization) and accreditation of educational programmes (hereinafter- accreditation), and facilitation to improve experts' activities;
- b) Improving the process of external evaluation of education quality assurance through developing transparent selection criteria and procedures for the expert pool members with relevant qualification;
- c) Supporting establishment of objective, transparent and development-oriented education quality assurance system, in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area;
- d) Supporting adherence to norms outlined in the Code of Ethics of Experts.

Chapter II Rule of Experts' Selection and Creation of Expert Pool

Article 3. Expert Pool

1. An expert cannot be an employee of the Center except the case when he/she is employed at the Center for a period of less than 3 months in order to execute specific volume of expert work.
2. An expert, citizen of Georgia, who is also a public servant may participate only in administrative proceedings in which the subject of the assessment of compliance with the standards of authorization or accreditation is a regulated medical academic higher education programme.
3. Expert pool must incorporate experts with a wide range of experience, taking the status, type and peculiarities of higher education institutions and educational programmes into account.
4. The expert pool is divided into authorization and accreditation experts.
5. Expert pool is approved by the individual administrative act issued by the Director of the Center.

Article 4. Procedure for Selection of Expert Pool Members

1. In order to select experts and create or update the expert pool, the Center receives applications, both during announcing a competition and in the case provided for in paragraph 5 of this article - without announcing the competition, and determines their compliance with the qualification requirements and evaluation and selection.
2. The selection procedure for the members of the expert pool via competition consists of the following stages:
 - a) Announcement of the competition by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center;

- b) Submission of the application, appended with document(s) certifying applicant's qualification/education (except international experts), and resume (CV) with indication of two references;
- c) Sort out the submitted documents by taking the relevant requirements into account;
- d) Creation of an appropriate Commission through the individual administrative act on selecting of experts by the Director of the Center;
- e) Conducting trainings (not mandatory when selecting international experts);
- f) Interview with the commission created by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (it is not mandatory for the selection of international experts);
- g) Recommend the candidates selected by the Commission to the Director of the Center;
- h) Admission of the candidates agreed with the Director of the Center to the composition of the pool of experts, by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

3. The procedure for selecting experts of the higher education programme as a member of the Pool of Accreditation Experts through the announcement of the competition includes the following stages:

- a) Announcement of the competition by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center;
- b) Submission of applications, which should be appended with document(s) certifying qualification/education, and resume (CV), indicating two references;
- c) Sort out the submitted documents by taking the relevant requirements into account;
- d) Creation of an appropriate Commission through the individual administrative act on selecting of experts by the Director of the Center;
- e) Conducting a training;
- f) Testing;
- g) Interview with the Commission created through the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center;
- h) Recommend the candidates selected by the Commission to the Director of the Center;
- i) Admission of the candidates agreed with the Director of the Center to the composition of the pool of experts, by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

4. In order to find international experts for the authorization and accreditation, the Center cooperates with foreign quality assurance agencies and international organizations/associations operating in the field of higher education (for example: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), European University Association (EUA); European Students' Union (ESU), Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA) and others).

5. In order to comply with the deadlines set by the legislation on authorization and accreditation administrative proceedings, to take into account the specifics of the higher education institutions and educational programmes to be evaluated, to take into account the workload of experts in the expert pool and avoid possible conflicts of interests, upon proper substantiation by the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department of the Center, the procedure for selecting members of the expert pool may be implemented without a competition. In this case, in order to select experts, the permanent commission for selection of authorization and accreditation experts (hereinafter - the permanent commission) and the rules of the commission's activity are defined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

6. The procedure for selection of members of the expert pools by the permanent commission provided for in paragraph 5 of this article includes the following stages:

- a) Searching for an expert candidate by the higher education quality assurance department of the Center;
- b) Presenting an autobiography (CV) with 2 references;
- c) Sorting out the submitted documents by taking the relevant requirements into account;
- d) Interviewing with the permanent commission (it is not mandatory when selecting international experts);
- e) Presenting the recommendation about candidates selected by the permanent commission to the Director of the Center;
- f) Admission of the candidates agreed with the Director of the Center to the composition of the pool of experts, by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

7. The procedure for selecting the members of the expert pool through a competition may include an additional stage/stages to paragraphs 2 and 3 of this article.

8. When selecting members of the expert pool through a competition, a candidate participating in the competition has the right to appeal in writing to the Center the negative evaluation received at the stage of the selection of members of the expert pool, based on the final results of the competition, within 10 calendar days after receiving the individual result.

9. An individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center establishes the Appeals Commission, which reviews the complaints related to the negative evaluation received within the framework of a specific competition.

10. The Appeals Commission consists of at least 3 members, one of whom, by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center, is appointed as the chair of the mentioned Commission. Activities of the Appeals Commission are determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of Center.

11. The Appeals Commission reviews each complaint and makes a decision within 15 working days upon its registration at the Center.

12. The Appeals Commission, taking into account the submitted complaint and the materials available within the specific competition, makes one of the following decisions:

- a) On satisfying the complaint and giving a positive assessment to the candidate;
- b) On sharing the decision of the relevant Competition Commission and leaving the negative evaluation in force.

13. The decision made by the Appeals Commission shall be notified in writing to the Director of the Center and the candidate within 5 working days upon its receipt.

14. In case the Appeals Commission receives a decision envisaged under the paragraph 12 (a) of this Article, the relevant activities related to the stages determined for the relevant competition process for the candidate shall be set by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

Article 5. Expert Qualification Requirements

1. Qualification requirements of authorization experts are as follows:

a) Master's or equivalent academic degree; in addition, to evaluate the educational programmes and research part provided for by the authorization standard of the higher educational institution, a candidate of expert should have PhD or equivalent academic degree or should be PhD student and have experience of participating in the elaboration, implementation and development of higher education programmes and/or experience of conducting research and/or research projects management. This requirement does not apply to the candidate expert/expert determined by the quota of the employer and the student;

b) Knowledge and experience of relevant specifics to evaluate at least one standard of authorization;

c) Knowledge about the functioning of higher educational institutions, processes and specifics, which is confirmed by relevant work experience;

d) Knowledge of the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG, 2015), of the Bologna Process (general knowledge) and of the following legal acts related to higher education:

- Law of Georgia on Higher Education;
- Law of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement;
- Order № 99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of October 1, 2010 on approval of the Educational Institutions Authorization Provision and of Authorization Fees;
- Order №69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of 10 April 2019 on approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study;
- Subject benchmarks of the relevant field;

e) Having computer skills;

f) Team working and effective communication skills;

g) Data collection, analysis and argumentative discussion skills;

h) Knowledge of English language.

i) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any).

2. Qualification requirements of accreditation experts are as follows:

a) Doctor's or equivalent academic degree or a doctoral candidate who has teaching and/or scientific research experience in a higher educational institution;

- b) Depending on the specifics of the field, a master's degree or equivalent academic degree and 3 years of work experience in the relevant field;
- c) Experience of participation in the elaboration, implementation and development process of the higher educational programme;
- d) Knowledge of the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG, 2015), of the Bologna Process (general knowledge) and of the following legal acts related to higher education:
- Law of Georgia on Higher Education;
 - Law of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement;
 - Order № 99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of October 1, 2010 on Approval of the Educational Institutions Authorization Provision and of Authorization Fees;
 - Order No. 65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated May 4, 2010 on approval of the statute of accreditation of educational programmes of higher educational institutions and accreditation fees;
 - Order №69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of 10 April 2019 on approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study;
 - Subject benchmarks of the relevant field;
- e) Having computer skills;
- f) Team working and effective communication skills;
- g) Data collection, analysis and argumentative discussion skills;
- h) Knowledge of English is preferred;
- i) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any).

3. The qualification requirements of the experts of the higher education programme who are members of the pool of accreditation experts are as follows:

- a) Master's or equivalent academic degree;
- b) At least three years of work experience in the field of higher education;
- c) Knowledge of the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG, 2015), of the Bologna Process (general knowledge) and of the following legal acts related to higher education:
- Law of Georgia on Higher Education;
 - Law of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement;
 - Order No. 65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of May 4, 2010 on approval of the statute of accreditation of educational programmes of higher educational institutions and approval of accreditation fees;
 - Order №69/N of the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia of 10 April 2019 on approval of the National Qualifications Framework and the Classifier of Fields of Study;
 - Order No. 3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of January 5, 2007 on approval of the rules for calculating higher education programmes by credits";
- d) Team working and effective communication skills;
- e) Ability to solve problems;
- f) Ability to analyze information;
- g) Data collection, analysis and argumentative discussion skills;
- h) Ability to take a responsibility for the work performed by others;
- i) Ability to independently conduct own learning process;
- j) Having computer skills;
- k) Knowledge of English language;
- l) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any).

4. Qualification requirements for employers who are members of the pool of authorization and accreditation experts are as follows:

- a) Master's or equivalent academic degree; depending on the specifics of the field, the expert may have a Bachelor's or equivalent academic degree, and outstanding experience of working in the relevant field;
- b) Working experience on middle or upper level managerial positions in the field;
- c) Having the active status of an employee on middle or upper level managerial positions at the time of entry into the expert pool;
- d) Knowledge of English language (in case of an expert employer of the accreditation expert pool - knowledge of the English language is desirable);
- e) Hiring expert/expert candidate should preferably have the experience of working in a higher educational institution and/or participating in the elaboration and development processes of higher educational programmes;
- f) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any);
- g) Team working and effective communication skills;
- h) Ability to solve problems
- i) Ability to analyze information.
- j) Data collection, analysis and argumentative discussion skills;
- k) Ability to take a responsibility for the work performed by others;
- l) Ability to independently conduct own learning process;

5. The qualification requirements for international experts who are members of the pool of authorization and accreditation experts are as follows:

- a) Experience of working as an expert of institutional/programme evaluation with foreign quality assurance agencies and/or international organizations/associations operating in the field of higher education, which can be verified by the Center on the basis of the relevant address and recommendation to foreign quality assurance agencies, international organizations/associations operating in the field of higher education;
- b) Knowledge of English language.
- c) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any);

6. The qualification requirements for a student member of the expert pool of authorization and accreditation are as follows:

- a) Having an active student status at the stage of admission to the expert pool;
- b) High academic performance, involvement in student and educational activities;
- c) Knowledge of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG, 2015), of the Bologna Process (general knowledge) and of the following legal acts related to higher education:
 - Law of Georgia on Higher Education;
 - Law of Georgia on Education Quality Improvement;
 - Order № 99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of October 1, 2010 on approval of the Educational Institutions Authorization Provision and of Authorization Fees;
 - Order No. 65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated May 4, 2010 on approval of the statute of accreditation of educational programmes of higher educational institutions and accreditation fees;
- d) Team working and effective communication skills;
- e) Data collection, analysis and argumentative discussion skills;
- f) Knowledge of English language.
- g) Additional qualification requirements established by the corresponding individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center (if any);

Article 6. Conflict of Interests of a Member of the Experts Pool

1. The conflict of interests of a member of the expert pool is a confrontation of the expert's interests related to

property or other personal issues with the objectives set out in the Article 2 of this Rule. Existence of the circumstances envisaged by the Article 92 of the General Administrative Code of Georgia is also considered the conflict of interests.

2. A member of the expert pool shall not establish a labor relationship with the relevant legal entity within 1 year after the completion of the corresponding administrative procedure for authorization/accreditation. Also, the expert pool member should not have signed an employment contract with the relevant legal entity within the last 2 years prior to the start of the evaluation process of the higher educational institution and higher education programme.

3. The expert is not authorized to provide consultation on behalf of the Center on authorization and accreditation issues without the consent of the Center.

4. In case of the need for additional documents before or during the site visit, an expert communicates with a higher education institution only through the representative of the Center.

Chapter III **The Rule of Expert Activities**

Article 7. Participation of an Expert as an Observer

1. An expert of authorization and accreditation (except for an international expert), student expert, and an expert of a higher education programme, who has not participated in the evaluation process of a higher education institution and/or education programme (in case of appropriate substantiation by the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department), can participate in the evaluation process of a higher education institution and/or education programme as an observer.

2. An expert participating as an observer does not participate in the planning, interviewing and evaluation of the higher education institution and/or educational programme.

3. The norms stipulated by the code of ethics of experts apply to the participating expert with observer status.

Article 8. Creation a panel of authorization experts and functions of the members

1. A panel of authorization experts is formed by adhering to requirements defined by "Provision on Authorization of Educational Institutions" approved by order № 99/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia on October 1, 2010.

2. In case of the applicant for the status of a higher education institution, a panel of experts is comprised of the members of the expert pool - administrative/academic staff and a student of other higher education institutions, an international expert, as well as employers and other persons with relevant qualifications.

3. One of the members of the expert's panel is obliged to serve as a chair of the panel by the Order of the Director of the Center. In case of the authorization of a higher education institution, the experts panel is chaired by an international expert. The composition of the experts panel, the number of experts and the duration of the site visit shall be determined individually, taking into account the specificity, type and resources of the education institution.

4. The primary responsibility of a student member of the authorization expert panel is to study and evaluate issues related to student rights, interests, student services, and student support mechanisms.

5. The primary responsibility of the employer, who is a member of authorization experts panel is to study and evaluate the compliance of the educational programmes implemented by the HEI with the labor market requirements and study and assessment of issues of cooperation with potential employers/economic agents, employment rates of students, graduates.

6. If the self-evaluation report of the applicant for a status of higher education institution indicates that it implements or plans to implement a regulated academic higher education programme of medicine, the expert panel must include experts with profile in fundamental biomedical sciences and/or clinical studies. In addition, the expert panel includes an international expert with relevant field competency who holds a status of a co-chair.

7. In case of verifying of the fulfillment of authorization conditions via monitoring, the composition of the expert panel, the type of monitoring and workload of the expert members and a chair (except for the obligations envisaged

by the paragraphs 8 and 9 of this Article), as well as the number of days paid for, is defined by the individual administrative act of the Director of the Center, taking the individual specificity into account.

8. The function of each member of the expert panel is to take into account the specifics of the administrative process of authorization or monitoring/increasing the threshold number of student quotas of the authorization status seeker and do the following in order to determine compliance with the authorization standards:

- a) Study the submitted documents at the first stage of the evaluation of the higher education institution;
- b) On the basis of the study of the documents in relation to each standard, formulate the notes, opinions and inquiries in the mapping grid of the standards that an expert would like to clarify during the site visit and/or through the additionally requested documents from the higher education institution, and send it to the chair of the expert panel as agreed upon;
- c) Participate in the preparatory meeting of the expert panel to discuss the documents;
- d) Take part in the drafting of the site visit agenda in case of the implementation of the visit;
- e) In case of a site visit, according to the pre-agreed agenda, to study all issues to draw up a report, including conducting interviews with interested persons, requesting additional documentation if necessary, conducting a visual inspection and carrying out activities not foreseen by the agenda;
- f) To verify the compliance of the information presented in the self-evaluation report/in the application for increasing the threshold number of student quotas (taking into account the methodology for determining the threshold number of students – the specifics of the programmes and the resources of the higher education institution) with respect to the existing situation in the higher education institution and the authorization standards;
- g) After the site visit/study of the documents, take part in the discussion of the evaluation outcome, summarizing and drafting of the final report;
- h) Participate in the discussion of the relevant issue at the meeting of the Authorization Council, including through electronic communication, which is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

9. To determine compliance of the education institution with the authorization standards, by taking into account proceedings specification of authorization of seeker of authorization or monitoring/increase of student quota, the function of chair of the expert panel is the following:

- a) To lead the evaluation process of the higher education institution;
- b) In order to study the documentation of the higher education institution and determine their compliance with the authorization standards, to ensure the distribution of duties among the members of the panel, taking into account the competence of the members of the expert panel;
- c) Summarize the mapping grid sent by the members of the expert's panel and accordingly, draft the site visit agenda/inform the Center for the necessity of additional documents to be requested;
- d) In case of carrying out a site visit, agree the visit agenda with the Center and during meeting of the experts panel planned before the visit, discuss the issues to be reviewed and examined during the visit in detail with members of experts panel;
- e) Head the interview process and meetings with the representatives of the HEI during the visit;
- f) Summarize every day of the visit with members of the experts panel to ensure the evaluation of all important issues within the framework of the visit;
- g) At the end of the visit, make presentation of the main findings in the evaluation process with the presence of the institution;
- h) Draw up a draft report of the experts panel within the established deadline and submit it to the Center;
- i) Formulate the final report of the experts panel and submit it to the Center on the basis of feedback from the Center and the institution (if any);
- j) Present the results of the report at the session of the Authorization Council and answer the questions of the Council members (if any).

10. An international expert included in the experts panel with the status of co-chair:

- a) Performs the functions defined by paragraph 9 of this article in terms of the medical direction and ensures the assessment of compliance with the standards of authorization of the medical direction of the higher education institution and the subject benchmarks of the higher education programme of medicine;
- b) Agrees with the chair of the expert panel on the activities and agenda necessary to determine compliance with

the standards of the higher educational institution in the medical direction;

c) Informs the chair of the experts panel and provides results and conclusions about the compliance of the higher education institution with each standard of medical direction;

11. The deadline for submitting a draft report/final report of the experts panel to the Center is determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center on the creation of an experts panel and/or on the site visit.

Article 8¹. Creation of accreditation experts panel and functions of the members

1. The composition of the accreditation expert panel is formed in accordance with the requirements established by the "statute of accreditation of education programmes of higher education institutions" approved by Order No. 65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia dated May 4, 2010.

2. In case of accreditation of a higher education programme, the expert panel of accreditation includes members of the pool of experts - administrative/academic/scientific/guest staff/students of other higher education institutions, (except for the case of accreditation of teacher training and Georgian language training programmes), international experts may also be included in the composition (participation of an international expert with appropriate qualifications is mandatory in case of a regulated academic higher education programme/programmes provided for in Article 75 paragraph 2 of the Law on Higher Education of Georgia is submitted by the accreditation application (except for teacher training or veterinary training educational programme) and/or doctoral educational programme is submitted (both stand-alone and included in a cluster of educational programmes). In this case international expert shall be determined as the chair of the accreditation expert panel. Also, in case when a joint higher education programme is submitted with an accreditation application, which is planned to be implemented in cooperation with a higher institution/institutions recognized in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country, the accreditation expert panel shall include the international expert/experts with respective qualifications from the country/countries that implement the programme), persons with expert status of the higher education programme, employers, also in the case of a regulated educational programme - the representatives of the relevant regulatory body and/or professional association and other persons with relevant qualifications.

[2. The accreditation expert panel includes members of the experts pool -administrative/academic/scientific/invited staff of other institutions, international expert (except for those presented in individual form - Georgian language preparation, teacher training and veterinary training -60 credits educational programmes), a student; the composition may also include the employers, the representatives of corresponding regulatory body and/or professional associations in the case of regulated educational programme and other persons with relevant qualifications. *(enters into force from January 1, 2023)*]

3. The primary responsibility of the student member of the accreditation expert panel is to study and evaluate issues related to student rights, interests, student services, and student support mechanisms.

4. The main responsibility of the employer, a member of the accreditation expert panel, is to study and evaluate the compliance of the higher education programme with the labor market requirements and issues of cooperation with potential employers/economic agents, employment indicators of students, graduates.

5. In case of verifying fulfillment of accreditation conditions via monitoring, composition of the experts panel, type of monitoring, work to be done by this panel, also the number of days paid for are defined by an individual legal act adopted by the Director of the Center, taking into consideration the individual specificity.

6. In case of evaluation of the application for determining the maximum number of student quota in the medical education programme, the composition of the expert panel, the work to be performed by the expert panel, as well as the number of days to be compensated for this work are determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

7. One of the members of the experts panel has an obligation to chair the panel by the order of the Director of the Center. In case there is an international expert in the experts panel, he/she is appointed as a chair.

8. The function of each member of the expert panel is to take into account the specifics of the administrative process of the application for the determination of the maximum number of student quota in the relevant educational programme/certified medical doctor educational programme and perform the following in order to determine compliance with the accreditation standards:

- a) To study the documentation presented by the higher education institution at the first stage of the evaluation of the application for determining the maximum number of students quota in the educational programme/certified medical doctor educational programme; Also, in order to check the issues to be established within the framework of monitoring, to get acquainted with relevant materials and documentation;
- b) On the basis of the study of the documents in relation to each standard, formulate the notes, opinions and inquiries in the mapping grid that an expert would like to clarify during the site visit and send the filled mapping grid to the chair within the agreed term;
- c) Participate in the preparatory meeting of experts panel planned before the site visit to discuss the documents;
- d) Take part in the drafting of the site visit agenda in case of the implementation of the visit;
- e) In case of the site visit, examine all issues to draw up report in accordance with an agreed agenda, including to interview interested persons, if necessary, request additional documentation, perform visual inspection and perform activities not covered by the agenda; to verify the compliance of the information reflected in the self-evaluation report/in the application for determining the maximum number of students quota in the medical education programme with the actual situation in the higher education institution and the accreditation standards, as well as with respect to the relevant subject benchmarks;
- f) After the site visit/study of the documents, take part in the discussion of the evaluation outcome and summarizing;
- g) Participate in the preparation of the draft report and the final report;
- h) Participate in the discussion of the relevant issue at the meeting of the Authorization Council, including through electronic communication, which is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

9. The function of the chair of the expert panel is to perform the following in order to determine the compliance of the application with the accreditation standards for the determination of the maximum number of student quota in the relevant educational programme/medical programme:

- a) To lead the process of evaluating the application for determining the maximum number of students quota in the educational programme/medical education programme;
- b) Divide the responsibilities among the members of the panel in accordance with their competences, with the purpose of ensuring the study of the documents submitted by the institution and their compliance with accreditation standards;
- c) Summarize the mapping grid sent by the members of the experts panel and accordingly, draft the site visit agenda/inform the Center for the necessity of additional documents to be requested;
- d) Agree the visit agenda with the Center and during the meeting of the experts panel planned before the visit, comprehensively discuss with the panel members the issues to be reviewed and examined during the visit;
- e) To lead the interviewing process and meetings with the representatives of the higher education institution within the framework of the visit;
- f) Summarize the course of the site visit with members of the expert panel to cover the evaluation of all important issues during the site visit;
- g) At the end of the visit, make presentation on the main findings in the evaluation process in the presence of the representatives of the higher education institution;
- h) Elaborate the draft report within the agreed term and submit to the Center;
- i) Based on the feedback (if any) received from the Center and the higher education institution regarding the report, formulate the report of the expert panel and submit it to the Center;
- j) Present the results of the report at the session of Accreditation Council and answer the questions of the Council members (if any).

10. In order to determine the compliance of the relevant educational programme with the accreditation standards, the function of the expert of a higher education programme is to:

- a) Evaluate the self-evaluation report of the educational programme and attached documents in relation to the legal acts and by-laws, the adherence and implementation of which is based on the standards of accreditation of education programmes of higher education institutions approved under the Order N65/N of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, issued on May 4, 2010 on approval of the provision and fees for accreditation of education programmes of higher education institutions";
- b) Participate in the preparation of the draft report and the final report and ensure that the draft report and the

final report comply with the requirements set in the paragraph 3 of the Article 10 of this Rule.

Article 9. Effective management of the activities of the expert panel by the representative of the Center and adherence to the common approach to the evaluation

1. In order to manage effectively the activities of experts panel in accordance with the legislation, and to adhere to the common approach to the evaluation, the Center sends its representative to the visit of the experts panel.
2. The Representative of the Center:
 - a) Ensures the effective management of the activities of the experts panel and adherence to the common approach at all stages of evaluation of the educational institution/educational programme;
 - b) Supports the experts panel to study all the issues defined through the authorization/accreditation standards, and delivers the information to the chair/members of the panel about the issues that are missed or/and have to be clarified during the visit.
 - c) Informs the Center about the procedural violations in the process of evaluation of the higher education institution/educational programme;
 - d) If necessary, provides technical assistance to the experts panel.
3. The representative of the Center does not take part in the process of evaluation and report drafting.

Article 10. Drafting the report

1. The expert panel, based on the information and data collected within the framework of the document study and site visit, drafts the report of the expert panel.
2. The templates of the report of the experts panel are approved by the individual administrative act of the Director of the Center.
3. The information presented in the report of the experts panel should be:
 - a) Clear and self-evident;
 - b) Linguistically sound;
 - c) Argumentative and evidence-based;
 - d) Showing data on the argumentation of sharing or not sharing the argumentative position;
4. If the draft report presented to the Center does not comply with the requirements of paragraph 3 of this article and/or its content contradicts the legislation in force in the field of higher education, based on the petition of the higher education quality assurance department of the Center, the Center is authorized not to accept the document and to return the report with appropriate recommendations to the expert panel for further processing. In this case, if the experts panel does not follow the recommendations of the Center, the Center is authorized to replace the member(s) of the panel and, if necessary, to re-evaluate the higher education institution/education programme.
5. The chair of the expert panel has the right to deliver the responsibility on the drafting of the specific parts of the report to a particular member of the expert panel. Moreover, the report of the expert panel should reflect the evaluations and recommendations of the expert panel as a whole, and each member of the panel should be familiar with the report. The chair of the expert panel is responsible for the formation of final version of the report of the expert panel.
6. In case of different opinions among the members of the expert panel, the particular opinion is separately attached to the report of the expert panel.

Article 11. Reimbursement for expert activities

The method of remuneration for the activities of the members of the authorization and accreditation expert pool is determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.

Chapter IV

Professional Development of Experts and Assessment of Their Work

Article 12. Professional development of experts

1. In order to fully manage the authorization and accreditation process and to establish a uniform assessment

- practice, the Center undertakes to ensure the professional development of experts, in particular, the Center:
- a) Facilitates training, workshops for the members of the expert pool to introduce current standards and procedures, processes, and local and international practices, as well as provides the periodic feedback;
 - b) Ensures the preparation of textbooks and supporting materials related to the activities of experts;
 - c) Organizes periodic meetings with the expert pool to analyze the course of authorization/accreditation, to identify problems and fill the current shortcomings.
2. The Center facilitates the involvement of experts in various international projects and evaluations carried out by the foreign agencies of quality assurance.
 3. The Center offers the members of the pool of experts to conduct trainings, workshops for the higher education institution and other members of the pool of experts.
 4. In order to determine the compliance with qualification requirements, the Center is authorized to perform a periodic certification of experts. Certification of the experts is announced by the individual administrative-legal act issued by the Director of the Center.
 5. The negative assessment through the certification may become a basis for termination of membership of the pool.
 6. Failure of an expert to participate in the certification of experts for an unreasonable excuse shall be a ground for termination of membership of the expert pool. However, in case of a reasonable excuse, the expert is obliged to submit to the Center the relevant documents and materials confirming the existence of this excuse, no later than within 15 working days after the elimination of the circumstances hindering the participation in the experts' certification. In case the Center recognizes that there is reasonable excuse for non-participation of the expert in the certification, the activities to be carried out in order to determine the compliance with the qualification requirements of the expert shall be set by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.
 7. The expert is entitled to appeal in writing to the Center against the negative assessment received at the stage of the experts' certification, based on the final results of the experts' certification within 10 calendar days from the notification of the individual result.
 8. An individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center establishes the Appeals Commission, which reviews the complaints related to the negative evaluation received within the framework of a specific certification.
 9. The Appeals Commission consists of at least 3 members, one of whom, by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center, is appointed as the chair of the mentioned Commission. Activities of the Appeals Commission are determined by the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of Center.
 10. The Appeals Commission reviews each complaint and makes a decision within 15 working days upon its registration at the Center.
 11. The Appeals Commission, taking into account the submitted complaint and the materials available within the specific certification, makes one of the following decisions:
 - a) On satisfying the complaint and giving a positive assessment to the candidate;
 - b) On leaving the negative assessment in force.
 12. The decision made by the Appeals Commission shall be notified in writing to the expert and the Director of the Center within 5 working days upon its receipt.
 13. In case the Appeals Commission receives a decision envisaged under the paragraph 11 (a) of this Article, the relevant activities related to the stages determined for the experts' certification for the expert shall be set by an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.
 14. If the status of the expert's membership is terminated due to a negative assessment received during the certification or non-appearance at the certification for an unreasonable excuse, and at the same time, at the moment of termination, he/she performs the functions/duties envisaged by this Rule, the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center on the termination of his/her membership of the expert pool shall indicate the date of enacting the mentioned act. This date must be related to the moment of completion of the functions/duties by the expert within a specific administrative proceeding, unless the person refuses to perform the assigned function/duty.

Article 13. Evaluation of experts' activities

1. In order to improve the work of experts, the Center evaluates their activities in accordance with this rule,

- according to the evaluation questionnaires approved by the individual legal act of the Director of the Center.
2. The higher education institution fills in the appropriate evaluation questionnaire of the accreditation/authorization expert panel's activities after the site visit of the accreditation/authorization expert panel, before the draft report is presented.
 3. The chair and members of the accreditation/authorization expert panel fill in the appropriate evaluation questionnaire to evaluate each other and the Center's activities after the discussion of the issue at the Council session or after the end of at the session.
 4. The members present at the meeting of the Accreditation/Authorization Council fill in the appropriate evaluation questionnaire of the activities of the accreditation/authorization expert panel after the discussion of the issue at the Council session or after the end of at the session.
 5. The higher education institution fills out the appropriate evaluation questionnaire of the Center's activity at the meeting of the accreditation/authorization council after the discussion of the issue or after the meeting is over.
 6. The employee of the Center, who coordinated the administrative proceedings of the relevant authorization/accreditation issue, fills out the relevant evaluation questionnaire of the activity of the authorization/accreditation expert panel after the discussion of the issue at the Council session or after the end of at the session.
 7. The analysis of expert performance assessment questionnaires is carried out annually. If necessary, the analysis of the questionnaires may be carried out several times a year based on the petition of the higher education quality assurance department of the Center.
 8. Systematic negative evaluation of an expert's activities may be the basis for termination of membership of the specific expert of the expert pool.

Chapter V

Rule on Suspension and Termination of Membership of Expert Pool

Article 14. Suspension of membership of expert pool

1. The grounds for suspension of membership of expert pool can be:
 - a) Occupation of the non-staff position at the Center by the expert for a period of no more than 3 years, except for the case provided by the first paragraph of Article 3 of this rule;
 - b) The case when an expert is selected as a member of Accreditation Council of Educational Programmes/Authorization Council of Higher Education Institutions/Appeals Council.
 - c) Personal application;
2. An individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center is issued on the suspension of membership of expert pool.
3. Based on the individual administrative-legal act envisaged under the paragraph 2 of this Article, the information on suspending the expert's status shall be reflected in the expert pool.
4. In case of suspension of the membership of the expert pool, the expert cannot carry out the activities envisaged under this Rule until the completion of the circumstances determined in paragraph 1 of this Article, except for the case envisaged under the paragraph 6 of this Article.
5. Membership of an expert of the expert pool may be suspended for no more than 3 years. After the expiration of the mentioned period, the Director of the Center issues an individual administrative-legal act on the termination of the membership of the expert pool.
6. If the circumstance envisaged under the paragraph 1 of this Article arises during the period when an expert implements the activities determined in this Rule, the expert is authorized to fully perform the functions assigned to him/her, except for participation in the discussion at the relevant Council session.
7. In the case of completion of the circumstances provided for in the first paragraph of this article, based on the expert's application, an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center on the restoration of the membership of the expert pool will be issued, the information about the restoration of the expert status will be reflected in the expert pool.

Article 15. Termination of membership of expert pool

1. The basis for the termination of membership of the expert pool can be:

- a) Inappropriateness of an expert with the qualification requirements defined by this Rule;
 - b) Violation of the norms of the Code of Ethics of Authorization and Accreditation Experts by the expert;
 - c) Poor performance of the functions by the expert;
 - d) Violation of the requirements defined in the Article 6 of this Rule by the expert;
 - e) Personal statement of the expert;
 - f) Negative court verdict enacted against the expert;
 - g) Recognition of the expert as disabled, lost without track, or dead by the court;
 - h) Death of the expert;
 - i) The case provided for in paragraph 5 of Article 14 of this rule;
 - j) Other cases defined as the ground for the termination of membership of the expert pool by the relevant norms of this Rule;
2. In case of systematic changes in the system of quality assurance mechanisms and/or determination of the new qualification requirements for the experts and/or substantial change of the rule on their activities, the Center is authorized to make a decision on the re-organization of the expert pool, including certification of the expert pool and the formation of its new composition.

Article 16. Start of the proceeding on the termination of the membership of the expert pool

1. An administrative proceeding on termination of membership of the expert pool begins with a written application and/or by the Center's initiative, except for the case envisaged under the Article 16 (2) of this Rule.
2. The written statement shall contain the following information:
 - a) The name of the administrative body which an applicant refers to;
 - b) Identity and address of the applicant;
 - c) Name and surname of the expert;
 - d) Demand;
 - e) The date of submission of the application and the signature of the applicant;
 - f) List of documents attached to the application (if applicable).
3. The application submitted to the Center on the existence of the grounds envisaged under the sub-paragraphs "a", "b", "c", "d" and "j" of paragraph 1 of Article 15 of this Rule shall contain the relevant justification.
4. In case of the grounds envisaged under the sub-paragraphs "a", "b", "c", "d" "i" and "j", paragraph 1, Article 15 of this Rule, based on the substantiated motion of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department of the Center, an individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center may initiate administrative proceedings against the expert.
5. In case of the grounds envisaged under the sub-paragraphs "e", "f", "g", "h", paragraph 1, Article 15 of this Rule, based on the motion of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Department of the Center, the expert's membership at the expert pool shall be terminated through the individual administrative-legal act of the Director of the Center.
6. Anonymous letters and messages cannot be the basis for considering the issue of termination of the membership of the expert pool.
7. The student member of the expert pool retains the status of a member of the pool and is authorized to perform the functions and duties assigned to him/her within 1 year after the suspension of the student status or termination of the student status due to completion of studies.
8. If a student who is a member of the expert pool does not restore his/her status or does not regain it within 1 year after the occurrence of the circumstances specified in paragraph 7 of this article, his/her status as a member of the expert pool will be terminated.

Article 17. Conducting proceedings on the termination of the membership of the expert pool

1. In case of the existence of the circumstances envisaged by the sub-paragraphs "b", "d", paragraph 1 of Article 16 of this Rule, the Director of the Center creates an Ethics Commission (hereinafter - the Commission) including not less than 3 persons on the basis of the individual administrative-legal act. The Commission shall submit the relevant recommendation to the Director of the Center with the majority of the total composition.
2. In the case provided for by paragraph 1 of this article, the Commission prepares recommendation based on the

study of documents presented in the Center, and evaluation and interconnection of all the important circumstances of the case.

3. In the case envisaged under the 4 paragraph of Article 16 of this Rule, the anonymity and confidentiality of the Center's staff should be maintained during the functioning of the Ethics Commission;

4. In case of existence of the circumstances in relation to an expert, envisaged by points "a", "c" and/or "j" of paragraph 1, Article 16 of this rule, based on study, evaluation and reconciliation of all the existing documentation and circumstances relevant to the case, the quality assurance department of higher education delivers recommendations on the termination of the membership of the expert pool to the Director of the Center.

5. The Director of the Center shall adopt one of the following decisions in a month after the commencement of administrative proceedings, based on the recommendation, the content, gravity and outcome of the violation committed in accordance with the provisions of the subparagraph 2 or 4 of this Article:

a) Termination of the expert's authority and the removal from the expert pool;

b) Termination of administrative proceedings related to the termination of the expert's authority.

6. In case of the decision envisaged by paragraph 5 (b) of this article, the Director of the Center is entitled to give the expert an obligatory instruction in the written form, with the right of further taking into account/execution of the aforementioned instruction in accordance with mechanism and terms of verification defined by Director of the Center. If an expert fails to perform the directive in the given period, the Director of the Center is authorized to make a decision on termination of the authority and withdrawal from the expert pool.

7. The decision of the Director of the Center shall be delivered personally to an expert within 10 calendar days and in case of his/her absence, it shall be sent by e-mail.

8. The person is not authorized to become a member of the expert pool for five years after the decision on termination of the authority on the grounds of the circumstances envisaged by subparagraph "b", "c" and / or "d" of paragraph 1 of article 15.