



The Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development
(AQA)

**REGULATIONS FOR RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY
EXPERTS**

Adopted by the AQA Advisory Council
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**Moscow
2009**

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Regulations for Recruitment, Training and Responsibilities of Higher Education Quality Experts. Moscow, Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development, 2009, 23 pages.

These Regulations cover the objectives and aims of the Agency concerning the recruitment, training and responsibilities of external reviewers during higher education quality assurance procedures in institutions. They provide the guidelines and procedures for reviewer nomination, recruitment, training and certification; determine review team responsibilities and schedule in preparing and carrying out the review; set forth the principles of making judgments, drawing reports, working out recommendations and final report; provide summary of follow-up actions by the Agency.

While drawing up these Regulations we were guided by the following national and international academic quality assurance reference points:

- Regulations for Recruitment, Training and Responsibilities of Higher Education Quality Reviewers, Moscow, Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development, 2007, 19 pages.
- Audit Guidelines for the Assurance of Academic Quality in Higher Education Institutions. Moscow, Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development, 2006, 34 pages.

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1. General Provisions

Since the recruitment of reviewers is crucial to appropriate academic audit procedures, the Agency considers the nomination of experts very carefully and is guided by quite strict criteria. Applicants can be proposed by higher education institutions, education authorities, professional communities, or Advisory Council of the Agency. Besides, specialists with relevant qualification and experience can put themselves forward as candidates.

Applicants are nominated by the Agency's Advisory Council and considered by the Accreditation Commission. The approved individuals are trained to ensure that they have a clear knowledge and understanding of their aims and objectives, the Agency's requirements and the peculiarities of academic review process.

Upon successful completion of training, the nominees receive Expert Certificates from the Agency. The Agency specifies the scope of responsibilities for each expert, regularly analyzes the experts' performance according to the data obtained during the academic review process, reconfirms the experts' authority and, if needed, uses its right to discharge them.

The Agency makes every effort to ensure heterogeneity of the expert team from the point of view of education sphere, geography, gender, nationality and academic disciplines. All experts must take part in at least three experts during a two year period. If mutually agreed, the period is renewed.

The experts must adhere to the Agency's HE quality assurance policy, Code of Expert's Good Practice and possess personal and professional qualities which make the institution's management confident in them.

The responsibilities of experts include:

- reading and analyzing the self-evaluation submitted by the institution and any other documents sent in advance of a review;

- adhering to the review schedule agreed between the Agency and the institution;

- participating in visits to the institution in order to gather, share, test and verify evidence;

- making judgments on the academic standards achieved and the quality of the learning opportunities provided;

- contributing to and commenting on the compilation of the report of the review as per agreed schedules and deadlines.

Experts analyze and evaluate the self-evaluation provided, with particular emphasis on curricular content and its suitability for achieving the program outcomes. They review and evaluate the assessment processes designed for the programs and determine whether they are suitable to assess program outcomes as stated in the program specifications.

Experts consider and evaluate overall student achievement; the contribution made to student achievement by the quality of teaching; opportunities for learning; academic support intended to ensure effective progression of students; and learning resources and their deployment (including staffing).

Experts contribute to the compilation of a report to the Agency. Each reviewer will be expected to prepare material for the various sections of the report, with specific references to the sources of evidence considered.

The Agency tries to ensure that each reviewer works in a variety of teams scrutinizing programs in their specialism in a range of institutions. While viewing the work of other reviewers and sharing their opinions with peers from different HE institutions, the experts get an excellent opportunity for professional development and acquire experience invaluable for cooperating both with the Agency and the institution.

When carrying out the academic quality review, the Agency aims at determining the factual academic capacity of the institution and assuring investors and consumers that the announced level and quality of provision corresponds to the factual level and quality. That is why experts are supposed not only to make sure that the level and quality of provision are higher than the minimum secured by the state, but also to consider and recommend possible means for enhancing the quality of academic standards and programs. In addition, the expert team is supposed to analyze the efficiency of learning technologies, academic arrangement and management tools, and, as the need arises, provide the institution with directions for

improvement. The experts are supposed to reveal and analyze best practices concerning the institution's academic and practical activities for the Agency to summarize and use them in order to enhance the quality of provision in general.

The information gathered by the experts and the Agency during the preparation period and in the course of academic audit shall be confidential and shall be used by the Agency only. No information gained during a review shall be used in a manner that allows individuals to be identified. The experts shall maintain confidentiality when submitting written evidence for meetings and when conducting reviews and making reports. The experts shall request from the institution only the information needed to perform the audit and protect it. The evidence gathered by the experts and the Agency can be published after the date when the report is published, provided that the institution has given its consent to it.

2. Recruitment of Experts

2.1 Recruitment Guidelines

2.1.1. The Accreditation Commission operates an equal opportunity policy in selecting potential members of Experts' Committee hereafter referred as **Experts**.

2.1.2. A job advertisement is placed on the Agency web site and possibly in the media. In parallel, a competition regulations description is published where the requirements for successful applicants are indicated.

2.1.3. The nominees may be recommended by:

- the Advisory Council of the Agency;
- the regional Agency representative offices;
- local education authorities;
- rectors of higher education institutions;
- councils of rectors;
- employers' associations.

2.1.4. Specifications of **Experts' Committee Members:**

- commitment to the principles of quality assurance in educational provision;
- recognised expertise/experience in the field of higher education;
- a professionally responsible person, capable of being objective and recognizing that an institution under review may not be the same as their own place of work;
- an appreciation of the ethical issues involved in the review of an institution and the ability to work with confidential material;
- an understanding of and willingness to work according to the evaluation criteria elaborated by AQA;
- ability to write formal reports and to meet deadlines;
- available to attend training events;
- no conflict of interest considered by the Accreditation Commission that would compromise the objectivity and fairness of decisions, judgements and opinions made as a part of the evaluation process.
- broad experience in the HE management and quality assurance in the system of HE provision in the Russian Federation;
- personal traits and professional competences needed to perform quality assessment of the institution's educational activity;
- ability to absorb and analyze substantial quantities of various data related to public assessments, make objective judgments, consider written and oral evidence in order to form judgments;
- strong ability to communicate in writing and strong oral communication skills;
- current or recent (within 2 years) experience of teaching and learning support or examining students if the reviewer is an individual specializing in a certain academic field.

2.1.4. The responsibilities of **Experts:**

- reading and familiarisation with the evaluation criteria elaborated by AQA;
- reading and evaluating the Self-Study Report and other documents submitted by the institutions under review;
- adhering to the review schedule determined by the **Principal of the Experts' Committee;**
- participating in evaluation visits to gather and verify evidence;

- making judgements on the institution with regard to its provision in meeting evaluation criteria elaborated by AQA;
- contributing to the Draft Evaluation Report to agreed deadlines;
- reading and verifying the accuracy of drafts of the Evaluation Report.

2.2. Appointment of Experts

2.2.1. Experts' Committee is appointed by the Accreditation Commission and will initially contain reserve persons. **Experts' Committee** normally comprises up to 4 persons including the **Principal**.

2.2.2. On appointment, a member of **Experts' Committee** will be required to sign a Non-Conflict of Interest Statement (Annex 1). After signing the appointment should proceed.

2.2.3. In accepting an appointment the **Expert** agrees to the role he/she will play in the review and accepts the responsibility of members of **Experts' Committee**. The applicant who has confirmed his decision to become an expert with the Agency, submits his personal information by filling in an application form (see Appendix 2 for sample).

2.2.4. On some occasions the Accreditation Commission may request that an Observer attends the evaluation visit as a part of their induction training.

2.3. Role of the Principal of the Experts' Committee.

2.3.1. The **Accreditation Commission** appoints one member of the **Experts' Committee** to act as the **Principal** for the entire review period. The **Principal** will be an experienced evaluator of quality and standards in higher education.

2.3.2. The **Principal** is responsible for organizing and managing the review process and editing and submitting the Final Evaluation Report to the Accreditation Commission for consideration.

2.3.3. The **Principal** is responsible in the planning and preparation stage to reach agreement with **Experts** on the pattern of review activities in such a way as to ensure effective use of the time available for review and to ensure that the Final Evaluation Report is submitted according to agreed deadlines.

2.3.4. The **Principal** is responsible for co-ordinating activities during the Evaluation visit and ensuring that **Experts** develop robust evidence on which to make their judgements.

2.3.5. The **Principal** is responsible for giving oral feedback to the institution at the end of the Evaluation Visit.

2.4. Opportunities for Disabled People

The objective is to make equal opportunities for disabled people a reality. Disabled people fulfilling the above mentioned characteristics (2.1; 2.2) can also apply for being a reviewer. Such people can take part in the training programs for reviewers by means of ICT; fulfil analytical reports; analyze substantial quantities of various data and make objective judgments about quality evaluations.

3. Training of Experts

3.1 Objectives

The objective of training is to prepare the applicants for performing expert's functions and performing quality assurance experts' functions as per the Agency program and criteria, and the recommendations of the international academic quality assurance organizations. Besides, the training program ensures that the experts:

- understand the aims and objectives of the audit procedure;
- understand their own aims and objectives, are familiar with the requirements set by the Agency and the rules of the audit;
- are able to collect and analyze data, to draw the visit schedule, frame and test hypotheses, make judgments and suppositions, and prepare reports.

3.2 Program

Experts' training program includes:

- familiarizing with the Agency normative quality assurance and assessment documents;
- development of skills necessary to assess the quality of provision in various fields of study /specializations;
- familiarizing with the international best practices in HE provision;

- familiarizing with the advanced teaching methodology and quality assurance methods;
- familiarizing with the modern management techniques in the field of higher education (academic management).

3.3 Examination and Certification

Upon completion of the training program the applicants take examinations. They write and defend a paper where they analyze the quality of provision in the field of their specialization where they act as instructors or employers. If the applicant passes the examinations, he/she becomes a reviewer with the Agency and gets a certificate (see Appendix 2) which entitles him/her to act as a reviewer and take part in the analytical processes related to the quality of provision organized by the Agency.

4. Review Procedure

4.1 Experts' Rights and Responsibilities

During their visit the experts:

- act in accordance with the Agency's regulations on the HE quality assessment and assurance;
- by signing the Expert Independence Confirmation (Appendix 3), guarantee that their judgments and conclusions are unbiased and independent;
- act in the institution's interests; try to raise the level of its competitiveness;
- can use the information gathered prior to and during the academic audit for the purposes not indicated in the agreement made between the Agency and the institution provided that the latter has given its consent hereto;
- are entitled to require the information to be submitted for the purposes of academic audit only;
- make judgments and final reports based on the information submitted by the institution and gathered during the audit period.

4.2 Practical Arrangements for Experts

The reviewers during their visit:

- make use of all the necessary documents where the Agency's theoretical and methodological principles are indicated related to the academic audit in the institutions conducted for the purposes of quality assurance;
- have access to the institution's self-evaluation and other necessary documents on the teaching and learning process characteristics;
- are entitled to use all the Agency resources needed for the purposes of the agreement made between the Agency and the institution;
- may engage specialist reviewers into the process if needed;
- conclude financial agreements with the Agency.

4.3 Report Requirements

The expert's report should contain the data which:

- show the extent to which the institution's internal quality assurance system is effective and the extent to which the programs of study, awards and qualifications offered by the institution meet the requirements;
- show the extent of accuracy, completeness and reliability of the published information on the quality of programs and standards of awards;
- show the institution's best practices in quality assurance;
- show the factual quality of provision and standards of awards in various disciplines and fields of study;

Besides, the report should contain recommendations in regard to the quality assurance action plan.

4.4. Follow-up Procedures

After the site visit, the Experts prepare a report which is considered by the Accreditation Commission. The Accreditation Commission checks the correctness and accuracy of the report and sends the report to HEI. If there are any slight improvements the HEI should undertake the Accreditation Commission defines the time for improvement according to the character and extent of recommendations. It takes usually eight weeks for the HEI to write its own clarifications concerning the Experts' report. After that the Accreditation Commission approves the Final Report with the Advisory Council and sends the full version to the audited HEI.

If there are any substantial improvements the HEI should undertake the Accreditation Commission together with the Advisory Council gives more time for the improvement and then the HEI initiates another audit procedure.

4.4.1. Annual short visits to the audited HEIs.

For the audited HEIs the Agency fulfils also the procedure of annual short visits to see the results the HEI achieves after the audit procedures and also take a look to the further perspectives of the HEI's development.

4.4.2. Constant Support Service

In case the HEI would like to have constant support service the HEI sets up with the Agency the special contract according to which the Agency supports the HEI in the development and improvement of HEI's quality education services at the program and the institutional levels.

4.5 Academic Review Timeline

The Agency Officer (hereinafter – the Officer) coordinates the academic audit work. He advises the institution on the issues related to the preparation for the reviewers' visit. He also provides consultations for reviewers prior to the visit and, if needed, during the audit period. The Officer also checks whether the evidence gathered is reliable and analyzes the data gathered by the reviewers. He also ensures that the report is characterized by succinct writing and is readily accessible.

The audit process begins 4 months before the review team visit (see Appendix 4), when the Agency specialists prepare an analytical report about the institution's management of quality and standards. In the course of the report preparation the following documents are used: the institution's self-evaluation documents, the institution's performance comprehensive report, and the reviewers' findings on the accreditation status of the institution and any up-to-date information which the institution and/or other organizations can provide to the Agency prior to the audit date.

The Officer meets the institution management and the students 3 months before the audit visit. The purpose of the meeting is to clarify the scope of the audit; to discuss the interactions between the institution, the Agency and the audit team. The Officer should also ensure that the institution's self-evaluation documents are filled in correctly and are well-matched to the process of the audit; discuss any matters relating to the published information and to the self-evaluation documents; and confirm the list of disciplines to be reviewed and the areas for thematic enquiry. The institution should reconfirm the list of the disciplines to be reviewed and the composition of the student representatives group.

After the areas for thematic enquiry have been confirmed, the Agency determines the preliminary composition of the review team, and confirms the membership of the team and provides the institution with a confirmed list of disciplines to be reviewed by the team 4 weeks before the team visit.

The institution should submit the documents to the review team not later than 8 weeks before the team visit. The documents include the self-evaluation documents and any data the institution wishes to submit prior to the audit date.

The Agency no later than 4 weeks before the visit reconfirms the final composition of the review team and submits to the institution the finalized list of disciplines to be reviewed. The institution no later than 8 weeks before the visit submits the internal discipline evaluation documents to the Agency.

The experts draw up a detailed visit program including meetings with staff and students. The program is to include:

- analysis of the institution's approach to quality assurance;

- analysis of the relationship between institutional procedures and their operation at the program and discipline level, giving particular attention to the effectiveness of internal reviews of quality of programs and awards;
- analysis of the chosen discipline audit processes and thematic enquiries, including targeted discussions with staff and scrutiny of several illustrative examples of students' work (when auditing discipline areas);
- analysis of the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information published for students and other stakeholders, with particular attention given to program specifications;
- analysis of the claims made for the quality of programs and the actual achievement of students, focusing not only on learning outcomes, but also on the ways in which students are treated and their learning opportunities optimized;
- at the end of the visit, meetings with the institution management and, where necessary, staff from the discipline areas selected for review, to discuss any matters outstanding and to follow up any matters emerging during the audit.

The Officer, where necessary, joins the review team at the final stage of the audit.

A letter is sent to the institution by the Agency within 2 weeks after the visit outlining the main team's findings and recommendations in the draft report. Besides, if specialist advice is to be sought, the date of specialist reviewers' visit is agreed by the Agency and the institution. The specialist reviewers visit the institution no later than within 3 weeks after the review team visit. Afterwards, a letter is sent to the institution by the Agency where the specialist reviewers' opinion is outlined. The draft report is not submitted to the institution management until after the experts have reported back to the team and the team has considered the reviewers' findings.

The draft report is compiled and sent to the institution for revision within 4 weeks of the end of the review team visit. The institution sends the draft report back to the Agency within 4 weeks after the date of submission and encloses a list of comments and notes if some errors or inaccuracies have been found. The Accreditation Commission prepares the final report taking into account the amendments made by the institution. The report should be sent back to the institution within 10 weeks after the review team visit.

The final judgment is accompanied by recommendations to be considered by the institution.

If no recommendations related to the areas for improvement to be considered by the institution are received, the publication of the report shall be the end of the academic audit process. Within a year the Agency sends a letter to the institution and includes an enquiry into it in regard to the follow-up actions taken after the date of the publication.

If the institution receives recommendations related to some areas for improvement to be considered, the report is published but the audit process is going on. The institution must submit an action plan to the Agency within 3 months from the date of publication followed by a report on what has been done. The audit process shall be deemed completed if the Agency within a year regards as satisfactory the institution's actions within the framework of the action plan. If after a year the Agency doubts that all the necessary measures have been taken by the institution, the Agency initiates another audit visit.

Every year the Agency Officers make a short visit to the institution to make sure that the necessary measures have been taken. Besides, the arrangement to enhance the quality assurance and standards of awards are described to the Agency Officers.

5. Conflicts of Interest, Discrepancies and Claims

5.1 Purpose

In order to ensure consistency and objectiveness of the audit team decisions, it is necessary to develop a mechanism of solving conflicts of interest within audit team.

5.2 Conflicts Description

Possible conflicts may be categorized as personal, professional or ideological.

Personal conflicts could include close friendship between expert/experts and/or between experts and senior managers of the institution. Besides, conflicts are possible if an expert is biased for or against the auditee due to some special relations. That is why we avoid having graduates of the institution as members of the audit team.

Professional conflicts could occur:

- if an expert had been a failed applicant for a position in the audited institution;
- if there are staff members in the audited institution who were failed applicants for a position in the Agency;

- if an expert was an applicant or prospect for a senior position in the Agency;
- if an expert has been with an institution that is strongly competing with an institution being audited or was with a competing agency.

Ideological conflict could occur if an expert is lacking sympathy to the style or ethos of an institution. Besides, a conflict of interest could occur if the Agency staff or experts were to suggest to an auditee either quality procedures or presentation which were subsequently criticized by an expert panel. To avoid this, the parties must comply with the audit procedure. The audited institution is responsible for the submission of self-evaluation documents related to the institutional audit and the audit of the programs of study, and the audit team is responsible for assessing the quality system based on the documents presented and evidence gathered. The Agency staff should at all times strictly comply with the job descriptions and the Agency points of reference.

5.3 Guidelines

In order to avoid possible conflicts, experts are obliged to declare formally to the Agency any matters or circumstances that could influence their ability to serve effectively as the experts' committee members. They should also sign a form which is a formal confirmation of their independence.

Prospective experts should declare in writing any matters that could pose a conflict of interest in the prospective auditor being appointed to the expert team for that institution. If the prospective auditor responds in the affirmative, the Agency may remove her / him from consideration, or decide that in fact no conflict exists. The audited institution may not agree with the preliminary list of experts' composition if it has reasons to believe there would be conflicts of interests with the experts or if it is doubtful of the fact that the experts' qualification is in line with the level of the provision in the institution. In this case the audited institution should submit its notes in writing to the Agency and discuss the case with an Agency representative. The final decision whether to appoint a particular person to any given audit team rests with the Agency.

If the existence of a conflict of interest emerges or is created during the audit process, the auditor should tell the team coordinator about it. The team coordinator and the Agency representative will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. The Agency maintains a record of all the signed Expert Independence Confirmation forms.

AGREEMENT TO SERVE AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY FOR EXPERTS' COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OBSERVERS ON EVALUATION VISITS

Experts' Committee members

I agree to be a member of the Experts' Committee to visit between
.....and.....

I understand that all information I collect before and during the visit is strictly confidential and is only to be used in connection with the evaluation process and should be revealed only to Experts' Committee members. Furthermore, I understand that the documentation submitted by the Institution is the property of the Institution and only to be used with the permission of the Institution

Name.....Date.....

Signature.....

Conflict of Interest Statement

I declare that there is no conflict of interest for me as a member of the Experts' Committee visiting

Name.....Date.....

Signature.....

I wish to declare the following that may influence my role and constitute a conflict of interest on the Evaluation Visit*.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Name.....Date.....

Signature.....

* Conflicts of interest declared on this form will be made known to the Accreditation Commission and to the Institution being evaluated.

**Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance
and Career Development (AQA)
Reviewer Nomination
APPLICATION FORM**

Contact Information	
Surname:	
Name:	
Region:	
Address:	
Place of Work:	
Position:	
Tenure:	
Academic Degree/Rank:	
Zip Code:	
Telephone:	
E-mail:	
Fax:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Review Areas:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Institution's Stability (leading expert)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrangement and Management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Technologies
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program Content
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Candidate's Qualification:
<input type="checkbox"/>	experience in the HE management and quality assurance in the system of HE provision in the Russian Federation
<input type="checkbox"/>	personal traits and professional competences needed to perform quality assessment of the various institution's educational activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	ability to absorb and analyze substantial quantities of various data related to public assessments, make objective judgments, consider written and oral evidence in order to form judgments
<input type="checkbox"/>	current or recent (within 2 years) experience of teaching and learning support or examining students if the reviewer is specializing in a certain academic field

AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

EXPERT'S CERTIFICATE

No. _____

EXPIRY DATE 16 JANUARY 2010

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

(Full name)

HAS COMPLETED THE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERTS

CHAIRMAN OF THE AQA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Vladimir SHADRIKOV

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AQA

Aleksej BELOKOPYTOV

SEAL

ISSUED _____ 2009

Expert Independence Confirmation

The form must be signed by each of the members of the Expert Team and serves as a guarantee of the fact that the Expert Team members are unbiased and independent when making their judgments. By signing the form, the reviewer states that he has no relations among, or personal interest or profit related to or feels no pressure exerted from or is not part of the conflict with nor cooperates with the representatives of the institution under review.

Expert Independence Confirmation

Do you have any relations among or feel any pressures exerted from or are you part of the conflict with or do you cooperates with the representatives of the institution under review?

YES/NO

If so, please give your comment here.

I hereby confirm that I have no financial liabilities or other responsibility related to the institution under review, nor any personal interest related to the review procedure. I hereby promise that I shall not take any gifts or other payments or bonuses from the representatives of the institution under review and from other interested parties.

I agree with the AQA operational principles and guidelines related to the public assessment of academic quality and the academic audit of programs or institutional audit. I hereby promise to adhere to the guidelines and principles when participating in the work conducted by the Review Team. I hereby confirm that I shall be making my judgments and form my opinions independently and without bias.

Signed:.....Full Name:
Date:

Timeline of Review Schedule

Prior to the Visit	
4 months	<p>The Agency specialists make a report on quality assurance and standards in the institution.</p> <p>A copy of the report is submitted to the institution.</p>
3 months	<p>The Agency Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meets with the institution's staff and students, - examines the self-evaluation documents and checks whether they meet the Agency's requirements, - gives guidelines to the students as to what evidence should be provided to the Agency. <p>The institution confirms the list of disciplines to be reviewed and the student information.</p>
2,5 months	<p>The Agency informs the institution of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the draft list of reviewers - the number of disciplines selected for review.
2 months	<p>The institution submits the self-evaluation documents to the Agency.</p> <p>The students submit to the Agency their written evidence.</p>
1 month	<p>The Agency agrees with the institution the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the list of reviewers and - the list of disciplines to be reviewed. <p>The Agency requires from the institution to submit its self-evaluation documents on each of the disciplines from the list.</p>
3 weeks	<p>The institution submits to the Agency the self-evaluation documents related to the disciplines.</p>
During the Visit	
The review team visits the site	<p>The review team works for not more than 5 days. The Agency Deputy Director joins the team at the final stage of the audit.</p> <p>The review team meets the students and teaching staff in order to discuss the general review areas and the list of disciplines selected.</p> <p>Two reviewers are engaged in the discipline audit.</p> <p>On the penultimate day of the visit the reviewers inform the institution of the necessity to seek specialist reviewers' advice during the review process.</p> <p>On the final day of the visit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Agency Deputy Director joins the team; the reviewers approve the

	list of disciplines to be reviewed with the help of the specialist reviewers and examine the evidence gathered - there is no oral or written report to the institution.
After the Visit	
2 weeks	The Agency deputy director sends a letter to the institution and encloses - information on the main judgments and recommendations made by the reviewers to be included into the draft report - agrees with the institution management the date of the specialist reviewer visit.
2-3 weeks	(If needed) the specialist reviewers and a review team representative or the Agency Deputy Director visits the institution.
4 weeks or 7 weeks, if the specialist reviewers' contribution is needed	The Agency submits a draft report to the institution.
8 weeks (or 11 weeks)	The institution makes comments on the draft report.
10 weeks (or 13 weeks)	The final report is published.
FOLLOW-UP	
Depending on the review findings	Performance as per the reviewers' recommendations is analyzed.
HE Quality Monitoring	
Annually	The Agency Officers make a short-term visit to the institution in order to examine: - the achievements by the institution after the review - the institution's action plans in regard to the enhancement of quality assurance system.

Code of the Expert's Good Practice**1. Interrelations between the Expert and a higher education institution being evaluated.**

- 1.1. The Expert must fulfill its obligations very carefully and thoroughly.
- 1.2. The Expert must follow his/her liabilities and guarantee the confidentiality of information he/she reviews during the auditing procedures.
- 1.3. The Expert takes its responsibility for independent and unbiased attitude to a higher education institution.
- 1.4. In case when the Expert possesses some information in consequence of he can't fulfill the audit procedures the Expert must inform the Agency about it and not less than 6 weeks before the audit visit.

2. Interrelations between a Expert and the Agency.

- 2.1. The Expert should follow the Agency's instructions while conducting the auditing and evaluating procedures.
- 2.2. The Expert should fully participate in training courses and get the Agency's certification during the preparation for the site visit.
- 2.3. The Expert should sign the Confidentiality Note.
- 2.4. In case of the Expert's malpractice the Agency has the right to suspend the Reviewer during the auditing and evaluating procedures and doesn't invite him/her for other auditing and evaluating procedures.
- 2.5. In case of the Expert's malpractice the Agency has the right to publish names of unprincipled Experts on the Agency's site.
- 2.6. The interrelations between the Expert and the Agency are regulated by RF Civil Code and its Code of the Expert's Good Practice.

3. The Reviewer's Responsibility.

- 3.1. The Expert doesn't undertake actions aimed at direct or indirect discredits the audited HEI, namely the expansion of part or the whole final report concerning the audit and evaluation procedures.
- 3.2. The Expert keeps from the methods of economic, moral, psychological and informational pressure to the audited higher education institution.
- 3.3. The Expert takes the responsibility according to RF Civil Code taking into consideration that the violation of this Code brings to the exclusion of the Expert from the Agency's database.

4. The order of changes in this Code.

4.1. The suggestions concerning the changes of this Code can be brought from reviewers, the Accreditation Commission, the Director-General of the Agency for the consideration of the Advisory Council in a written form who develops a new project of a Code.