



QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

MANUAL

**Procedures and Deadlines for Quality Evaluations within the
accreditation process of
Higher Education Institutions and Study Programs**

ASCAL 2017

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ABRAVIATION AND EXPLANATORY DICTIONARY

- **QAAHE** - Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, - The Institution responsible for quality assurance in higher education and for the accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and study programs in the Republic of Albania.
- **AB** - Accreditation Board - Collegiate decision - making body, which decides for the accreditation process of higher education institutions and study programs.
- **MES** - Ministry of Education and Sports – The Ministry responsible for the Education and Sports in the Republic of Albania.
- **MRHE** - Ministry responsible for the higher education.
- **HEIs** - Higher education institutions - Higher education institutions are: universities, high schools, colleges, academies and institutes.
- **SP** - Study program - Programs offered by higher education institutions.
- **Accreditation** - quality assessment procedure in higher education, developed by ASCAL based on state and European standards.
- **CQHE** - Code of Quality in Higher Education - Code adopted by Decision of the Council of Ministers which determines the processes and procedures implemented by QAAHE and AB in their activity.
- **LHE** - Law on Higher Education - Law no. 80/2015
- **SQS** - State quality standards are the essential documents that contain standards and minimum criteria that must be met by each institution and study program for full accreditation.
- **ESG** - European standards and guidelines for quality assurance.
- **HEI Coordinator** – The contact person appointed by the HEI responsible for the communication with QAAHE and exchange of information through the electronic system.
- **TC** - Technical Coordinator - ASCAL representative who follows the accreditation process of a HEI.
- **EE**- Evaluation Expert- Recognized expert in a certain field engaged by ASCAL for one evaluation process.
- **AMS** - QAAHE Management System - QAAHE Electronic Management System.

- **IEG** - Internal evaluation group – A group of people engaged by HEIs for the implementation of the institution or study program self-assessment process and the self-assessment report.
- **EET** - External evaluation team - Responsible for carrying out the external evaluation process of HEI and their study programs.
- **DIER** - Draft internal evaluation report – Preliminary IEG report submitted to the head of the HEI or the main unit for approval.
- **IER** - Internal evaluation report.
- **DEER** - Draft external evaluation report - Preliminary report submitted to ASCAL by EET.
- **EER** - External evaluation report – EET finalized report.
- **AF** - Accreditation file - File with complete documentation submitted by the HEI for one accreditation process (printed and in electronic version).
- **CAF** - Complete accreditation file - File with complete documentation prepared by ASCAL for review by BA (printed and electronic system).
- **DAB** - Decision of the Accreditation Board - Decision taken by AB after the review of the AF regarding an accreditation process.
- **DCM** - Decision of the Council of Ministers.
- **OME** - Order of the Minister of Education.

INTRODUCTION

The Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (QAAHE) is a public state institution, part of the Quality Assurance System in Higher Education in Albania, established by the Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 109, dated 15.02.2017 *“On the organization and functioning of The Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education and the Accreditation Board and for setting fees for quality assurance processes in higher education”*.

QAAHE is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. QAAHE, through quality assurance mechanisms, accreditation and other processes, monitors and evaluates the quality of the institution and the programs offered.

Based on the core belief that “Higher Education Institutions themselves are the first ones responsible for quality assurance in the Higher Education System” the Agency’s mission is also based on some basic principles such as: the Higher Education Institutions’ institutional autonomy and academic freedom respect, transparency and information at every step of the process, HEIs internal quality assurance mechanisms, objectivity and professionalism in all processes carried out by it as well as respecting only the state, European and Academic quality criteria and standards.

The QAAHE activity is based in certain laws and bylaws: “Law Nr. 80/2015, “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in Republic of Albania”- Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 109, dated 15.02.2017, Code of Quality in Higher Education and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area, and other international higher education acts, as well and the QAAHE Internal Operation Regulation.

To come to the aid of Higher Education Institutions to carry out the procedure of accreditation in accordance with the Albanian higher education legislation as well as increasing efficiency and transparency in the implementation of these processes, the QAAHE has prepared this handbook containing the procedure and deadlines for quality assessment regarding the accreditation of Institution and Study Programs.

This document is designed to provide details of each step followed in the evaluation process in the framework of institutional and study programs accreditation, as well as informing HEI on what is expected from them regarding the documentation and standards on which the accreditation procedure is based.

This guide also aims to regulate inter-institutional relations between The Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Accreditation Board and Higher Education Institution, as well as their acquaintance with the obligations and commitments that arise during the implementation of the HEI’s accreditation processes.

QAAHE

I. THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' EVALUTATION PROCEDURE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST AND PERIODIC ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation of higher education institutions and their study programs is a legal obligation required by Law no. 80/2015.

Based on this law and DCM no. 109, dated 15.02.2017, QAAHE and AB are institutions responsible for quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Albania. Quality in higher education is guaranteed through internal evaluation process (self-evaluation), where the responsible institution is the HEI itself, and the external evaluation process (accreditation), which is carried out by QAAHE and AB. Accreditation procedure of HEIs and study programs is a dynamic process that goes through several stages and lasts in time.

The following paragraphs detail the steps to be followed for the first and periodic Institutional and study programs accreditation process. In this handbook, each accreditation process is divided into three stages:

1. Accreditation application phase, where the application is reviewed in advance, the request is approved, the HEI is notified, etc.
2. The accreditation process phase that begins with the approval of the accreditation period, development of the accreditation process, drafting the final report, etc.
3. The final review and decision-making phase focuses on preparing materials for the AB, the AB review, reaching a decision, final decision, publication of decisions and the information and issuance of the accreditation certificate that accompanies the AB's decision.

The above stages are presented in the following paragraphs in more details.

I.1. The Accreditation application phase

I.1.1. The institutional accreditation's process application

According to the Albanian Law on Higher Education, HEIs offer accredited programs legally recognized in the Republic of Albania. QAAHE and AB maintain constant contact with HEI regarding the exchange of information, data and trainings in the field of quality assurance.

At the beginning of each academic year, during the period October 15 - November 15, HEIs must formally send to QAAHE the composition of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAN) and its head, along with his contacts. HEI also proposes the HEI coordinator who remains in constant contact with QAAHE for information and data exchange.

All higher education institutions are obliged to be institutionally accredited before the issuance of their first diplomas, or be accredited periodically based on the duration of the previous accreditation. Based on this legal obligation, the HEI applies for institutional accreditation in QAAHE or other agencies part of the European Network of Quality

Assurance Agencies. Pursuant to Law 80/2015, Higher Education Institutions, which require undergoing the external evaluation process for the first and periodic accreditation process, should first request to start this process together with the application form [annex 6] at Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education and Accreditation Board at least 1 year before completing their study programs. For this reason, all HEIs seeking to undergo the institutional accreditation process can submit the completed institutional accreditation form according to the approved format, during each academic year within the period October 1 - May 31, but at least 1 year before the graduation of its first students for the new institutions, or completion of their previous accreditation period. Together with the request for accreditation, the HEI submits a statement of the head of institution, which declares the HEI situation at the time of application while guaranteeing its academic progress until the end of the accreditation process, (during the process of accreditation, HEIs cannot be in litigation with various state or private institutions, in the process of institutional reorganization, in the process of implementing various legal acts which affect the institutional organization, academic functioning, financial and further performance of the institution). Even in cases where the institutional accreditation process is initiated by the Ministry Responsible for Higher Education (MRHE), the HEI must submit to QAAHE the application form for this process.

The request is officially submitted electronically and printed, signed by the head of HEI. The HEI's coordinator simultaneously carries out this application through the QAAHE Management System (QAAHE Electronic Management System), which can be accessed by all higher education institutions. In the application form, in addition to the essential institution data, the HEI also proposes the most appropriate period for the it to perform the institutional accreditation procedure. The QAAHE and AB consider whether or not the proposed period is compatible with their annual agenda and the HEI specifics.

The same procedure is followed in the case of the periodic accreditation.

[I.1.2. The QAAHE and AB's accreditation application review and approval](#)

The QAAHE, being the only institution responsible for the quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Albania has the legal obligation to accept any request for institutional accreditation presented from these institutions. The QAAHE cannot initiate any institutional accreditation process without the request of the institution itself. Submission of the application for accreditation by the HEI, in no case constitutes the start of the accreditation process by the QAAHE.

Upon receiving the accreditation request and application form, the QAAHE performs the the following procedures:

- Examines in advance the legal compliance of the accreditation request, within 10 days from the date of submission of the application. The main focus is the verification of the higher education institution and study programs functioning legal acts, and if they are in accordance with applicable legislation. The QAAHE verifies the functioning legal basis of the institution by the date of establishment (for institutions applying for their first

accreditation process) and from the date of their previous accreditation period. More specifically, the QAAHE verifies the implementation of the institution and its study program legal acts, its activity permit, or previous orders and decisions regarding the accreditation process etc. Various lawsuits against the institution are taken into consideration, as well as the 9 legal acts related to the obligations set by the MRH which have a short-term impact in the HEI performance.

- In case of uncertainties, the HEI requests verification of the information or re-application for the accreditation process in accordance with the approved format and accreditation procedure.
- In cases where the application is correct, the QAAHE verifies the legal compliance with the LHE regarding the academic structure of the main units / basic units, the academic staff, and the operation, organization and accreditation bylaws.
- In the case when during the verification of the application or from the documents made available by the HEI to the QAAHE there are found legal problems or the standards are not met, the QAAHE informs the AB and the Institution.
- The same procedure is followed when the QAAHE identifies deviations from the state standards during the different evaluation stages. Even in these cases, the QAAHE informs the AB about its findings and conclusions and only after the BA reaches a decision, the verification / monitoring procedures are continued.
- Within 10 days it informs the HEI about the ascertainment and the legal consequences in cases when the application was not conducted respecting the legal deadlines for institutional accreditation.
- In cases where the application is considered in accordance with the legal acts in force and procedure e accreditation, QAAHE determines the accreditation period, in cooperation with the Accreditation Board.

The Accreditation Board is a collegial body that operates under the QAAHE and cannot perform less than 6 and no more than 9 meetings per year. The AB in cooperation with the QAAHE are responsible for the approval of the institutional accreditation proposed plan by the HEI or proposes eventual changes depending on its annual agenda and the QAAHE, and the specifics of each HEI. After the finalization, the approved period for the HEIs accreditation process, is officially sent to the institution. Approval of the accreditation period does not imply the beginning of the accreditation process. The QAAHE formally sends to the institution the financial fee it has to pay for performing the accreditation process based on the fees set by DCM no. 109, dated 02/15/2017. Within 10 days from receiving this notification, the HEI must make the full payment for the institutional accreditation process.

In case the HEI does not make the payment within the set deadline, or does not inform the QAAHE for the delay reasons, the accreditation application is canceled and the institution must apply from the beginning. In other specific cases (if the accreditation period coincides with the approval of the HEI budget or other specific evidence identified on a case-by-case basis), the HEI requests the deferral of payment within 10 days of receiving

the fee invoice. The QAAHE takes in consideration and decides on the new deadline proposed. In this case, the accreditation process is considered suspended.

After allocating the payment and submitting the bank invoice to QAAHE, the agency sends the letter of the confirmation for the beginning of the accreditation process by defining the accreditation period (the start and end date of the process). **During this period, until the Decision of the Board of Accreditation, the HEI is considered to be in the process of institutional accreditation.**

I.2. The accreditation process' development steps

The institutional accreditation process cannot last more than 6 months. This period includes only the internal and external evaluation stages, and not the AB's review or decision-making period.

I.2.1. The internal evaluation process' preparation

Three days after payment submission for the institutional accreditation process and submission of the confirmation letter from QAAHE, the HEI coordinator is officially notified regarding the start of the accreditation process and set the meeting date with him, to further discuss the steps of the process. This meeting is important because it clearly defines the procedural steps which will follow the accreditation process. One week after the meeting is held with the coordinator of the HEI, the institution determines and approves the composition of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG), who will be tasked with the implementation of the self-assessment report. The IEG must have at least one member of the student council. The name list together with the contacts of the members, is officially sent to QAAHE. The HEI requires or does not require technical assistance regarding the training of IEG members. This request is sent simultaneously with the composition of group.

If the institution requires a training session for its internal group, the QAAHE notifies the institutional coordinator about the training date and time. This training session can both be conducted in the QAAHE or the institution's premises depending from their request. The QAAHE training consists in helping the internal evaluation group with the necessary knowledge on the institutional accreditation process (the available list of documents the HEI has and what should be drafted) as well as on drafting the IER. The QAAHE also makes available all the necessary documentation to the IEG, gives access to their electronic management system etc. The whole assistance procedure and training last no longer than 15 days from the submission of the IEG list from the HEI.

If the IEG training is not required, the accreditation process continues in its successive stage but according to the predetermined deadlines (without accelerating the predetermined deadlines).

I.2.2. The Internal evaluation process

The internal evaluation from the IEG is very important, not only for the progress of the accreditation process but also it affects the AB's final decision. Within 30-40 days, the HEI and its IEG should prepare the accreditation file with all the documents required by the QAAHE. The essential documentation (a list of documentation required will be provided by QAAHE in advance, ANNEX 3) should be in English language or in both (Albanian and English language).

Some of the IEG's tasks are:

- Document or data compilation, extraction and processing during the internal evaluation period.
- Updating the institution and its constituent unit's information.
- Information preparation in the electronic version (CD) and managing the accreditation procedure through the QAAHE electronic management system.
- Drafting the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) according to the approved format by QAAHE/ AB,
- Drafting a summary of the IER in both the Albanian and English languages, according to the approved format.
- Final report and summary version approval and preparing the accreditation file.
- Formal submission to the QAAHE of the Accreditation FILE (AF) within the set deadline (printed and electronic version). Materials are also to be uploaded to the QAAHE Electronic Management System.

In case the HEI does not submit the accreditation file within the set deadline, the QAAHE formally notifies the institution within 3 days about the delay and of the consequences that derive from it. If the HEI does not forward to the QAAHE all the complete documentation, 3 days after the official notification by the agency or does not present arguments for the delay, the QAAHE immediately terminates the accreditation process. Upon expiration of this deadline, the accreditation process is considered unilaterally ended by the institution. The QAAHE considers this process terminated, therefore the HEI should apply from the beginning for the accreditation process according to the requirements of phase 1. The payment made by HEIs on behalf of the accreditation process is non-refundable.

I.2.3. The Staff and student's questionnaire

While the documents are being prepared and reports drafted, the QAAHE organizes academic staff and student's questionnaires that are part of the HEI.

The HEI coordinator must submit to QAAHE electronically the academic staff's (full-time and part-time) name list and their contact information (e-mail) and the same for students in all three study cycles. The QAAHE prepares online questionnaires for academic staff and

students and contacts them individually via e-mail requesting them to complete the respective questionnaires. Through this email, each individual is given access to its personalized questioner with its address and personal code.

The QAAHE statistically processes the academic staff and students' questionnaires and prepares an analytical report with the results obtained. This report is made available to the external evaluation experts and the Accreditation Board, and is also part of AF and archived.

In cases where the number of staff and students is relatively large, the QAAHE selects randomly a group of names from the list. The number selected must be such that meets the statistical conditions of reliability in relation to the total number of individuals.

Completion of the questionnaires is individually carried out and not mandatory, and is valid no more than 7 days from the date of the announcement.

If the number of individuals completing the questionnaire is less than 20% of the whole number of participants, the results are not taken into account and therefore do not become part of the evaluation file.

I.3. The External evaluation process

The External evaluation step is the main phase of the accreditation process, which is carried out by ASCAL, GVJ and HEI. At this stage of the accreditation process, the main activities performed are:

I.3.1. The External Evaluation Team establishment (EEV)

While the HEI is drafting its IER, the QAAHE sets up the External Evaluation Group. EEG members are selected from a list of approved experts for the institutional accreditation process. These members are being selected for the evaluation process based on the institution, its profile and size. The number of experts varies according to the type of institution where the lowest number of experts is 2 (for Vocational College) and the highest number is 3 (for the University). In the institutional accreditation process at least one of the members must a foreign expert. Foreign experts are selected based on a public announcement made by the QAAHE or by its international partners proposals, part of the ENQA network.

Each EEG has in its composition a representative of the QAAHE, who plays the role of technical coordinator for the process (TC).

The QAAHE is tasked with the selection of well-known experts, with high academic profile from approved list of experts. The assessment experts are constantly trained by the QAAHE and informed for updates and new changes in the accreditation procedure. These experts have access to the agency's electronic system and to all the necessary documents and materials.

The head of QAAHE approves the EEG composition and officially informs the institution, 3 days after the accreditation file and IER are submitted. The HEIs within 3 days of

notification must formally express if they approve or not of the EEG composition. The objection of one or all the EEG members must be based on facts and arguments, and it is sent to the QAAHE by the HEI. The agency after reviewing the submitted information, considers or not the arguments of the HEI and may or may not change the composition of the EEG. In any case and for any change, the HEI is informed.

In no case may the approval of the EEG take more than 6 days from the date of notification of the HEIs for its composition.

I.3.2. The Accreditation File verification process (AF)

The HEI submits the complete accreditation file no later than the deadline set in the detailed agenda. The QAAHE within 5 days from the submission of materials, has the task to fully control the file if all the submitted documentation and IER is in accordance with the standards and accreditation procedures. In cases where the standards are not met in the accreditation file or in drafting process of the IER, the QAAHE immediately notifies the HEI. The institution within 5 days from the date it was notified, may or may not correct AF and IER, and send additional materials or change the final version of the IER. After this date the HEI cannot add any additional material or information to the AF.

I.3.3. The EEV briefing and AF's evaluation process

The QAAHE after receiving the final approval from the HEI regarding the final version of the AF and IER, notifies the EEG members about their first meeting. The Technical Coordinator, within 5 days from the submission date of the AF, informs the EEG about the accreditation process of the respective HEI, its progress up to this phase, make available all the information and materials submitted by the HEI (AF and IER), the questionnaires results, additional information and individual access to all this documentation through the QAAHE electronic system. The EEG is obliged to carry out the preliminary assessment based only in the documentation made available. However, the group might conduct one or more meetings with the HEI representatives during this period, to discuss on its findings and the AF. Also, the EEG based on the findings and uncertainties arising from the assessment prepares a working plan and a list of additional information needed and to be verified during the visit to the HEI. This working plan is proposed to the head of the QAAHE in order to later draft the visit agenda planned to the HEI.

I.3.4. The HEI's visit day(s)

Based on the EEG proposal, the TC drafts the visiting day(s) to the HEI agenda and sends it for approval to the head of the QAAHE. The agenda contains a complete information for each visit day, with a predetermined schedule and topics.

For the institutional accreditation process the visiting days cannot last more than 6 days. The small HEI with limited structure and a small staff and students' number, the visiting

days vary from 1-3 days. While in other large HEIs with over 10000 students, the visiting days may vary from 4-6.

The preliminary agenda is officially sent to the HEI. The institution, within 3 days must express itself formally regarding the visiting agenda, proposes eventual changes (changes of schedules or meetings) but without changing its content and topics. Also, the HEI has the duty to offer all the necessary infrastructure in function of EEG such as: the work environment, additional materials, the responsible personnel during the visit as well as the people who will conduct the meeting with the EEG members according to agenda. In cases when the EEG member(s) do not know the English language well, the HEI makes available to the group an interpreter throughout the visit to the institution.

The visiting days in the HEI must be carried out on the dates set out before in the agenda. The EEG is obliged to respect and conduct all the predetermined visits of the agenda. The main task of the QAAHE representative is to monitor every step of the process and guarantee its normal development in compliance with accreditation procedures and standards. In cases where there are observed violation of the accreditation procedure either by the HEI or EEG, the TC immediately terminates the accreditation process, records the relevant meeting minutes and informs the head of the agency about his findings. The QAAHE and AB decide on the further progress of the accreditation process. Also, the EEG must comply with the QAAHE Regulation and the accreditation procedure, and in no case may exceed the competencies arising from these acts (e.g. the expression of their opinions for HEIs, comparison with other HEIs, arguments unfounded legally or in bylaws, etc.). In these cases, the TC has a key role in smoothing the running process and avoiding any further violations.

After each visit day, the EEG compiles a daily report with a summary of its findings. Depending on these findings, issues and progress, the EEG may change the agenda for the next meeting day, but it should inform the TC and the HEI coordinator in advance.

During their visit, the EEG can request additional information or documents from the HEI. For this reason, the EEG compiles a list with all the necessary documents and submits it to the HEI coordinator. The HEI makes available the required documents no longer than 3 days from the submission of the request, officially and through the QAAHE electronic management system.

[I.3.5. The External evaluation report \(EER\)](#)

The EEG is responsible for drafting the Draft External Evaluation Report (DEER) and the External Evaluation Report (EER) and must submit it to the QAAHE within the predetermined deadline. The EER is drafted in the English language according to an approved format by the QAAHE. Experts should write and use a clear and understandable level of English, and the report must be based only in facts and findings. The report should present the actual and real situation of the HEI, providing detailed information for each aspect and indicator defined in the state and European accreditation standards. The EEG

should carry out an assessment for each indicator or quality indicator, defined in each of the institutional evaluation area.

Each EER should contain the final analysis regarding the institution indicating its strength and weaknesses point(s). Based on this analysis, the EEG should determine a final assessment or if the HEI meets the evaluation standards (the EEG can give 4 judgements, the standards are fully, substantially, partly and not met). In any EER, the experts must clearly express their final assessment on the evaluation areas of the HEI.

The EEG submits its first EER version, the draft EER, in the electronic form no later than the specified date. The TC is responsible for the review of this report and, stating if the DEER follows the standards and the accreditation procedures, and if all aspects/quality indicators are included in the experts' analysis. If there a lack of information or the report does not meet the standards, it is sent back to the EEG for further review and compliance with the necessary data. The EEG may or may not update its report based on the finding of the QAAHE and submits it electronically. This procedure must be conducted within the deadline set out in the detailed agenda.

After finalizing the DEER, the QAAHE officially sends it to the institution. This procedure must be carried out within the set deadline. The institution technically evaluates the EER in terms of content, within the timeframe set out in the detailed agenda. The HEI prepares a material with comments, remarks, eventual suggestions regarding the EER and sends them to the QAAHE.

The QAAHE and the EEG may reflect or not on the HEI suggestions and proposals within the specified deadline. In any case, any change in the EER is a competence only to the EEG. In this case the QAAHE only acts as an intermediary between the HEI and the EEG. After any eventual changes (if it has), the EEG completes and sends a final EER to the TC. The QAAHE and the TC, edit the final version (linguistic and aesthetic corrections) and send it again to the EEG for approval. After confirmation, the EER is printed in 2 copies, signed by the EEG members where one copy is archived in the QAAHE and the second copy is officially sent to institution. The electronic version of the EER is also uploaded into the QAAHE system. The EER together with other additional documents (comments or notes of the EEG) are attached to the AF.

The TC and the QAAHE prepare the Complete Accreditation File with all the documentation used during the accreditation process. The complete AF must contain: written communication, the AF, the IER, additional documents, the EER, and other additional documents. The TC submits the organized AF along with an accompanying list of documentation it contains in the Accreditation Board secretariat. All this procedure should be ended no later than set deadline.

I.4. The Final review and decision reaching phase

I.4.1. The Accreditation Board's Review and Decision Reaching

Based on Law no. 80/2015, the HEI accreditation decision-making body is the Accreditation Board.

The CAF of any HEI is reviewed by the AB in their next meeting. Since the AB's meeting agenda is finalized 15 days before its development date, the AF is taken in consideration by the AB at the next meeting only if it is submitted at least 15 days before the meeting date. In other cases, the AF is reviewed in the further next meeting.

The AB is obliged to review all completed AFs within the above deadline. In any case, if the AB delays or postpones the review of one AF, it must provide relevant arguments for this postponement. The Board, after prior review of the AF, may postpone its decision due to time impossibility in the decision-making process. The AB, can call the TC, EEG members and HEI's representatives in cases where their presence and any detailed information is needed regarding the review and the procedure followed for the AF. In specific cases, the AB may set up verification groups consisting of AB members and various experts who assist in decision making.

However, the AF review and decision-making cannot be postponed by more than two successive meetings. The final decision is printed and signed by the AB members present at the review meeting. The AB and QAAHE within two weeks after the review and decision making, archive the AF and the AB's Decision and formally send the latter to the Ministry Responsible for Higher Education (MRHE). At the same time, this decision is officially sent to the institution, accompanied by the accreditation certificate. The AB decision and summary report of the EEG are made public on the QAAHE official website.

The date the Ab reaches its decision, is the date that the institutional accreditation process for an HEI ends.

I.4.2. The Information, complaint and appeal procedure

Every higher education institution has the right to receive information, complain and appeal the accreditation process or the final AB decision at any time.

For any information, ambiguity, issues or complaints about the accreditation process that is being developed by the QAAHE until the submission of the AF to the AB, HEI addresses it concerns case by case, officially to the head of the agency. Through the QAAHE electronic system, the agency informs in real time the HEI for the progress of each accreditation process. The TC, using this system, informs the head of the HEI for the accreditation process progress.

In cases where the QAAHE does not provide the requested information or the HEI deems that the accreditation process has been violated by the agency or the EEG, the HEI officially addresses its concerns to the Accreditation Board.

Each higher education institution, after receiving the Accreditation Board Decision (ABD), depending on its feedback, has the right to appeal this decision under the Albanian Administrative Procedure Code.

II. THE COMPLETING DEFICIENCIES, RECOMANDATIONS AND CONDITIONS' PROCEDURE SET FOR THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION EVALUATION PROCESS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST AND PERIODIC ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The evaluation procedure regarding the fulfillment of certain conditions is applied by the Accreditation Board, before reaching its final judgement, allowing the institution to complete these conditions within a certain deadline. This process takes place after the HEI application and documentation submission to support the completion of the AF, in accordance with the terms and deadlines set by the AB.

The fulfillment of these conditions consequently leads to the negative or positive reply from the AB regarding the Institutional/ Study Program accreditation process.

Each HEI, based on the progress of the accreditation process, the final decision and recommendations aroused in this decision, is obliged to fulfill them within the AB's defined deadlines, communicated and monitored through the QAAHE.

The main steps followed during this process are:

- The intuition's request to begin the recommendation's fulfillment process based on the deadlines set out in the ABD.
- Application approval and determining the documentation submission deadline to the QAAHE, proving the completion of any deficiencies, recommendation and conditions previously set.
- The application file is verified by the TC. In case of documentation deficiencies, the QAAHE requires supplementary and additional information. At the end, after the whole documentation is being submitted, the QAAHE sends the process' fee to the institution.
- The HEI sends back the financial invoice after the payment is carried out.
- The QAAHE determines the deadlines and the agenda to be followed for this process and sends it to the HEI. After submitting the agenda and receiving the HEI approval, the following procedure is the same as the institutional accreditation process.

In cases where the AB's decision is accompanied by recommendations, the HEI within the accreditation period set in the decision should submit to the QAAHE the request and the documentations requested for the completion of the process, respecting its deadlines. The AB is informed regarding the quality of the completion and acts in accordance with quality monitoring procedures. In this case, the procedural steps are in accordance with the above completing conditions.

III. THE STUDY PROGRAMS' EVALUATION PROCEDURE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST AND PERIODIC ACCREDITATION

The Study Programs Accreditation process is a dynamic one that goes through several phases and lasts in time. Each HEI accredits their study programs before issuing the first diplomas for new programs or before the end of the first or periodic accreditation period. The first study program accreditation process is carried out only after the HEI has positively completed its institutional accreditation process.

This accreditation process is based on the state quality standards for each program cycle, the I, II, and III.

III.1. The accreditation's application phase

III.1.1. The Study Program's accreditation application

According to the Albanian higher education legislation, the HEIs offer accredited programs legally recognized in the Republic of Albania. Based on this legal obligation, the HEI applies for the study program accreditation process at the QAAHE or other agencies part of the European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies, for the latter having obtained prior approval of the Accreditation Board.

Each HEI which decides to undergo to the study program accreditation process should apply according to an approved format, during each academic year within the 1 October-31 May period, but at least 1 year before the graduation of its first students for the new programs, or the completion of their first accreditation period or their periodic accreditation. From this rule, the second cycle study programs the, "Professional Masters" which consist of 60 ECTS, are excluded and should apply for their accreditation process 3 months after the activity start date or 9 months before the end of the accreditation period. The HEI applies individually for each study program. Even in cases where the accreditation process is initiated by the Ministry Responsible for Higher Education (MRHE), the HEI must also apply to the QAAHE through their approved format for the study program accreditation process. The request is officially submitted electronically and printed, signed by the head of HEI. The HEI's coordinator simultaneously carries out this application through the QAAHE Management System (QAAHE Electronic Management System), which can be accessed by all higher education institutions. The HEI's TC proposes the most appropriate period for the institution to undergo the study program accreditation process.

The same procedure is followed in the case of the periodic accreditation.

III.1.2. The QAAHE and AB's accreditation application review and approval

The QAAHE, being the only institution responsible for the quality assurance in higher education in the Republic of Albania has the legal obligation to accept any request for the study program accreditation process presented from these institutions. This process can be

initiated only by the HEI itself or the MRHE. Submission of the application for accreditation by the HEI, in no case constitutes the start of the accreditation process by the QAAHE.

Upon receiving the study program accreditation process application, the QAAHE reviews its compliance with the accreditation requirements. In case of uncertainties, the HEI is requested to correct the irregular information or to re-apply for this process again, in accordance with the approved accreditation format and procedure. The QAAHE informs the HEI about the legal consequences in cases the application was completed and submitted outside the legal deadlines. In cases where the application is correct, the QAAHE verifies the legal compliance with the LHE regarding the academic structure of the main units / basic units and its study programs, eventual reorganization processes and its previous accreditations. In the case when during the verification of the application or from the documents made available by the HEI to the QAAHE there are found legal problems or the standards are not met, the QAAHE informs the AB and the Institution. The same procedure is followed when the QAAHE identifies deviations from the state standards during the different evaluation stages. Even in these cases, the QAAHE informs the AB about its findings and conclusions and only after the BA reaches a decision, the verification / monitoring procedures are continued.

The QAAHE is responsible for the approval of the study program accreditation process proposed plan by the HEI or proposes eventual changes depending on its annual agenda and the study program specifics. After the finalization, the approved period for the HEI's study program accreditation process, is officially sent to the institution within 10 days from the application date. Within 15 days the QAAHE formally sends to the institution the financial fee it has to pay for performing the accreditation process based on the fees set by DCM no. 109, dated 02/15/2017. Within 10 days from receiving this notification, the HEI must make the full payment for the study program accreditation process.

In case the HEI does not make the full payment within the set deadline, the accreditation application is canceled and the institution must apply from the beginning. In other specific cases (if the accreditation period coincides with the approval of the HEI budget), the HEI requests the deferral of payment period. The QAAHE takes in consideration and might or might not approve the new deadline proposed. In this case, the accreditation process is considered suspended.

After allocating the payment and submitting the bank invoice to QAAHE, the agency sends the letter of the confirmation for the beginning of the accreditation process by defining the accreditation period (the start and end date of the process). During this period, until the Decision of the Board of Accreditation, the HEI is considered to be in the process of institutional accreditation.

III.2. Quality assessment

The study program accreditation process cannot last more than 6 months. This period includes only the second phase steps, the QAAHE evaluation process from the starting date to the AF submission to the AB.

III.2.1. The internal evaluation process' preparation

The QAAHE officially notifies the institution of the start of the accreditation process through the confirmation letter no later than 5 days after the payment submission for the study program accreditation process. In the confirmation letter, the QAAHE specifies the study program accreditation process deadlines. In cases where the HEI has applied simultaneously for several study programs accreditation process, the QAAHE sends the accreditation process deadlines for each study program in the same confirmation letter. The accreditation process is carried out individually and independent from each other. For each study program which undergoes this accreditation process, an IER and EER is being submitted by the respective groups, and its finalized by the AB's final decision.

The HEI determines and approves the composition of an Internal Evaluation Group (IEG), who will be tasked with the implementation of the self-assessment report for each study program. The name list together with the members' information contacts is sent officially to the QAAHE. The HEI requires or does not require technical assistance regarding the training of IEG members. This request is sent simultaneously with the composition of group no later than 5 days from the accreditation process beginning. If the institution requires a training session for its internal group, the QAAHE notifies the institutional coordinator about the training date and time. This training session can both be conducted in the QAAHE or the institution's premises depending from their request. The QAAHE training consists in helping the internal evaluation group with the necessary knowledge on the institutional accreditation process (the available list of documents the HEI has and what should be drafted) as well as on drafting the IER. The QAAHE also makes available all the necessary documentation to the IEG. The whole assistance procedure and training last no longer than 15 days from the submission of the IEG list from the HEI.

If the IEG training is not required, the accreditation process continues in its successive stage but according to the predetermined deadlines.

III.2.2. The Internal evaluation process

The study program accreditation process internal evaluation should be completed within the set deadline and agenda. The IEG should complete the accreditation file with all the documents required by the QAAHE. The essential documentation (a list of basic documentation required) will be provided by QAAHE in advance. During this period all the necessary data and information is being drafted and the IEG is working in preparing the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) according to the approved format by QAAHE/ AB, the AF is completed with all the needed information and materials and formally submitted to the QAAHE within the set deadline (in both printed and electronic version). All the AF data is uploaded to the QAAHE Electronic Management System.

In the second cycle study programs (Master of Science) and third cycle ones' case (Executive Master, Long-Term Specialization and Doctorate), the IER and basic

documentation (list of documents required for accreditation provided in advance by the QAAHE, annex 4), must be in English or both Albanian and English languages.

In case the HEI does not submit the accreditation file within the set deadline, the QAAHE formally notifies the institution within 3 days about the delay and of the consequences that derive from it. If the HEI does not forward to the QAAHE all the complete documentation, 3 days after the official notification by the agency or does not present arguments for the delay, the QAAHE immediately terminates the accreditation process. Upon expiration of this deadline, the accreditation process is considered unilaterally ended by the institution. The QAAHE considers this process terminated, therefore the HEI should apply from the beginning for the accreditation process according to the requirements of this manual. The payment made by HEIs on behalf of the study program accreditation process is non-refundable.

III.2.3. The Staff and student's questionnaire

While the documents are being prepared and reports drafted, the QAAHE organizes academic staff and student's questionnaires that work and are enrolled in the HEI study programs that are being accredited.

The HEI coordinator must submit to QAAHE electronically the academic staff's (full-time and part-time) name list and their contact information (e-mail) and the same for students enrolled to the study program being accredited. The QAAHE prepares online questionnaires for academic staff and students and contacts them individually via e-mail requesting them to complete the respective questionnaires. Through this email, each individual is given access to its personalized questioner with its address and personal code.

Completion of the questionnaires is individually carried out and not mandatory, and is valid no more than 7 days from the date of the announcement.

If the number of individuals completing the questionnaire is less than 20% of the whole number of participants, the results are not taken into account and therefore do not become part of the evaluation file. The QAAHE statistically processes the academic staff and students' questionnaires and prepares an analytical report with the results obtained. This report is made available to the external evaluation experts and the Accreditation Board, and is also part of AF and archived.

III.2.4. The External evaluation process

III.2.4.1. The External Evaluation Team establishment (EEV)

While the HEI is drafting its IER, the QAAHE sets up the External Evaluation Group. EEG members are selected from a list of approved experts for the study program accreditation process. These members are being selected for the evaluation process based on the study cycle, its profile and study field. The number of experts varies from 2 to more according to the study program. In the institutional accreditation process at least one of the

members must a foreign expert. In the second cycle study programs (Master of Science) and third cycle ones' case (Executive Master, Long-Term Specialization and Doctorate), the EEG might be composed with foreign experts also. Each EEG has in its composition a representative of the QAAHE, who plays the role of technical coordinator for the process (TC). The QAAHE is tasked with the selection of well-known experts, with high academic profile from approved list of experts. The assessment experts are constantly trained by the QAAHE and informed for updates and new changes in the accreditation procedure. These experts have access to the agency's electronic system and to all the necessary documents and materials.

The head of QAAHE approves the EEG composition and officially informs the institution, 3 days after the accreditation file and IER are submitted. The HEIs within 3 days of notification must formally expresses if they approve or not of the EEG composition. The objection of one or all the EEG members must be based on facts and arguments, and it is sent to the QAAHE by the HEI. The agency after reviewing the submitted information, considers or not the arguments of the HEI and may or may not change the composition of the EEG. In any case and for any change, the HEI is informed.

In no case may the approval of the EEG take more than 6 days from the date of notification of the HEIs for its composition.

III.2.4.2. The Accreditation File verification process (AF)

The HEI submits the complete accreditation file no later than the deadline set in the detailed agenda. The QAAHE within the material submission set deadline, has the task to fully control the file if all the submitted documentation and IER is in accordance with the standards and accreditation procedures. In cases where the standards are not met in the accreditation file or in drafting process of the IER, the QAAHE immediately notifies the HEI. The institution may or may not correct AF and IER after the date it was notified, send additional materials or change the final version of the IER. After this date the HEI cannot add any additional material or information to the AF.

III.2.4.3. The EEV briefing and AF's evaluation process

The QAAHE after receiving the final approval from the HEI regarding the final version of the AF and IER, notifies the EEG members about their first meeting. The Technical Coordinator, within the AF submission set deadline, informs the EEG about the accreditation process of the respective study program, its progress up to this phase, make available all the information and materials submitted by the HEI (AF and IER), the questionnaires results, additional information and individual access to all this documentation through the QAAHE electronic system. The EEG is obliged to carry out the preliminary assessment based only in the documentation made available. However, the group might conduct one or more meetings with the HEI representatives during this period, to discuss on its findings and the AF. Also, the EEG based on the findings and uncertainties arising from the assessment prepares a working plan and a list of additional information needed and to

be verified during the visit to the HEI. This working plan is proposed to the TC in order to later draft the visit agenda planned to the HEI.

III.2.4.4. The HEI's visit day(s)

In this type of accreditation process, visits may last from 1-3 days. The preliminary visiting day agenda is officially sent to the HEI no later than the deadline set in the detailed agenda. The institution, within 3 days must express itself formally regarding the visiting agenda, proposes eventual changes (changes of schedules or meetings) but without changing its content and topics. To add, the HEI also has the duty to offer all the necessary infrastructure in function of EEG such as: the work environment, additional materials, the responsible personnel during the visit as well as the people who will conduct the meeting with the EEG members according to the agenda. In cases when the EEG member(s) do not know the English language well, the HEI makes available to the group an interpreter throughout the visit to the institution.

The visiting days in the HEI must be carried out on the dates set out before in the agenda. The EEG is obliged to respect and conduct all the predetermined visits of the agenda. The main task of the QAAHE representative is to monitor every step of the process and guarantee its normal development in compliance with the accreditation procedures and standards. In cases where there are observed violation of the accreditation procedure either by the HEI or EEG, the TC immediately terminates the accreditation process, records the relevant meeting minutes and informs the head of the agency about his findings. The QAAHE and AB decide on the further progress of the accreditation process. The EEG must also comply with the QAAHE Regulation and the accreditation procedure, and in no case may exceed the competencies arising from these acts (e.g. the expression of their opinions for HEIs, comparison with other HEIs, arguments unfounded legally or in bylaws, etc.). In these cases, the TC has a key role in smoothing the running process and avoiding any further violations.

After each visit day, the EEG complies a daily report with a summary of its findings. The report is submitted to the head of the QAAHE and becomes part of the accreditation procedure. Depending on these findings, issues and progress, the EEG may change the agenda for the next meeting day, but it should inform the head of the QAAHE and the HEI coordinator in advance.

During their visit, the EEG can request additional information or documents from the HEI. For this reason, the EEG compiles a list with all the necessary documents and submits it to the head of the IEG. The HEI may or may not make available the required documents no longer than 3 days from the submission of the request, officially and through the QAAHE electronic management system.

III.2.4.5. The External evaluation report (EER)

The EEG is responsible for drafting the Draft External Evaluation Report (DEER), the External Evaluation Report (EER) and summary report according to the QAAHE format. The EER must be submitted to the QAAHE within the predetermined deadlines. This report is drafted in the Albanian and English language depending on the study program and according to an approved format by the QAAHE/AB. The EER Experts should write and use a clear and understandable level of English, and the report must be based only in facts and findings. The report should present the actual and real situation of the study program undergoing the accreditation process, providing detailed information for each aspect and indicator defined in the state and European accreditation standards. The EEG should carry out an assessment for each indicator or quality indicator, defined in each evaluation area.

Each EER should contain the final analysis regarding the study program indicating its strength and weaknesses point(s). Based on this analysis, the EEG should determine a final assessment or if the study program meets the evaluation standards (the EEG can give 4 judgements, the standards are fully, substantially, partly and not met). In any EER, the experts must clearly express their final assessment on the study program evaluation areas.

The EEG submits its first EER version, the draft EER, in the electronic form no later than the specified date. The TC is responsible for the review of this report and, stating if the DEER follows the standards and the accreditation procedures, if all aspects/quality indicators are included in the experts' analysis and if all the agenda's topics were covered. If there a lack of information or the report does not meet the standards, it is sent back to the EEG for further review and compliance with the necessary data. The EEG may or may not update its report based on the finding of the QAAHE and submits it electronically. This procedure must be conducted within the deadline set out in the detailed agenda.

After finalizing the DEER, the QAAHE officially sends it to the institution. This procedure must be carried out within the set deadline. The institution technically evaluates the EER in terms of content, within the timeframe set out in the detailed agenda. The HEI prepares a material with comments, remarks, eventual suggestions regarding the EER and sends them to the QAAHE respecting the deadlines.

The EEG may reflect or not on the HEI suggestions and proposals for corrections and eventual changes. In any case, any change in the EER is a competence only to the EEG. In this case the QAAHE only acts as an intermediary between the HEI and the EEG. After any eventual changes (if it has), the EEG completes and sends a final EER to the TC. The QAAHE and the TC, edit the final version (linguistic and aesthetic corrections) and send it again to the EEG for its final approval. After confirmation, the EER is printed in 2 copies, signed by the EEG members where one copy is archived in the QAAHE and the second copy is officially sent to institution. The electronic version of the EER is also uploaded into the QAAHE system. The EER together with other additional documents (comments or notes of the EEG) are attached to the AF.

The TC and the QAAHE, after collecting all the necessary data and document, prepare the Complete Accreditation File with all the documentation. The complete AF must contain: written communication, the AF, the IER, additional documents, the EER, and other additional documents. The TC submits the organized AF along with an accompanying list of

documentation it contains in the Accreditation Board secretariat. All this procedure should be ended no later than set deadline.

III.3. The Evaluations review and decision reaching phase

III.3.1. The Accreditation's Board Review and Decision Reaching

Based on Law no. 80/2015, the Accreditation Board is an independent collegial decision-making body. The Board issues the final decision on the accreditation of the higher education institutions and the programs offered by them.

The study program's CAF is reviewed by the AB in their next meeting. Since the AB's meeting agenda is finalized 15 days before its development date, the AF is taken in consideration by the AB at the next meeting only if it is submitted at least 15 days before the meeting date. In other cases, the AF is reviewed in the further next meeting.

The AB is obliged to review all completed AFs within the above deadline. In any case, if the AB delays or postpones the review of one AF, it must provide relevant arguments for this postponement.

The Board, after prior review of the AF, may postpone its decision due to time impossibility in the decision-making process. In each case, the Board must argue each review and decision-making process postponement and officially notify the HEI of this decision. The AB, can call the TC, EEG members and HEI's representatives in cases where their presence and any detailed information is needed regarding the review and the procedure followed for the AF. In specific cases, the AB may set up verification groups consisting of AB members and various experts who assist in decision making.

However, the AF review and decision-making cannot be postponed by more than two successive meetings. The final decision is printed and signed by the AB members present at the review meeting.

The AB and QAAHE within 1 month after the process is completed, archive the AF and the AB's Decision is made public on the QAAHE official website. Also, this decision is formally send to the Ministry Responsible for Higher Education (MRHE) and at the same time to the respective institution, accompanied by the accreditation certificate.

The date the AB reaches its decision, is the date that the institutional accreditation process for an HEI ends.

III.3.2. The Information, complaint and appeal procedure

Every higher education institution has the right to receive information, complain and appeal the accreditation process or the final AB decision at any time.

For any information, ambiguity, issues or complaints about the accreditation process that is being developed by the QAAHE until the submission of the AF to the AB, HEI addresses it concerns case by case, officially to the head of the agency. The QAAHE

informs in real time the HEI for the progress of each accreditation process. The TC, through the electronic system, informs the HEI for the accreditation process progress.

In cases where the QAAHE does not provide the requested information, the HEI officially addresses its concerns to the Accreditation Board.

Each higher education institution, after receiving the Accreditation Board Decision (ABD), depending on its feedback, has the right to appeal this decision under the Albanian Administrative Procedure Code.

IV. THE COMPLETING DEFICIENCIES, RECOMANDATIONS AND CONDITIONS' PROCEDURE SET FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE STUDY PROGRAM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FIRST AND PERIODIC ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The evaluation procedure for completing certain conditions is issued by the Accreditation Board before reaching the final decision on the accreditation of the study programs. These conditions must be met within a certain deadline also appointed by the AB.

This process takes place after the HEI application and documentation submission to support the completion of the AF, in accordance with the terms and deadlines set by the AB.

The fulfillment of these conditions consequently leads to the negative or positive reply from the AB regarding the Institutional/ Study Program accreditation process.

Each HEI, based on the progress of the accreditation process, the final decision and recommendations aroused in this decision, is obliged to fulfill them within the AB's defined deadlines, communicated and monitored through the QAAHE.

The main steps followed during this process are:

- The institution's request to begin the recommendation's fulfillment process based on the deadlines set out in the ABD.
- Application approval and determining the documentation submission deadline to the QAAHE, proving the completion of any deficiencies, recommendation and conditions previously set.
- The application file is verified by the TC. In case of documentation deficiencies, the QAAHE requires supplementary and additional information. At the end, after the whole documentation is being submitted, the QAAHE sends the process' fee to the institution.
- The HEI sends back the financial invoice after the payment is carried out.
- The QAAHE determines the deadlines and the agenda to be followed for this process and sends it to the HEI. After submitting the agenda and receiving the HEI approval, the following procedure is the same as the study programs accreditation process.

In cases where the AB's decision is accompanied by recommendations, the HEI within the accreditation period set in the decision, should submit to the QAAHE the request and the documentations requested for the completion of the process, respecting its deadlines. The AB is informed regarding the quality of the completion and acts in accordance with quality monitoring procedures. In this case, the procedural steps are in accordance with the above study program accreditation process completing conditions.

V. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Table 1. Activities and procedures performed within the institutional accreditation process and the Institutions responsible

The Institution Responsible	Activity	Start of the process / duration
HEI	The presentation of the Quality assurance unit and HEI Coordinator composition.	At the beginning of academic each year.
	Application for the institutional accreditation process according to approved format. Online application via the QAAHE electronic Management system.	Each academic year during the period October 1 - May 31, but at least 1 year before the first student's graduation for the new institutions or completion of the HEI's first or periodic accreditation period.
QAAHE/AB	The application request review. The request's approval or not and the notification of the HEI for the institutional accreditation process invoice.	10 days from the date of the HEI's application.
HEI	The HEI makes the accreditation process' payment and deposits the invoice to the QAAHE.	10 days from the receiving date of the QAAHE receipt.
QAAHE	The QAAHE sends the confirmation letter for the initiation of the accreditation process by determining the accreditation period (the process' start and end date). During this period the HEI is considered to be in the accreditation process.	3 days after the receipt delivery
	The QAAHE officially notifies the HEI's coordinator about the process's fee and sets the meeting date for the accreditation process steps discussion.	
HEI	The HEI determines the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) who is responsible for the realization of the self-assessment report. The HEI requires or does not require technical assistance for the IEG member's training and submits it to the QAAHE.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE informs the HEI coordinator	According to the predetermined

	regarding the IEG's training period, conducts the training sessions regarding the internal evaluation process and the IER drafting, and makes available all the necessary documents and materials.	agenda
HEI	The IEG prepares the documentation's file and IER for the institutional accreditation process. The AF is submitted to the QAAHE (in both printed and CD format). The materials are also uploaded into the QAAHE electronic management system.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE/AB	The QAAHE conducts online questionnaires for the HEI's academic staff and students	During the IER drafting period
	The QAAHE sets up the External Evaluation Group (EEG) for the institutional accreditation process, informs the parties and conducts their training if needed.	During the IER drafting period
QAAHE	The QAAHE notifies the EEG composition to the HEI.	3 days after the IER delivery
HEI	The HEI express its opinion on the EEG members.	3 days after the EEG composition's notification
QAAHE	The QAAHE reviews all the documentation and the IER submitted if they follow the accreditation procedure. If there is any deficiency, it notifies the HEI	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	The HEI completes or does not complete the QAAHE findings on the documentation deficiencies.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE makes all the necessary materials, the IER as well as all the questionnaires' results available to the EEG, in order to further progress the accreditation process.	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG/QAAHE	The EEG reviews the AF. The review is based only the documentation submitted.	According to the predetermined agenda
	The EEG visiting day(s) plan compilation with the HEI representatives to discuss its findings. The visiting day(s) plan completion (meetings and the necessary materials).	According to the predetermined agenda

QAAHE	The QAAHE notifies the HEI regarding the visiting days, agenda, the people needed to meet and all the necessary materials required from the EEG.	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	Confirms the date of the visit, with proposals for eventual changes (if there are any).	3 days after receiving the visit day(s) notification
EEG	EEG conducts the planned visits in the HEI. These visits may vary from 1-3 days (small/medium HEI) or 3-5 days (relatively large HEI).	According to the predetermined agenda
	The completion of the Draft EER and submission to the QAAHE.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The DEER technical control for its compliance with the accreditation standards and procedure. If there is any deficiencies, the report is returned to the experts to fix it.	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG	The EEG updates or not the EER according to the QAAHE findings and recommendations.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE delivers the DEER to the HEI.	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	The HEI sends its comments, remarks, suggestions regarding the DEER	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG	The EEG takes or not into considerations the HEI's findings and finalizes its report (the Final EER).	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE/EEG	Linguistically format the EER and compile a summary for publication and translate it into the Albanian language.	
QAAHE	The QAAHE prepares the AF with all the necessary materials, the IER and EER, and delivers it to the AB secretariat.	According to the predetermined agenda
AB	The AB reviews the AF according to its agenda and reaches a final decision regarding the accreditation process.	The AF must be submitted 10 days before the AB's meeting date. In other cases, it is reviewed in the next meeting.
	The AB can require the presence of the EEG members, HEI representatives, or other experts in its decision-making	In case the AB can't reach a decision in the meeting the AF is planned to be reviewed, the

	process.	decision is postponed for the next meeting.
QAAHE/AB	The QAAHE/AB draft their final decision regarding the accreditation process in review, sign and archive it. The decision is made public in the QAAHE official website.	1 month after the AB's review meeting
QAAHE	The QAAHE publishes an EER's summary in both English and Albanian language, in its official website.	1 month after the AB's final decision

Annex 2: Table 2. Activities and procedures performed within the study program accreditation process and the Institutions responsible

The Institution Responsible	Activity	Start of the process / duration
HEI	Application for the study program accreditation process according to approved format. Online application via the QAAHE electronic Management system. The HEI applies for each study program it offers.	At the beginning of academic each year. Each academic year during the period October 1 -May 31, but at least 1 year before the first student's graduation for the new institutions or completion of the HEI's first or periodic accreditation period. Exception does only the new professional master study program where the application period is 3 months after its activity starts.
QAAHE/AB	The application request review. The request's approval or not and the notification of the HEI for the study program process invoice.	10 days after the of the HEI's application date.
HEI	The HEI makes the accreditation process' payment and deposits the invoice to the QAAHE.	10 days from the receiving date of the QAAHE receipt.
QAAHE	The QAAHE sends the confirmation letter for the initiation of the accreditation process by determining the accreditation period (the process' start and end date). During this period the HEI study program is considered to be in the accreditation process. The QAAHE officially notifies the HEI's coordinator about the process's fee and sets the meeting date for the accreditation process steps discussion.	3 days after the receipt delivery
HEI	The HEI determines the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) who is responsible for the realization of the self-assessment report. The HEI requires or does not require technical assistance for the IEG member's training	5 days after the HEI's Coordinator meeting

	and submits it to the QAAHE.	
QAAHE	The QAAHE informs the HEI coordinator regarding the IEG's training period, conducts the training sessions regarding the internal evaluation process and the IER drafting, and makes available all the necessary documents and materials.	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	The IEG prepares the documentation's file and IER for the institutional accreditation process. The AF is submitted to the QAAHE (in both printed and CD format). The materials are also uploaded into the QAAHE electronic management system.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE/AB	The QAAHE conducts online questionnaires for the HEI's academic staff and students that are part of the study program under the accreditation process.	During the IER drafting period
	The QAAHE sets up the External Evaluation Group (EEG) for the institutional accreditation process, informs the parties and conducts their training if needed.	During the IER drafting period
QAAHE	The QAAHE notifies the EEG composition to the HEI.	3 days after the IER delivery
HEI	The HEI express its opinion on the EEG members.	3 days after the EEG composition's notification
QAAHE	The QAAHE reviews all the documentation and the IER submitted if they follow the study program accreditation procedure. If there is any deficiency, it notifies the HEI	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	The HEI completes or does not complete the QAAHE findings on the documentation deficiencies.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE makes all the necessary materials, the IER as well as all the questionnaires' results available to the EEG, in order to further progress the accreditation process.	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG/QAAHE	The EEG reviews the AF. The review is based only the documentation submitted.	According to the predetermined agenda
	The EEG visiting day(s) plan compilation	According to the predetermined

	with the HEI representatives to discuss its findings. The visiting day(s) plan completion (meetings and the necessary materials).	agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE notifies the HEI regarding the visiting days, agenda, the people needed to meet and all the necessary materials required from the EEG.	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	Confirms the date of the visit, with proposals for eventual changes (if there are any).	3 days after receiving the visit day(s) notification
EEG	EEG conducts the planned visits in the HEI. These visits may vary from 1-3 days.	According to the predetermined agenda
	The completion of the Draft EER and submission to the QAAHE.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The DEER technical control for its compliance with the accreditation standards and procedure. If there are any deficiencies, the report is returned to the experts to fix it.	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG	The EEG updates or not the EER according to the QAAHE findings and recommendations.	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE	The QAAHE delivers the DEER to the HEI.	According to the predetermined agenda
HEI	The HEI sends its comments, remarks, suggestions regarding the DEER	According to the predetermined agenda
EEG	The EEG takes or not into considerations the HEI's findings and finalizes its report (the Final EER).	According to the predetermined agenda
QAAHE/EEG	Linguistically format the EER and compile a summary for publication and translate it into the Albanian language.	
QAAHE	The QAAHE prepares the AF with all the necessary materials, the IER and EER, and delivers it to the AB secretariat.	According to the predetermined agenda
AB	The AB reviews the AF according to its agenda and reaches a final decision regarding the accreditation process.	The AF must be submitted 10 days before the AB's meeting date. In other cases, it is reviewed in the next meeting.

	The AB can require the presence of the EEG members, HEI representatives, or other experts in its decision-making process.	In case the AB can't reach a decision in the meeting the AF is planned to be reviewed, the decision is postponed for the next meeting.
QAAHE/AB	The QAAHE/AB draft their final decision regarding the accreditation process in review, sign and archive it. The decision is made public in the QAAHE official website.	1 month after the AB's review meeting
QAAHE	The QAAHE publishes an EER's summary in both English and Albanian language, in its official website.	1 month after the AB's final decision

Annex 3: The institutional accreditation process' essential document list

The following list is the mandatory documentation that institutions must submit together with the SER required for the institutional accreditation process. Said that, it doesn't mean that every information listed below should be a single individual document, some information may be included together in one document.

All the required documentation, including the Self-Assessment Report, should be delivered in the English language.

1. The Institution Statute and its General Regulation.
2. The main and basic unit's General and Specific Functioning Regulation.
3. The HEI's mission.
4. The HEI's actual Strategic Plan.
5. The Cooperation and Internationalization policies.
6. The Institutional Development Strategy
7. Legal acts regarding the HEI's management, appointments and election procedures.
8. The academic financial autonomy and freedom evidence.
9. The HEI's Human resource, Employment, Recruitment and Selection policies.
10. The Staff's professional development policy.
11. HEI's and its Study Programs organizational structure.
12. The HEI's documentation on assets and facilities, and its property policy.
13. The Administrative Procedures for the budget, funds and donations distribution.
14. The Foreign policy on staff and student mobility.
15. The IT, laboratories and institutional services strategy.
16. The public information management, data/information system and archive policies.
17. The Learning and Quality Teaching policies.
18. The Staff's Academic Teaching process evaluation policies.
19. The Tests, Exams, Graduation criteria and procedures' Regulations.
20. Evidence that the offered study programs are completed with all the necessary elements.
21. The Diplomas and Diploma Supplements evidence.
22. The opening of new study programs policy.
23. The Student's appeal and complaint procedure.
24. The study programs' supporting, developing and quality improving procedures.
25. The teaching quality improving procedure.
26. The student admission policy.
27. The student registration and database/registering procedure.
28. The Student support and guidance policy and their organizational structure.

29. The research policy.
30. The institutional research, monitoring and results activity.
31. The Cooperation policy and partnership priorities.
32. The Partnerships Agreements and cooperation strategy.

Annex 4: The study programs accreditation process' essential document list

The following list is the mandatory documentation that institutions must submit together with the SER required for the institutional accreditation process. Said that, it doesn't mean that every information listed below should be a single individual document, some information may be included together in one document. In the second cycle study programs (Master of Science) and third cycle ones' case (Executive Master, Long-Term Specialization and Doctorate), the IER and list of documentation below must be delivered in the English language.

1. The main and basic unit's General and Specific Functioning Regulation responsible for the study program undergoing the accreditation process.
2. The completed study program file.
3. The study program's Regulation,
4. The study program's mission and labor market study.
5. The study program's development strategy.
6. The academic financial autonomy and freedom evidence.
7. The HEI's Human resource, Employment, Recruitment and Selection policies.
8. The Staff's professional development policy.
9. HEI's and its Study Programs organizational structure.
10. The Foreign policy on staff and student mobility.
11. The Learning and Quality Teaching policies.
12. The Staff's Academic Teaching process evaluation policies.
13. The Tests, Exams, Graduation criteria and procedures' Regulations.
14. The Diplomas and Diploma Supplements evidence.
15. The Student's appeal and complaint procedure.
16. The study program's supporting, developing and quality improving procedure.
17. The teaching quality improving procedure.
18. The student admission policy.
19. The student registration and database/registering procedure.
20. The Student support and guidance policy and their organizational structure.
21. The study program's research, monitoring and results activity.
22. The Partnerships Agreements and cooperation strategy regarding the study program.

Annex 5: The institutional accreditation process' necessary information and data

a. Qualitative information and data

The following data, indicators, and information can be used by the IEG and EEG for the preparation of the final evaluation reports required in the accreditation process. The HEI prepares the required information according to the list given and if needed updates the data during the institutional or study program accreditation process. This data can be summarized in several documents and each data does not need to be delivered separately.

1. The HEI, study program, curricula's, etc. mission:

- The research and teaching goals and objectives.
- The short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies for achieving their objectives
- How does the HEI follow its homologue (national and international) counterpart institutional changes
- How does the HEI approach changes required for its own improvement, according to the new requirements and external circumstances
- Who is in control of the above mechanisms
- The HEI's General information:
- The HEI's Historical background
- Its national status
- Its staff's number (full time, supporters)
- Its students number
- The number of study programs (I, II, and III cycle)
- The ongoing qualification forms
- The HEI position compared with the national HEIs.
- The international HEI position.

2. The HEI's organizational structure, its constituent units and management:

- HEI's organizational way; the hierarchical organization
- The decision-making process and its policy
- The support staff's quality
- Elected bodies of all levels
- Faculties, departments, sections
- The management, teaching, support and administrative staff number for each unit
- The internal and external staff number
- Competencies and responsibilities; their acquaintance with them
- The employment contracts and the information regarding their rights and duties

- The HEI's database, update and responsibilities of keeping and providing information.

3. The study programs. Diplomas, postgraduates' programs etc. analysis

- The HEI's general didactic structure, the issued diplomas
- The study program and department didactic structure
- The admission statistics for each study course: number of applicants: Number of admissions, the qualitative level of the admitted
- Each study program student's number
- The teaching staff number for each study program: internal and external staff
- The student's pass rates: the number of students admitted and completing the program
- The passing student's quality: the average grade
- The study programs coordination;

4. The study programs, the curricula organization, credits

- The beginning of the year, goals and objectives for each study program
- Each study course programs, subjects and its teaching loads
- The lectures' course loads for each study program
- The semester and course's number for each study programs
- The subject's place in each study program; the compliance with the study program in its entirety
- The teaching methods for each subject, the relationship between them according the subject and study program's specifics
- The subjects' literature and its quality
- The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); loads translated into credits, inside and outside the auditorium.

5. The teaching and support staff

- The main and support staff's structure in the curriculum of each study program
- The full-time and part-time staff's workload in all the study programs
- The full-time staff's number of the last 5 years
- The students and teaching staff's ratio for each study program
- The courses coverage with lectures, number of disciplines, teaching loads
- The teaching load distribution for each subject of a study program
- The study program teaching staff's engagement outside the employment structure
- Staff recruitment policies in compliance with applicable rules

- The recruitment documentation, staff's file
- The qualification degree of the key staff and its compliance with the tasks they perform
- Qualified and unqualified staff ratio
- Internal and external staff ratio
- The external staff's qualification degree and the recruitment criteria
- The teachings' staff average age and female-male ratio
- Support staff: recruitment, loads, its control;

6. Teaching

- The teaching organization and forms: their relationship
- The teaching load (nr)
- The teaching quality (nr)
- The knowledge control, its forms and objectivity
- The knowledge control value to the student's profile and build up, the exam passing rate per season for each study program
- The entering students' number in the last 5 years
- The leaving students' number for each study course (number of graduates)
- The average studies' duration
- The students' number entering the postgraduate's schools
- The admission criteria in these schools, how are they implemented
- The number of students who have completed the postgraduate schools (new postgraduate schools)
- The number of doctorate studies undergoing in the last 5 years
- Number of doctorates studies completed in the last 5 years
- Teaching methods, techniques and technologies
- The use of new teaching technologies: computers, audiovisual tools, etc.
- Internal teaching control system.

7. The Scientific research

- The research policy in all levels of the HEIs
- The number of the publications in the last 5 years by the HEI's full time staff
- The number of research projects won in the last five years
- The number of projects implemented in the last five years
- The HEI's staff participation and presentation in scientific activities, inside and outside the country

- The number of scientific activities organized by HEIs during the last five years
- Participation as partner in national or international projects
- Organizing seminars with external lecturers, local or foreign
- The staff's training in brand research abroad
- The scientific infrastructure
- The students and postgraduates' involvement in scientific research
- National or international awards in the field of scientific research

8. The students and postgraduates

- The students and postgraduate's admission policies and procedures: rules, control i knowledge control, selection criteria, transparency, statistics and relevant documentation.
- The students teaching load in the auditorium and outside of it; the credit system according to their study year and study program
- The diploma topics: the HEI's criteria, performance, and capacity.
- The student's activity types
- The graduates' employment: access to the labor market and their compliance with this market.
- Informing the students about their rights, duties, curricula, study program guide, etc.
- The students' involvement in improving the study programs, the teaching process and their representation in the HEI's governing structures.

9. The Facilities, material resources, logistics and other services to the community

- Appropriate facilities and assets for conducting the learning process: lecture halls, laboratories, tools and equipment for theoretical and practical student's preparation
- Internet connections, computer equipment for the staff and students.
- The library and their capacity in relation to staff and students
- The subjects and study programs' coverage with additional literature from the library central or unit funds (departments)
- Other students' services, study rooms, photocopies, printing, literature search, information service, service staff, etc.
- Other staff and students 'services: sports, recreational facilities, etc.
- Other community services: information, public relations, third parties' services, etc.

10. Financing and the financial resources' management

- The funding sources and statistics of the last 5 years
- The use of financial resources for the last 5 years

- The students' expenses and fee for one academic year
- The teaching, research, administration, equipment, etc expenses
- Transparency and internal financial control, audit and its results
- The financial management capacities.

11. The Internal Quality Assurance System

- Internal quality control
- Internal quality management system
- The quality monitoring and management responsibilities, up to the department level
- The Self-assessment process and its results
- The Quality improvement policies based on the periodic self-assessments
- The external audit and evaluation results

12. The National and international cooperation, and public relations

- National cooperation
 - The HEI's contacts, cooperation and activity coordination within the country
 - The HEI staff and students' mobility within the country
 - The communication process and cooperation with other state institutions, the government, professional organizations, business community, labor market and other HEI's important social actors.
 - Maintaining contacts with graduate and employed students
- International cooperation
- The implementation of objectives and activities in the framework of the Bologna process
 - The HEI's contacts and cooperation with international institutions
 - The HEI staff and students' mobility in twin institutions abroad; the staff and students' exchange between them
 - Participation in European programs (CARDS, TEMPUS, etc.) in the last 5 years.
- The students, specialists and graduates' contacts and exchange, working for international institutions abroad.

b. Quantitative data

The following data and reports must be extracted and processed by the HEI and can be used for internal evaluation report by IEG and external evaluation report by EEG.

- The Institution's size (the number of constituent units, the general, professional, supportive and administrative staff's number)
- The management staff for each HEI's level

- The Full time's staff
- The External staff
- The Administrative staff
- The Support staffs
- The internal staff with titles percentage
- The internal staff with ranks percentage
- The internal staff without titles and ranks percentage
- The external staff with titles percentage
- The external staff with ranks percentage
- The external staff without titles and ranks percentage
- The average age of fulltime staff
- The Staff's selection criteria (graduation, age, titles, etc.)
- The M/F report
- The students' admission (points, age, etc.)
- The students number
- The students' number for each academic year
- The number of branches
- The number of diplomas issued
- The number of diplomas issued for each branch
- The number of lectures, seminars, internships and laboratories
- The number of teaching semesters in an academic year
- The unit's total teaching load
- The teaching load of each diploma
- The maximum duration of each study program in an academic year
- The number of students graduates each year
- The average graduate students' number during the last 5 years
- The percentage of the pass rate over the years
- The percentage of the failing rate over the years
- Classrooms, laboratories, computer cabinets, internet, library, etc.
- The graduate's percentage employed in the same structure
- The graduates' percentage entering the postgraduate school
- The graduates' percentage graduating the postgraduate school
- The number of doctorates started in the last 5 years
- The number of doctorates thesis completed during the last 5 years

- The staffs, subjects, and study programs' literature available
- The coverage degree of study programs with Albanian textbooks
- The coverage degree of study programs with foreign textbooks
- The percentage of the management staff
- The internal staff per unit ratio
- The external staff per unit ratio
- The internal staff with titles percentage
- The internal staff with ranks percentage
- The internal staff without ranks and titles percentage
- The external staff with titles percentage
- The external staff with ranks percentage
- The external staff without ranks and titles percentage
- The full-time staff's average age (per unit)
- The M/F ratio per unit
- The unit's support staff
- The unit's administrative staff
- The students' number per unit
- The students' number per each study year
- The students' number per each branch in study year
- The number of branches per unit
- The number of diplomas issued in each unit branch
- The number of lectures, seminars, internships and laboratories per unit
- The number of teaching semesters in an academic year per unit
- The programs (renovation, how modern it is, etc.)
- The staffs' facilities number
- The staffs' number of computers
- The students' number of computers
- The number of staffs' publication according to their titles and degrees
- The number of projects implemented in the last 5 years
- The number of scientific activities organized
- The number of extracurricular activities organized
- The number of staff's exchange abroad
- The number of students' exchange abroad
- The number of participations in European Project as proposers or partners

- The minimum staff number for each study program
- The minimum percentage of qualified staff in relation to the unqualified one
- The student/lecturer ratio
- The teaching criteria: lectures, seminars, laboratories
- The students' number per seminar
- The students' number per laboratory classes
- The students' number per lectures
- Lecture / seminar / laboratory ratio
- The Prof / prof ass / dr / ped / asped ratio
- The total teaching load/ teacher ratio
- The total teaching load/ teacher/ subject ratio
- The total actual teaching load / teacher ratio
- The factual teaching load / teacher / subject ratio
- The total converted teaching load / teacher ratio
- The total converted teaching load / teacher/ subject ratio
- The total factual converted teaching load / teacher ratio
- The minimum staff number for a study program
- The Professional staff / support staff ratio (laboratory technician, operator, collector, etc.)
- The minimum staff number per section
- The minimum staff number per department
- The qualified/ unskilled staff ratio per section
- The qualified/ unskilled staff ratio per department
- The department, section ratio
- The faculty/ department ratio
- The internal staff / external staff ratio
- The teaching staff / administrative staff ratio
- The maximum auditorium annual teaching load/ lecturer
- The maximum total annual teaching load/ lecturer
- The minimum teaching qualification (lectures, seminars, laboratories)
- The minimum qualification to complete the diploma reviews
- The minimum qualification to conduct a doctoral opposition
- The minimum qualification to perform a mini-review
- The minimum qualification to teach in Postgraduate Schools
- The minimum working years' experience in order to teach

- The minimum qualification and other criteria to engage as a HEI's external lecturer
- The maximum number of total teaching load / prof. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / as.prof ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / dr. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / ped. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / as.ped. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / prof. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / as.prof ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / dr. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / ped. Ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / as.ped ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ prof. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ as.prof ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ dr. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ ped. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ as.ped ratio
- The maximum Bachelor Degree courses' number
- The maximum Master of Science Degree courses' number
- The teaching load distribution within a unit
- The annual teaching load distribution between internal and external staff ratio
- The teachers' criteria who teach in several units
- The maximum number of subjects a lecturer can conduct
- The knowledge control forms, exams, commissions, bribery
- The library, number of places, books (main, other, foreign, Albanian, old, new etc. texts)
- The subjects covered by textbooks percentage
- The number of textbooks per study program
- The textbooks copies/ subjects/ students' ratio
- The students' annual cost
- The students' annual cost per study program
- The student's expenses
- The students' revenue from fees / expenses ratio
- The students' cost / expenses ratio
- The teaching expenses
- The research expenses

- The administration's costs
- The salaries' expenses
- The investments, laboratories, classrooms' expenses
- The total secondary income
- The state budget/ secondary income ratio
- The donor's projects revenue within country
- The foreign donor's projects revenue
- The number of services offered to third parties
- The number of activities conducted with other state institutions
- The number of activities conducted with other non-state institutions
- The number of self-assessments conducted during the last 5 years
- The lecture rooms/ student's ratio
- The number of subjects/ laboratories (those that require the laboratory classes) ratio
- The laboratory/ students who perform laboratory classes ratio
- The average daily use of classrooms number
- The average daily use of library number
- The employed within the country students' contact number
- The abroad employed students' contact number
- The number of general subjects in a study program
- The number of profiled subjects in a study program
- The general subjects/ profiled subjects in a study program ratio
- The maximum annual number of general subjects per study program
- The maximum annual number of profiled subjects per study program

Annex 6: The study programs accreditation process' necessary information and data

a. Qualitative information and data

The following data, indicators, and information can be used by the IEG and EEG for the preparation of the final evaluation reports required in the accreditation process. The HEI prepares the required information according to the list given and if needed updates the data during the institutional or study program accreditation process. This data can be summarized in several documents and each data does not need to be delivered separately.

1. The HEI, study program, curricula's, etc. mission:

- The research and teaching goals and objectives.
- The short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies for achieving their objectives
- How does the HEI follow its homologue (national and international) counterpart institutional changes
- How does the HEI approach changes required for its own improvement, according to the new requirements and external circumstances
- Who is in control of the above mechanisms
- The HEI's General information:
- The HEI's Historical background
- Its national status
- Its staff's number (full time, supporters)
- Its students number
- The number of study programs (I, II, and III cycle)
- The ongoing qualification forms
- The HEI position compared with the national HEIs.
- The international HEI position.

2. The HEI's organizational structure, its constituent units and management:

- HEI's organizational way; the hierarchical organization
- The decision-making process and its policy
- The support staff's quality
- Elected bodies of all levels
- Faculties, departments, sections
- The management, teaching, support and administrative staff number for each unit
- The internal and external staff number
- Competencies and responsibilities; their acquaintance with them

- The employment contracts and the information regarding their rights and duties
- The HEI's database, update and responsibilities of keeping and providing information.

3. The study programs. Diplomas, postgraduates' programs etc. analysis

- The HEI's general didactic structure, the issued diplomas
- The study program and department didactic structure
- The admission statistics for each study course: number of applicants: Number of admissions, the qualitative level of the admitted
- Each study program student's number
- The teaching staff number for each study program: internal and external staff
- The student's pass rates: the number of students admitted and completing the program
- The passing student's quality: the average grade
- The study programs coordination;

4. The study programs, the curricula organization, credits

- The beginning of the year, goals and objectives for each study program
- Each study course programs, subjects and its teaching loads
- The lectures' course loads for each study program
- The semester and course's number for each study programs
- The subject's place in each study program; the compliance with the study program in its entirety
- The teaching methods for each subject, the relationship between them according the subject and study program's specifics
- The subjects' literature and its quality
- The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); loads translated into credits, inside and outside the auditorium.

5. The teaching and support staff

- The main and support staff's structure in the curriculum of each study program
- The full-time and part-time staff's workload in all the study programs
- The full-time staff's number of the last 5 years
- The students and teaching staff's ratio for each study program
- The courses coverage with lectures, number of disciplines, teaching loads
- The teaching load distribution for each subject of a study program
- The study program teaching staff's engagement outside the employment structure

- Staff recruitment policies in compliance with applicable rules
- The recruitment documentation, staff's file
- The qualification degree of the key staff and its compliance with the tasks they perform
- Qualified and unqualified staff ratio
- Internal and external staff ratio
- The external staff's qualification degree and the recruitment criteria
- The teachings' staff average age and female-male ratio
- Support staff: recruitment, loads, its control.

6. Teaching

- The teaching organization and forms: their relationship
- The teaching load (nr)
- The teaching quality (nr)
- The knowledge control, its forms and objectivity
- The knowledge control value to the student's profile and build up, the exam passing rate per season for each study program
- The entering students' number in the last 5 years
- The leaving students' number for each study course (number of graduates)
- The average studies' duration
- The students' number entering the postgraduate's schools
- The admission criteria in these schools, how are they implemented
- The number of students who have completed the postgraduate schools (new postgraduate schools)
- The number of doctorate studies undergoing in the last 5 years
- Number of doctorates studies completed in the last 5 years
- Teaching methods, techniques and technologies
- The use of new teaching technologies: computers, audiovisual tools, etc.
- Internal teaching control system.

7. The Scientific research

- The research policy in all levels of the HEIs
- The number of the publications in the last 5 years by the HEI's full time staff
- The number of research projects won in the last five years
- The number of projects implemented in the last five years

- The HEI's staff participation and presentation in scientific activities, inside and outside the country
- The number of scientific activities organized by HEIs during the last five years
- Participation as partner in national or international projects
- Organizing seminars with external lecturers, local or foreign
- The staff's training in brand research abroad
- The scientific infrastructure
- The students and postgraduates' involvement in scientific research
- National or international awards in the field of scientific research.

8. The students and postgraduates

- The students and postgraduate's admission policies and procedures: rules, control i knowledge control, selection criteria, transparency, statistics and relevant documentation.
- The students teaching load in the auditorium and outside of it; the credit system according to their study year and study program
- The diploma topics: the HEI's criteria, performance, and capacity.
- The student's activity types
- The graduates' employment: access to the labor market and their compliance with this market.
- Informing the students about their rights, duties, curricula, study program guide, etc.
- The students' involvement in improving the study programs, the teaching process and their representation in the HEI's governing structures.

9. The Facilities, material resources, logistics and other services to the community

- Appropriate facilities and assets for conducting the learning process: lecture halls, laboratories, tools and equipment for theoretical and practical student's preparation
- Internet connections, computer equipment for the staff and students.
- The library and their capacity in relation to staff and students
- The subjects and study programs' coverage with additional literature from the library central or unit funds (departments)
- Other students' services, study rooms, photocopies, printing, literature search, information service, service staff, etc.
- Other staff and students 'services: sports, recreational facilities, etc.
- Other community services: information, public relations, third parties' services, etc.

10. Financing and the financial resources' management

- The funding sources and statistics of the last 5 years

- The use of financial resources for the last 5 years
- The students' expenses and fee for one academic year
- The teaching, research, administration, equipment, etc expenses
- Transparency and internal financial control, audit and its results
- The financial management capacities.

11. The Internal Quality Assurance System

- Internal quality control
- Internal quality management system
- The quality monitoring and management responsibilities, up to the department level
- The Self-assessment process and its results
- The Quality improvement policies based on the periodic self-assessments
- The external audit and evaluation results

12. The National and international cooperation, and public relations

- National cooperation
 - The HEI's contacts, cooperation and activity coordination within the country
 - The HEI staff and students' mobility within the country
 - The communication process and cooperation with other state institutions, the government, professional organizations, business community, labor market and other HEI's important social actors.
 - Maintaining contacts with graduate and employed students
- International cooperation
- The implementation of objectives and activities in the framework of the Bologna process
 - The HEI's contacts and cooperation with international institutions
 - The HEI staff and students' mobility in twin institutions abroad; the staff and students' exchange between them
 - Participation in European programs (CARDS, TEMPUS, etc.) in the last 5 years.
- The students, specialists and graduates' contacts and exchange, working for international institutions abroad.

b. Quantitative data

The following data and reports must be extracted and processed by the HEI and can be used for internal evaluation report by IEG and external evaluation report by EEG.

- The Institution's size (the number of constituent units, the general, professional, supportive and administrative staff's number)

- The management staff for each HEI's level
- The Full time's staff
- The External staff
- The Administrative staff
- The Support staffs
- The internal staff with titles percentage
- The internal staff with ranks percentage
- The internal staff without titles and ranks percentage
- The external staff with titles percentage
- The external staff with ranks percentage
- The external staff without titles and ranks percentage
- The average age of fulltime staff
- The Staff's selection criteria (graduation, age, titles, etc.)
- The M/F report
- The students' admission (points, age, etc.)
- The students number
- The students' number for each academic year
- The number of branches
- The number of diplomas issued
- The number of diplomas issued for each branch
- The number of lectures, seminars, internships and laboratories
- The number of teaching semesters in an academic year
- The unit's total teaching load
- The teaching load of each diploma
- The maximum duration of each study program in an academic year
- The number of students graduates each year
- The average graduate students' number during the last 5 years
- The percentage of the pass rate over the years
- The percentage of the failing rate over the years
- Classrooms, laboratories, computer cabinets, internet, library, etc.
- The graduate's percentage employed in the same structure
- The graduates' percentage entering the postgraduate school
- The graduates' percentage graduating the postgraduate school
- The number of doctorates started in the last 5 years

- The number of doctorates thesis completed during the last 5 years
- The staffs, subjects, and study programs' literature available
- The coverage degree of study programs with Albanian textbooks
- The coverage degree of study programs with foreign textbooks
- The percentage of the management staff
- The internal staff per unit ratio
- The external staff per unit ratio
- The internal staff with titles percentage
- The internal staff with ranks percentage
- The internal staff without ranks and titles percentage
- The external staff with titles percentage
- The external staff with ranks percentage
- The external staff without ranks and titles percentage
- The full-time staff's average age (per unit)
- The M/F ratio per unit
- The unit's support staff
- The unit's administrative staff
- The students' number per unit
- The students' number per each study year
- The students' number per each branch in study year
- The number of branches per unit
- The number of diplomas issued in each unit branch
- The number of lectures, seminars, internships and laboratories per unit
- The number of teaching semesters in an academic year per unit
- The programs (renovation, how modern it is, etc.)
- The staffs' facilities number
- The staffs' number of computers
- The students' number of computers
- The number of staffs' publication according to their titles and degrees
- The number of projects implemented in the last 5 years
- The number of scientific activities organized
- The number of extracurricular activities organized
- The number of staff's exchange abroad
- The number of students' exchange abroad

- The number of participations in European Project as proposers or partners
- The minimum staff number for each study program
- The minimum percentage of qualified staff in relation to the unqualified one
- The student/lecturer ratio
- The teaching criteria: lectures, seminars, laboratories
- The students' number per seminar
- The students' number per laboratory classes
- The students' number per lectures
- Lecture / seminar / laboratory ratio
- The Prof / prof ass / dr / ped / asped ratio
- The total teaching load/ teacher ratio
- The total teaching load/ teacher/ subject ratio
- The total actual teaching load / teacher ratio
- The factual teaching load / teacher / subject ratio
- The total converted teaching load / teacher ratio
- The total converted teaching load / teacher/ subject ratio
- The total factual converted teaching load / teacher ratio
- The minimum staff number for a study program
- The Professional staff / support staff ratio (laboratory technician, operator, collector, etc.)
- The minimum staff number per section
- The minimum staff number per department
- The qualified/ unskilled staff ratio per section
- The qualified/ unskilled staff ratio per department
- The department, section ratio
- The faculty/ department ratio
- The internal staff / external staff ratio
- The teaching staff / administrative staff ratio
- The maximum auditorium annual teaching load/ lecturer
- The maximum total annual teaching load/ lecturer
- The minimum teaching qualification (lectures, seminars, laboratories)
- The minimum qualification to complete the diploma reviews
- The minimum qualification to conduct a doctoral opposition
- The minimum qualification to perform a mini-review
- The minimum qualification to teach in Postgraduate Schools

- The minimum working years' experience in order to teach
- The minimum qualification and other criteria to engage as a HEI's external lecturer
- The maximum number of total teaching load / prof. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / as.prof ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / dr. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / ped. ratio
- The maximum number of total teaching load / as.ped. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / prof. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / as.prof ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / dr. ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / ped. Ratio
- The maximum number of teaching overload / as.ped ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ prof. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ as.prof ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ dr. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ ped. ratio
- The maximum total teaching hours/ actual teaching hours/ as.ped ratio
- The maximum Bachelor Degree courses' number
- The maximum Master of Science Degree courses' number
- The teaching load distribution within a unit
- The annual teaching load distribution between internal and external staff ratio
- The teachers' criteria who teach in several units
- The maximum number of subjects a lecturer can conduct
- The knowledge control forms, exams, commissions, bribery
- The library, number of places, books (main, other, foreign, Albanian, old, new etc. texts)
- The subjects covered by textbooks percentage
- The number of textbooks per study program
- The textbooks copies/ subjects/ students' ratio
- The students' annual cost
- The students' annual cost per study program
- The student's expenses
- The students' revenue from fees / expenses ratio
- The students' cost / expenses ratio
- The teaching expenses

- The research expenses
- The administration's costs
- The salaries' expenses
- The investments, laboratories, classrooms' expenses
- The total secondary income
- The state budget/ secondary income ratio
- The donor's projects revenue within country
- The foreign donor's projects revenue
- The number of services offered to third parties
- The number of activities conducted with other state institutions
- The number of activities conducted with other non-state institutions
- The number of self-assessments conducted during the last 5 years
- The lecture rooms/ student's ratio
- The number of subjects/ laboratories (those that require the laboratory classes) ratio
- The laboratory/ students who perform laboratory classes ratio
- The average daily use of classrooms number
- The average daily use of library number
- The employed within the country students' contact number
- The abroad employed students' contact number
- The number of general subjects in a study program
- The number of profiled subjects in a study program
- The general subjects/ profiled subjects in a study program ratio
- The maximum annual number of general subjects per study program
- The maximum annual number of profiled subjects per study program

Annex 7: The institutional and study programs' accreditation process application form

The QAAHE's application form is completed on line through its electronic management system. The HEI's coordinator, through the services module, may choose to undergo the Institutional or Study program accreditation process. Some of the institution's study program data is automatically generated by the QAAHE electronic management system, while some other essential information is completed at the application time. For this reason, the HEI constantly updates its data in the QAAHE and reflects any changes made during an academic year.

After filling in, the completed form is printed and signed by the head of the HEI, and attached to the application request sent to the QAAHE. Meanwhile, the application's electronic version is administered by the QAAHE's staff.

The study program's application form (the online version)

Nr. prot: _____

Aplikim për akreditim programi

Të dhënat e institucionit

Emri i Institucionit
Emri i Institucionit anglisht
Dokument licencimi
Dokument akreditimi
Adresa
Tel
Website
E-mail

Të dhënat e titullarit të Institucionit

Emri i titullarit
Titulli akademik

Lista e programeve që kërkohet të akreditohen

1 -

Njësia që ofron programin
Njësia përgjegjëse
Dokument licencimi
Dokument akreditimi
Statusi aktual i akreditimit
Shënime

Periudha e kërkuar për realizimin e procedurës: () - ()

Titullari: