

## **Procedure for accreditation of curriculum groups of vocational education and training**

### **I. General provisions**

1. The procedure is based on Vocational Educational Institutions Act § 13, § 19 (4) and § 58 as well as regulation of the Minister of Education and Research “Conditions and procedure for accreditation of formal studies of vocational education and training”.
2. Accreditation of curriculum groups of vocational studies (hereinafter accreditation) is external evaluation conducted by curriculum groups in a school by external independent assessors
3. Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA) compiles a schedule for conducting accreditation by years and curriculum groups.

### **II. Areas and criteria for assessment**

4. Accreditation includes assessment of teaching and education, management and leading, human resources management, cooperation with interest groups and management of resources in present and sustainability in perspective.
5. In assessing teaching and education, the following assessment criteria are taken as basis:
  - 5.1. Compiling and developing curricula (incl. study programmes for in-service training) is based on the needs of interest groups and curriculum strategy.
  - 5.2. The organisation and development of teaching and education process supports reaching the objectives of curricula (organisation and assessment organisation of studies, incl. practical work in the study environment and work practice in working environment; supporting integration with organisation of studies; online studies; granting a profession; relevance and application of documentation).
  - 5.3. Conducting and developing the studies and teaching process supports the development of the student in obtaining learning outcomes provided in the standard of vocational education (study methods based on learning outcomes and the needs and characteristics of learners; integrating, developing and assessing key and specialty competences; results related to development of the student, etc.)
  - 5.4. The support system and its development support the learner (supporting the development of learning capabilities, reflexive and social capabilities of the learner; supporting learners with educational special needs, incl. a support system for learners with learning and behavioural problems; supporting adult learners; analysing the development of the learner, applying individual study programme if necessary, incl. the use of APEL).
6. In assessing management and leading, the following criteria are taken as basis:

- 6.1. The management and leading of the study programme group are efficient and support the sustainability of the study programme group (reasoned changes in the leading of the study programme group in the reporting period; involving the council of advisors, learners and teachers in leading the study programme group; clearly determining areas of responsibility; communication on various levels; targeting the goal of the activities of the study programme group and harmony with the general strategy; contribution to achieving the mission, vision and strategic goals of the school, feedback and assessment of managing the study programme group, etc.).
7. In assessing staff management, the following criteria are taken as basis:
  - 7.1. The staff of the study programme group conforms to requirements and supports the sustainability of the study programme group (development interviews; staff-related results incl. teachers with vocational qualifications).
  - 7.2. Developing and supporting the staff are based on the current and developmental needs of the study programme group (self-assessment of the staff; conformity of in-service training to the needs; efficiency of training; supporting teachers methodologically and pursuant to education technology; taking the results of staff development into consideration in teaching, etc.).
8. In assessing cooperation with interest groups, the following criteria are taken into account:
  - 8.1. Cooperation with external interest groups supports the sustainability of the study programme group (defining the interest groups and areas of cooperation, purposeful involvement, collecting and considering feedback; cooperation with internship companies and institutions, other educational institutions, etc.).
9. In assessing resource management, the following criteria are taken as basis:
  - 9.1. Resource management supports the obtaining of the goals of the study programme group (incl. financial resource management; the relevance of material technical and IT basis and their expedient use for obtaining the goals of the studies; coverage of study programmes with study materials, etc.).
10. Assessment of key results of a study programme group will be based on the following activity indicators for vocational educational institutions established with the regulation no. 49 of 24 August 2010 by the Minister of Education and Research "Activity indicators of pre-school child care institutions, middle schools, gymnasiums and vocational educational institutions":
  - 10.1. performing the state-commissioned education and completing studies;
  - 10.2. application of graduates on the job market;
  - 10.3. further studies of graduates;
  - 10.4. passing the vocational exam;
  - 10.5. providing training to target groups;
  - 10.6. other indicators of the productivity of studies.

### **III. Schedule and organisation of accreditation**

#### **III.1 Submitting the accreditation application and study programme group report, schedule**

11. In order to participate in accreditation, the headmaster of the school will submit an application to EKKA 12 months before the due date of expiry of the right to conduct studies in the corresponding study programme group at the latest.

12. In order to participate in accreditation, the school will compile a study programme group report based on internal evaluation, with the maximum length of up to 15 A4 pages in a format established by EKKA. The school council will approve and the school headmaster will confirm the study programme group report.

13. The headmaster will submit the study programme group report electronically to EKKA office pursuant to the schedule of study programme groups and schools:

- 13.1. on 1 February at the latest (study programme groups accredited on 1st half of year);
- 13.2. on 1 July at the latest (study programme groups accredited on 2nd half of year);

14. If necessary, EKKA may request for additional data from employers or educational institutions connected with the study programme group, or from graduates from the study programme group. EKKA will make all received information available to the assessment committee as well as the assessed school.

#### **III.2 Forming assessment committees**

15. EKKA will form the assessment committees. The assessment committee has three to four members and it consists of representatives of employers in the field corresponding to the study programme group and experts in teaching and education. A member of the assessment committee may not be an employee of the Ministry of Education and Research, a school manager or an employee at a state foundation which assesses study programmes of formal education in vocational education based on a management contract concluded with the Ministry of Education and Research or develops vocational studies.

16. In selecting members of the assessment committee, EKKA is based on the following principles:

- 16.1. avoiding conflict of interests;
- 16.2. members are selected for the assessment committee from different organisations.

17. Requirements on a member of the assessment committee:

- 17.1. a member of the assessment committee is independent in his or her work and does not represent the interests of the organisation of which he or she is part;
- 17.2. a member of the assessment committee knows the directions of Estonian and EU vocational education and training and the principles of their organisation;

- 17.3. a member of the assessment committee has prior experience in management and/or development in the field related to the corresponding study programme group and/or in the field of education;
  - 17.4. a member of the assessment committee has preferably passed a training in internal and/or external assessment or quality management and preferably has experience in internal and/or external assessment;
  - 17.5. a member of the assessment committee preferably has experience in teaching or instructing vocational studies (incl. practical instructions).
18. A member of the committee will confirm with his or her signature that he or she will maintain in confidentiality any information gained during assessment and the lack of conflict of interests. If there is a conflict of interests, the member of the committee undertakes to immediately inform the director of EKKA and revoke his or her position as member of the committee. Conflict of interests is presumed in the following cases:
- 18.1. Member of the committee has professional or other contractual relations with the assessed school at the time of assessment or he or she has had contractual relations with the assessed school within five years before the assessment visit.
  - 18.2. The member of the committee is participating in the executive or supervisory board of an assessed school at the time of assessment.
  - 18.3. The member of the committee is studying in the assessed school or graduated from it less than three years ago. People involved with the study programme group of the assessed school include a person close to the member of the committee (spouse or life partner, child or parent).
19. EKKA office will approve the membership of the assessment committee with the school, which may provide its opinion on the membership within 2 (two) business days.
20. The director of EKKA will confirm the final composition of the committee assessing the curriculum group of a specific school by an order and will appoint from among the members of the committee the chairman of the committee and the secretary of the committee.
21. Tasks of the chairman of the assessment committee:
- 21.1. managing the work of the assessment committee, incl. distributing tasks to committee members;
  - 21.2. ensuring adequate preparation of the members of the assessment committee for the assessment visit;
  - 21.3. ensuring the substantiation of committee assessments and proposals;
  - 21.4. informing the director of EKKA of the contribution of committee members.
22. Tasks of the secretary of the assessment committee:
- 22.1. planning assessment visits together with EKKA office;
  - 22.2. being responsible for the proper compilation and timely submission of the assessment committee report;

22.3. ensuring the compliance of information included in the assessment committee report with the data presented in the self-assessment report of the curriculum group and collected during the assessment visit.

23. All members of the assessment team pass a study programme group accreditation training organised by EKKA.

### **III.3 Work organisation of the assessment committee**

24. EKKA office will forward the school's study programme group(s) report(s) and additional information, if necessary, to all members of the assessment committee by the day of training at the latest.

25. The assessment committee will conduct an assessment of the study programme group in assessment areas provided in point 5 in regards to current and prospective assessment criteria, the school's activity and productivity indicators, and a visit of the school.

26. A visit to the school is mandatory for the committee and it will last for 1-2 business days.

27. The assessment committee will approve the time and action plan of the school visit with the school (hereinafter the school visit plan) 10 (ten) business days before the school visit at the latest, and will provide the school and EKKA office with the final school visit plan 5 (five) business days before the school visit at the latest.

28. The headmaster of the school will organise the availability of information required necessary by the assessment committee and the conditions necessary for the work of assessment committee members pursuant to the agreed plan for the school visit plan, or delegate this task to a competent employee.

29. Members of the assessment committee will review information provided by the school during the school visit on site, adhering to the requirement of confidentiality. Members of the assessment committee have the right to:

- 29.1. talk to members of the school council, representatives of the owner, employees, students and main partners;
- 29.2. review school documents;
- 29.3. review the working and study environment of the school;
- 29.4. visit various forms of study activities.

30. Assessments of the assessment committee by areas of assessment are preferably consensual. If consensus is not reached, the decision is based with simple majority of votes of assessment committee members for the study programme group of the corresponding school and reasoned objection(s) are appended to it. If votes are distributed equally, the chairman of the committee determines the outcome.

31. The assessment committee will submit a proposal to the assessment council based on assessments on the areas of assessment and the key strengths and main areas of development of current and prospective views to:

- 31.1. accredit the curriculum group of the school for 6 (six) years;
- 31.2. accredit the curriculum group of the school for 3 (three) years, or;
- 31.3. not accredit the curriculum group of the school.

32. Assessment results will be formalised by the assessment committee in a format established by EKKA as the assessment committee report (Assessment committee report). The chairman of the assessment committee will submit the assessment committee report to EKKA office electronically within 10 (ten) business days after the school visit at the latest.

33. EKKA office will send the assessment committee report to the school for review within 15 (fifteen) business days after the school visit at the latest.

34. The school has the right to review the assessment committee report within 5 (five) business days and electronically submit reasoned comments signed by the headmaster to the EKKA office.

35. After receiving the comments of the school, the assessment committee will compile a final assessment committee report and a response letter to the school within 5 (five) business days and submit these electronically to EKKA office with the chairman's signature.

36. Templates of the schedule and organisation of accreditation, study programme group report and the assessment committee report are available on the EKKA homepage at [www.ekka.archimedes.ee](http://www.ekka.archimedes.ee).

#### **III.4 Accreditation decision of the assessment council**

37. The Minister of Education and Research will form an assessment council. The assessment council has up to 13 members and contains:

- 37.1. representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research;
- 37.2. six experts from various areas of vocational studies provided in the standard of vocational education;
- 37.3. representatives of central organisations of employees and other interested parties.

38. Out of experts provided in clause 37.2, three experts will be appointed by a body of chairmen of professional councils provided in § 7 (2) of the Professions act, and three experts will be appointed by the Minister of Education and Research.

39. The headmaster of the school is not appointed in the assessment council.

40. The assessment council will base the accreditation decision on assessments of areas of assessment provided in the assessment committee report and the accreditation proposal of the committee together with reasoning, the timely comments of the school and additional materials provided at the request of the assessment council.

41. In the case of discrepancies of lack of argumentation in assessments of the areas of assessment by the assessment committee, the assessment council has the right to send assessments to the assessment committee for a second review and specifications.

42. The assessment council will adopt the decision to:

- 42.1. accredit the study curriculum group of the school for six years;
- 42.2. accredit the curriculum group of the school for three years, or
- 42.3. not accredit the curriculum group of the school.

43. After the accreditation decision has been adopted, the assessment council will make one of the following proposals to the Minister of Education and Research:

- 43.1. extend the right to provide instruction in a curriculum group by six years;
- 43.2. extend the right to provide instruction in a curriculum group by three years;
- 43.3. refuse to extend the right to provide instruction.

44. EKKA office will publish the study programme group report, the assessment committee report and the assessment council's decision on its homepage.

#### **IV. Challenging the accreditation activities conducted by EKKA and accreditation decision of the assessment council**

45. Accreditation procedures conducted by EKKA may be challenged if they fail to conform to procedure provided in this document. The objection will be submitted to the management of Archimedes Foundation within 30 days from the day the person learned of or had to learn of the challenged procedure.

46. Challenging the accreditation decision of the assessment council is possible after the Minister of Education and Research has adopted an administrative decision regarding the extension of right to conduct studies. The objection must be submitted pursuant to the reference of objection provided in the relevant regulation of the Minister.