

GUIDELINES TO THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Since joining the Bologna Process in Berlin, 2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina has also taken on a commitment to establish a higher education quality assurance system promoted by the Process. The Conference of European Ministries of Education in Bergen, 2005, adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) which define a common European methodology in this area.

In fulfilling its commitments from the Bologna Process, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina („The Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina“, no. 57/07 and 57/09), and two key steps were taken in order to achieve the Bologna’s goal of developing the system of quality assurance: the Council of Ministers of BiH adopted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in BiH („The Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina“, no. 13/08) that are entirely in line with ESG, and the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (the Agency) has been established with its competences defined in the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Framework Law).

Pursuant to Article 48 of the Framework Law, the Agency adopted the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions (the Criteria) stemming from ESG and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Criteria are universal for all higher education institutions, both for universities and colleges, either public or private, and they shall be equally and consistently applied across higher education institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, apart from defining the subject of quality assurance (what should be evaluated and developed), both ESG and the BiH Standards and Guidelines define mechanisms for quality assessment as well. Given the basic assumption that the major responsibility for the quality of education lies with the very higher education institution; the internal quality system, established and developed by the institution, becomes the key factor in quality assurance in higher education. Following this logic, a common European model for quality assurance has been developed, based on internal QA system, periodic external evaluation of the system and quality assurance of external evaluators.

External quality assessment is conducted in 4 steps:

1. Self-evaluation carried out by the higher education institution,
2. External review conducted by the independent experts,
3. Report on fulfillment of quality criteria and on recommendations for quality improvement which is published, and
4. Follow-up activities undertaken by the higher education institution upon external evaluation, in order to implement the recommendations from the Report.

To this end, Criteria for accreditation define what actions need to be taken by the higher education institution in order to demonstrate it provides credible education and other activities, as well as what is evaluated by the independent experts. In compliance with the Framework Law, the Agency determined, and all the ministries of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted, the List of experts who provide assessment and conduct quality review

and give recommendations on accreditation of higher education institutions and study programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, identifying thereby 4 groups of experts:

1. Experts – representatives of the academic community in BiH,
2. Experts – representatives of business and practice,
3. Students, and
4. International experts.

The committees that will be composed of all the 4 groups of experts shall analyze self-evaluation reports and visit higher education institutions in order to verify that the Criteria have been met and to give recommendations for quality improvement. Each criterion should be assessed on the basis of the following 4 degrees:

1. Criterion fully met,
2. Criterion substantially met,
3. Criterion partially met, and
4. Criterion not met.

Therefore, the Criteria are regarded as a mandatory document and the accreditation outcome shall depend on the extent to which the criteria are fulfilled.

In order to provide additional explanation to the Criteria, and guidance to higher education institutions for preparing the self-evaluation report, on the one hand, as well as guidance to experts for conducting evaluation of criteria fulfillment, on the other hand, the Agency has established the guidelines to each of the criterion. The Guidelines are examples of good practice demonstrating one of the possible ways towards the full criteria fulfillment, but not the only way. Respecting the autonomy of higher education institutions and their diversity, the Agency's intention was not to raise the level defined by Criteria, but to provide complementary explanations and directions towards the full Criteria fulfillment. This model impels higher education institutions in their accreditation efforts to demonstrate they meet the criterion, but not the guidelines.

Both the Criteria and the Guidelines were established in the process of public consultations with all higher education institutions and relevant ministries and through participation and final review conducted by the European experts, Bruno Curvale and Peter Findlay, who were engaged in a common project of the European Commission and the Council of Europe "Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina III". The Agency would like to take the opportunity to express its gratitude and appreciation towards all its partners who contributed in drafting these documents.

Glossary of terms

Accreditation: the procedure for formal recognition of a higher education institution or study programme that it delivers by the external body, carried out on the basis of external quality assessment verifying thereby that specific standards and criteria have been met.

Accreditation of higher education institution: a formal decision on the quality of institution which is: made public, issued for a period of time and adopted on the basis of external assessment and criteria for accreditation of higher education institutions.

Accreditation outcome: decision on compliance of higher education institution or study programme with the set criteria, based on the evaluation of criteria fulfillment carried out by the committee of experts and is made by a recommendation of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance. On the basis of the recommendation, the final decision on the accreditation outcome is adopted by the competent ministry.

Accreditation validity period: timeframe starting from the date of issuance of the accreditation until the date of its expiry after which an institution is obliged to seek issuance of a new one.

Agency for development of higher education and quality assurance: an independent public organization, established by the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina competent for quality assurance in higher education, as provided by the Law.

Assessment criteria: descriptions of what the learner is expected to do, in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.

Committees for determining the list of experts: a body established by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance pursuant to Article 49, paragraph (1) indent 2. of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina which sets the list of experts participating in the accreditation procedure.

Committee of experts: an independent body verifying the fulfillment of quality standards in the work of higher education institutions or the quality of study programmes that are subject to accreditation.

Committee of experts' report (external report): the final document of external evaluation whereby the committee of experts gives recommendations to a higher education institution for improvement of quality, and provides assessment of the fulfillment of each accreditation criterion.

Competences (students): a dynamic combination of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, ethical values and attitudes. Fostering competences is the object of all educational programmes. Competences are developed in all course units and assessed at different stages of a programme. Some competences are subject-area related (specific to a field of study), others are generic (common to any degree course). It is normally the case that competence development proceeds in an integrated and cyclical manner throughout a programme.

Competent ministry: ministry or other body competent for education in Republic Srpska, cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with jurisdictions in quality assurance in higher education as provided by the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Criteria for accreditation: activities that must be undertaken and verified in order to demonstrate the level of achievements in fulfilling the standards.

Cycle: all qualifications in the European Higher Education Area are located within three cycles. One of the objectives indicated in the Bologna Declaration in 1999 was the “adoption of a system based on two main cycles.” In 2003 doctoral studies were also included in the Bologna structure and referred to as the third cycle.

Decision on accreditation: an act issued by the competent ministry based on the recommendation of the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance the result of which is the final determination of outcome and validity period of the accreditation.

ECTS credit: quantified means of expressing the volume of learning based on the workload students need in order to achieve the expected outcomes of a learning process at a specified level.

Enrollment quotas: number of positions at a higher education institution for admission of students to the first year of a cycle.

Examination term: a term, normally following the completion of a teaching course, in each semester in which examinations take place at the higher education institution.

Expert (evaluator): is a member of the committee from the list of experts determined pursuant to Article 49 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

External evaluation: the procedure whereby an independent body (committee of experts) collects data, information and evidences about the work of higher education institution or study programme in order to make statements about quality and which is consisted of a minimum of three activities: self-evaluation report analysis, site visit and drafting of external evaluation report with recommendations.

Governing board of higher education institution: the body of a higher education institution whose jurisdictions relate to the business operations and are provided for in the Article 15 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the composition, manner of election and mandate are provided for in the Article 16 of the Law.

Guideline: an explanation to the criterion including examples of good practice and providing possible ways for criteria fulfillment.

Higher education institution: an institution that performs higher education activities and, pursuant to Article 10 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can be referred to as a college or university.

Initial (ex-ante) accreditation: accreditation of higher education institution at start-up, that in the past time has not performed any higher education activities, i.e. it is accreditation of study programme that is not being delivered yet and the delivery of which is proposed by the higher education institution.

Learner-centered (approach or system): an approach or system that supports the design of learning programmes which focus on learners' achievements, accommodate different learners' priorities and are consistent with reasonable students' workload (i.e. workload that is feasible within the duration of the learning programme). It accommodates for learners' greater involvement in the choice of content, mode, pace and place of learning.

Learning outcomes: statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning.

List of experts: a list of names and information on the domestic and international experts who meet the criteria for participating in the accreditation procedure which is arranged in four categories: experts – representatives of the academic community, experts – representatives of the business community and practice, international experts and students.

Pass rate analysis: an analysis made after a completed examination term, semester or academic year which is, based on the percentage of students who took and passed exams, used for drawing conclusions and giving recommendations for enhancing teaching process. The analysis can be conducted per subjects, a year of study, study programmes and the level of the whole higher education institution.

Provisional accreditation: accreditation issued pursuant to Article 61 of the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the limited period of time as stipulated by the Law without having to implement the accreditation procedure.

Qualifications (higher education): any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting that particular learning outcomes have been achieved, normally following the successful completion of a recognized higher education programme of study.

Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area: an overarching framework that makes transparent the relationship between European national higher education frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks. The umbrella framework for qualifications in the European Higher Education Area along with the generic learning outcomes in the three cycles was adopted by the Conference of European Ministers of Education in Bergen, 2005.

Quality assurance in higher education: set of processes and activities adopted nationally and institutionally to ensure sustaining of higher education quality at the targeted or minimum accepted level.

Recognition of credits (ECTS): the process through which an institution certifies that learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution satisfy (some or all) requirements of a particular programme, its component or qualification.

Recommendation on accreditation: an act issued by the Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance by which the accreditation outcome is determined, based on

the evaluation of the accreditation fulfillment laid out in the committee of experts' report, and by which the issuance of the certificate on accreditation is recommended to the competent ministry.

Re-accreditation: procedure carried out at the accredited higher education institution in order to extend the validity period of the accreditation.

Self-evaluation or internal evaluation: assessment, periodic control and documented collection of parameters of quality, teaching and study programmes, administration and management, scientific-research parameters, etc., conducted by a higher education institution.

Senate of the higher education institution: the highest academic body of a higher education institution whose scope of jurisdiction, composition and method of work are provided by the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Standard: statement of principles and expected level of requirements and conditions against which quality is assessed that must be attained by higher education institution or study programme.

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG): a document adopted by the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, in Bergen 2005, defining a common methodology of higher education quality assurance within the Bologna process signatory countries.

Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina: standards defined by the document “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina” adopted by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Council of Ministers’ Decision no. 193/07 at the 32. Session held on December 12, 2007 (“Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina” no. 13/08).

State (National) qualification framework for higher education: the single description, at national level, which is internationally understood and through which all qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education may be described and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between higher education qualifications.

Student: learner enrolled in a formal educational programme.

Students' assessment: the total range of methods (written, oral and practical tests/examinations, projects and portfolios) used to evaluate learners’ achievement of expected learning outcomes.

Study programme: a set of educational components, based on learning outcomes that are recognized for the award of a specific qualification.

Teachers: persons appointed to academic titles (scientific and teaching) or artistic-teaching title of: assistant professor, associate professor or full professor.

Teaching assistants: teaching staff selected into the title of assistant, senior assistant or lector.

Teaching coverage plan: a list of subjects on all study programmes of a higher education institution (per year of study) with names of the teachers and teaching assistants delivering the teaching for each subject in a semester or academic year. The teaching coverage plan can contain a teaching workload as well (the amount of classes per week, at the level of semester or a year).

Teaching (academic) staff: persons who teach (teachers and TAs) and are appointed to academic (teaching and/or scientific) or artistic-teaching title, and can be employed full time or under a fixed-term contract.

Timetable: a weekly plan of teaching for each year of study normally indicating names of subjects, teachers and teaching assistants delivering the teaching, time and premises where the teaching takes place.

Validity period of accreditation: period starting from the issuance of the accreditation until the date of its expiry after which the higher education institution is obliged to seek issuance of the new one.

Guidelines to the Criteria

CRITERION 1 – DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Criterion 1.1. Higher education institution develops its strategy in the process of public consultation with all the stakeholders. The strategy is formally adopted and publicly available.

Guidelines:

- When developing its strategy, the higher education institution consults its stakeholders: teaching and non-teaching staff, students, the founders, the governmental and the non-governmental sector, the local community, key business entities, employers and other relevant partners.
- In its statute the higher education institution sets the basis for strategic planning, such as: the method for defining the strategy, partners to be consulted during its development, the body that creates it, and implementation of the strategy.
- The strategy of the higher education institution shall be published on its web site and elsewhere.

Criterion 1.2. With its strategy, the higher education institution defines: its vision and mission, strategic goals and plans and activities relevant for each strategic goal.

Guidelines:

- With its mission, the higher education institution defines itself as a university or a higher school, and sets its values (such as: academic freedom, openness, democratic values, equality, or unity of teaching and scientific work) and its position in the society, such as setting its contribution to its development through developing education, learning and research as well as other aims defined through specific features of the institution and its position in society.
- The higher education institution has procedures for developing precise plans and activities that define responsibilities, deadlines and resources necessary to implement the activities that the higher education institution intends to achieve.
- The higher education institution conducts SWOT or another similar analysis in order to set clear aims and recommendations for improving its work and to develop its strategic management.

Criterion 1.3. Higher education institution has an effective system and procedures for monitoring the fulfilment of its plans and the attainment of its strategic goals.

Guidelines:

- The degree of fulfilment of plans is evaluated on the regular basis, and the higher education institution sets the procedures under which holders of activities report on its implementation.
- The higher education institution renews its strategic goals and plans regularly, setting new goals and developing new plans.

CRITERION 2 - MANAGEMENT, INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CULTURE

Criterion 2.1. Higher education institution has an effective organisational and managerial structure that are formalised in its legal acts.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution acts under the principle of academic autonomy, and academic functions are thus clearly separated from the managerial ones, in such a way that the senate and the scientific-teaching councils address academic issues, and the governing board issues related to its business activities.
- The statute of the higher education institution defines clearly the roles and competences of managerial and governing structures, the method of selection of the governing board, the rector (director), deans and other managerial structures, and in particular the relations between organisational units (faculties, study programmes, institutes) and the management of the higher education institution.
- The degree of integration of the higher education institution, coordination of organisational units and programmes of study is defined in such a way that the higher education institution can fulfil its mission and implement its strategic goals.

Criterion 2.2. Higher education institution promotes quality culture, develops a comprehensive and efficient internal quality assurance system for improving teaching, scientific research, management and administration.

Guidelines:

- The quality assurance policy is derived from the mission of the higher education institution and facilitates the implementation of strategic goals. It also establishes rules for the highest level of ethics in the conduct of the staff and the students of the higher education institution (code of ethics, the ethics board, etc.).
- The quality assurance policy sets separate procedures for assuring quality of: the teaching process, with special focus on student achievements, the scientific research or applied research (depending on the type of the institution) and the management and administration processes.
- Procedures define clearly the method of execution, control and analysis of key processes at the higher education institution.

Criterion 2.3. Policy and procedures for internal quality assurance are defined in a formally adopted act.

Guidelines:

- The quality policy is regulated by a formal Quality Rulebook, adopted by the senate of the higher education institution or by a separate chapter of the statute of the higher education institution.
- The act that defines the internal quality system contains clear expressions of intent and key resources for their implementation, organisation of the quality assurance system, establishment of the quality assurance bodies, method of work, responsibilities and

relationships among all the parties within the internal quality system of the higher education institution.

- The quality act is publicly available, published on the web site and elsewhere.

Criterion 2.4. Higher education institution has a formal quality assurance body whose role, responsibilities and activities are clearly defined in its legal acts.

Guidelines:

- By establishing a formal body and/or person for quality assurance (quality board, quality office, quality administrator, quality manager, etc.), the higher education institution assigns to that person or body the responsibility for implementing quality assurance policies and procedures.
- Method of organisation of the internal quality system, its structure and the number of persons engaged in the internal quality system are appropriate for the size of the higher education institution, the number of programmes of study it offers and the number of staff employed.
- The higher education institution takes all due actions to guarantee the effective operation of the quality assurance body/person, the full integrity of their work and unhindered access to all the relevant information and processes (teaching, research and administration-management processes).
- Reports, analyses and recommendations by the quality assurance body and/or person are considered regularly within the bodies and organs of the higher education institution (scientific-teaching councils, senates, student organisations and the governing board).

Criterion 2.5. The role of students of the three cycles within the higher education institution management and internal quality system is clearly and institutionally defined.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution regularly organizes ballots to ensure a democratic representation of students in governing bodies.
- Students are allowed to influence the processes of making decisions and solving problems that affect them.
- Students' representatives are represented as equal members in the work of academic and governing bodies and take part in the work of the quality assurance body.
- The higher education institution regularly organises the collection of student opinions on the quality of the teaching process (student surveys), where students are allowed to express their opinions freely and anonymously. Collecting of students' opinion should be organized systematically.
- Opinions expressed by the students influence the processes and measures are taken on that basis (regularity of teaching, adequacy and volume of the content, assigned teaching – engagement of teaching staff per subject, curricula review, etc.).

CRITERION 3 – PROCEDURES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

Criterion 3.1. Procedures for proposing, adopting, monitoring and implementing the programmes of study are established and applied for each programme of study. They notably regulate:

- a) The title and aims of the study programme;**
- b) Learning outcomes expressed for the overall qualification and for each subject;**
- c) Conditions for enrolment into the programme of study;**
- d) The type of study and method of delivery;**
- e) Credit value of each subject expressed in ECTS;**
- f) Method of grading for each subject;**
- g) Relevance of qualifications of the staff and the resources.**

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has clear procedures for drafting, proposing and adopting the programmes of study, including involvement of subject teachers, the labour market, professional associations and the students.
- Procedures are set by a formal act.
- The programme may be designed according to the qualification template developed under the joint EU and CoE project „Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina III“ (2010).
- All the programmes of study are consistent with the mission of the higher education institution and support it.
- Student learning outcomes are presented at the level of each programme of study and each area, they provide clear descriptions of the knowledge and skills the students will have at the end of their studies.
- The method of allocation of ECTS credits ensures a real evaluation of the workload per student.
- Programmes are designed in accordance to well identified and current objectives.
- The teaching methods are appropriate for transferring knowledge and motivating students to learn independently and responsibly (case-study, projects, workshops, interactive learning, etc.).
- Where appropriate for the learning outcomes, students have the possibility to apply and develop what they have learned within the context of practical application, such as professional practice, internship, business partnership, voluntary work, etc.

Criterion 3.2. Higher education institution analyses and continually strives to enhance its study programmes.

Guidelines:

- The analysis should normally include:
 - a) Data on the percentage of graduates, employed graduates, average duration of studies;
 - b) Feedback from the labour market gathered from professional associations, employers' associations, chambers of commerce and other users;
 - c) Feedback from the students gathered through a system of regular surveys.

- Implementation of programmes of study is monitored regularly, each academic year, when determining enrolment quotas.
- Enrolment quotas are justified by societal needs and are appropriate to the resources of the institution needed for quality teaching.
- Written Analyses are prepared by the study department, in consultation with the quality assurance body, and are submitted to the scientific-teaching council and the senate for consideration.
- The higher education institution adapts its programmes in accordance with properly documented analyses.

CRITERION 4 – STUDENT ASSESMENT PROCEDURES

Criterion 4.1. Higher education institution has and implements procedures that guarantee a fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the students. The procedures are described in a formal act adopted by the senate.

Guidelines:

- The procedures should normally define:
 - a) Continuous monitoring and assessment of the students' progress throughout the semester for each subject;
 - b) Grading methods have been applied and adapted for each subject. Minimum amount of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by a student is clearly defined by the grading scale;
 - c) A timetable of exams with the time, place and name of the examiner is set at the beginning of the semester and is advertised publicly;
 - d) The possibility for students to see their papers, solutions to tasks included in the exam after the final grading, appeals procedures and a possibility to take the exam before an independent commission.
- Organisation of assessment of knowledge, competences and skills of the students, transparency of methods and grading criteria and students' rights are set by means of a formal act.
- Teachers develop the grading methods for the subject he/she teaches (written, oral, practical, colloquium, seminar paper, test, project etc.), set the pass rate threshold and the ranking for each grade and informs the students about it at the beginning of a semester, making such information permanently available.
- Teaching staff of a programme of study ensures that student assessment conforms to the set learning outcomes, that assessment includes an entire spectrum of knowledge and that it is conducted in accordance with the level of qualification.
- Teaching staff keeps records of student activities during a semester (attendance, active participation in different activities, seminar papers, achievement at colloquiums). Student activity during the semester reflects on the final grade.

Criterion 4.2. Higher education institution continuously gathers data and analyses students' success (pass rate analysis) at the level of the study programme and the higher education institution, and takes actions in order to improve students' success.

Guidelines:

- After each exam term (and no less than at the end of each semester), the scientific-teaching councils analyse the students' success levels.
- At the end of each semester, the senate considers the analyses of the students' success levels at the level of the higher education institution.
- Analyses cover statistics (number of students who took the exam, number of students who passed, average grade, number of students meeting the criteria to progress to the next year of study, etc.) and students' opinions on the teaching process as expressed in the student surveys.
- On the basis of such analyses, measures and recommendations are adopted with the aim of improving the processes of examination and teaching. Particular attention is focused on those subjects where particularly low or particularly high success rates or average grades are noted.
- Recommendations may relate to the level of difficulty of the exam, pass rating or grade rating, link between the exam and the content of teaching, scope of the subject, but also to students' support, students' guidance and clear communication about requirement of the programme.
- Should serious deviations be found (irregular teaching, irregular exams, particularly low or particularly high success rate and average grade, total lack of students' understanding of the subject, etc.), the higher education institution will adopt measures such as changing the teacher for the subject or changing the curriculum. Measures taken by the higher education institutions towards the teachers can be strict in case of their neglected duties (irregular teaching, irregular exams, etc.), but if established that the reason behind the low success rate is the lack of pedagogical or didactical capacities of the teacher, the institution should arrange for professional development for that teacher before taking any strict measures.

CRITERION 5 – HUMAN RESOURCES

Criterion 5.1. Higher education institution secures a sufficient number of qualified teaching staff (professors and TAs) aimed at achieving its educational goals, establishing and supervising academic rules and ensuring sustainability of its study programmes. At each study programme of the higher education institution, a sufficient number of teachings staff is employed full time and with full teaching load in order to ensure the quality and continuity of teaching and encourage external associates to join the academic process. Higher education institution employs a sufficient number of associates and/or scientific assistants to secure the continuity of the academic process and the development of its own staff.

Guidelines:

- The total number of teaching staff engaged in a programme of study corresponds to the standards and norms set by the relevant education authorities, in compliance with the teaching load standards for teachers, and the total teaching load for each programme of study.
- The higher education institution should ensure that each subject has at least one permanent employee (teacher or TA), in order to create a possibility for the students to have permanent communication during the semester (that there is no subject for which students have no one to turn to).

- In programmes of study largely relying on external staff (visiting teachers), the higher education institution employs a sufficient number of teaching assistants to promote adequate inclusion of external staff in the teaching process, permanent availability of academic staff to the students and development of its own staff in the given area.
- Assignment of teaching to the academic staff is done only according to their competences, on the basis of their appointment to a particular scientific or teaching title, and under a set classification of teaching areas (affiliation of subjects with chairs, scientific fields and areas).
- Academic staff teaching a particular subject has published works in that subject area.

Criterion 5.2. Higher education institution has a professional development policy for its teaching staff, allowing them professional and scientific development.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution allocates funds for scientific, professional and pedagogical development of its academic staff (participation in projects, at scientific conferences, professional trainings, etc.).
- Funds are allocated in accordance with criteria set in advance, having in mind the clear and equal allocation.
- The higher education institution organises its own scientific events (meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.).
- The higher education institution supports its staff to publish their scientific papers preferring recognised and widely acknowledged publications.
- The higher education institution has a staff development plan in accordance with the strategy of the institution.

Criterion 5.3. Once a year, the higher education institution presents publications by its own teaching staff in the past academic year (titles of papers with special emphasis on the relevance of the periodical or the event where they were published or presented, books published etc.). Higher education institution has a procedure for publication of books and textbooks.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution maintains a record of professional and scientific papers, scientific projects or books published by its staff.
- A database is maintained at the level of the higher education institution (in the office for scientific research or other similar service).
- At the end of each academic year, the institution publishes an overview of professional or scientific works, projects and books published by each member of the academic staff.
- An overview of publication is published on the web site and elsewhere.
- In addition to the overview, the office for scientific research or another unit of the higher education institution prepares an analysis of publications according to classification and index status, statistics per each organisational unit, the ratio between the number of papers and the funds allocated, etc.
- Analysis and the overview of publications are regularly considered by the senate of higher education institution.
- The procedures for the approval of books and textbooks and their publication include review and approval methods.

Criterion 5.4. Procedures for selection and promotion of the teaching staff are set in advance, they are publicly available and harmonised with applicable legislation. Composition of the selection committee is competent in the given scientific area (fields and branches) for which the applicant seeks appointment.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution sets and further develops formal criteria for selection for scientific-teaching and artistic-teaching titles.
- Procedures for appointment of academic staff, based on an open and public procedure, contain the sequence of competition, deadlines, method of evaluation of scientific, artistic or teaching achievements, the composition of the selection committee and the appeals procedure.
- When assessing the teaching achievements, the higher education institution may also consider the student evaluations.

Criterion 5.5. Higher education institution regularly analyses the age structure of the teaching staff, the ratio of its own and visiting faculty, qualifications of the teaching staff at all study programmes, particularly in highly specialised subjects.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has a personnel data base, which allows it to conduct an annual analysis of its personnel, based on the number of the academic staff, the ratio of permanent employees against visiting staff, the ratio of teachers and students, the age structure of the academic staff, planned retirements, etc.
- Such analyses lead to clear development of aims for the academic staff and new recruitments, in compliance with the strategic aims of the higher education institution.
- The higher education institution has clear and well known procedures for allocation of teaching load, so that it ensures clear and equal distribution of duties that include teaching, research, mentoring and consultations.
- At the beginning of each academic year, the senate of the higher education institution sets a teaching coverage plan, which determines which teachers and teaching assistants teach which courses.

Criterion 5.6. Higher education institution employs a sufficient number of administrative and support staff in order to ensure the regular execution of the institution's activities. The institution secures the training, development and evaluation of its administrative and support staff.

Guidelines:

- The total number of administrative and support staff corresponds to the standards and norms set by the relevant education authorities.
- The higher education institution ensures training for its administrative staff conforming to new trends and reforms (IT, foreign languages, the Bologna process, etc.).
- The higher education institution has developed procedures for evaluation and advancement of its administrative staff.

CRITERION 6 – QUALITY OF PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Criterion 6.1. Higher education institution secures sufficient resources (lecture halls, laboratories and equipment, library resources, computers, individual and group study areas, etc.) for all staff and students enrolled, in order to secure improvements in the working environment and support efficient utilization of the resources. Adequacy of the resources for the delivery of the study programmes, functionality, age, ergonomics and availability are assessed continuously through internal evaluations.

Guidelines:

- The amount of resources in relation to the number of students corresponds to the standards and norms adopted by the relevant education authorities.
- Once a year, the higher education institution evaluates the efficiency of utilisation of its physical resources, by comparing the amount of resources with the number of students, collecting and analysing opinions of students and the staff on the amount and adequacy of the resources, and their contribution to student learning.
- The higher education institution defines the achieved and projected standard for facilities and equipment for each programme of study, and sets action plans in order to respond to the needs and thus ensure improvements.

Criterion 6.2. Higher education institution plans its investments so as to invest a part of its annual revenues in improving the physical resources.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has a clear investment plan and allocates funds every year, e.g. for the purpose of construction of new facilities or acquisition of equipment and books.
- The institution makes sure that its development goals are compatible with its resources.

Criterion 6.3. Higher education institution owns an adequate IT equipment to ensure quality delivery of teaching. The higher education institution provides Internet access available to all students.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has an adequate hardware and licensed software needed for adequate achievement of learning goals in different programmes of study (professional software such as engineering, statistics, or simulation software, etc.).
- The higher education institution provides students with Internet access in its premises, be it by providing computers in the library, be it via wireless access that students may access from their own computers.

Criterion 6.4. Higher education institution has a library equipped with an adequate number of printed or electronic volumes and an adequate space for normal use of library services.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution provides students with reference materials and the premises needed for the learning process.

- Libraries at the higher education institution are equipped with a sufficient number of compulsory reading copies for each subject at each programme of study.
- Textbooks authored by teaching staff of the higher education institution must be present in the library in a large number of copies (no less than for one half of the students of the academic year where such a textbook is part of compulsory reading).

CRITERION 7 – THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Criterion 7.1. Higher education institution gathers, analyses and utilizes information relevant for improving its activities in teaching, scientific research and business-administration.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has developed data collection systems related to quality, which ensure systemic information on: regularity of teaching, student success rate, student employability, learning resources, research resources, publications by its own staff, financial data, etc.
- At the higher education institution, data are collected using uniform templates. Templates are designed so as to allow rapid data analyses.
- Document management system is a good document management system.

Criterion 7.2. Higher education institution has information systems that allow precise analyses of students' pass rate for each subject and exam term, academic year or programme of study, of student-teacher ratio, etc. As a minimum, the information systems are based on the following data:

- Data on students per programmes of study, cycles, years, age and sex structure, periods of study, percentage of completion, success rate, etc.;***
- Data on teaching staff (publications, engagement by subjects, sex and age structure, appointments to specific teaching/scientific titles, etc.).***

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has uniform software in all its organisational units, administered by student services office, with access for the teaching staff, who enter their grades.
- The software allows different types of searches and quick production of statistics.
- The personnel database is an electronic database and it allows for quick entry of data on teachers, their advancement, publications, and coverage of teaching for each year of study.

CRITERION 8 – PUBLIC INFORMATION

Criterion 8.1. Higher education institution regularly publishes impartial, objective and publicly verifiable information on all the programmes and degrees it offers, at least on its website, in one of the languages of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in English.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has a web site where it publishes all the information of interest for future and current students, for academic and non-academic staff and the public.
- Websites are in one of the languages of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and at least 50% of the total web content is also published in English.
- Websites of the higher education institutions are updated regularly and the higher education institution has a web team, either employed or outsources.
- The higher education institution has a developed system for monitoring and analysing the number of visits to the web site.
- The higher education institution prepares an information package, which is a useful tool for future students and for ECTS exchange, and which contains all the relevant data on the programmes of study, including the curriculum and the syllabus, with the number of ECTS credits for each subject or module. The information package must be in two languages (in one of the languages of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in English).

Criterion 8.2. Higher education institution defines its public communication policy and develops its communication strategy used for defining its target groups (students, graduates, the environment, governments and authorities, the NGO sector, the business community, the social sector), types of communication with each target group, as well as institutional public relations.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has institutionally organised public relations through an office or an employee.
- The higher education institution organises regular press conferences where it presents information of interest to the public.
- The higher education institution gathers and analyses information about itself published by the media (press clipping).
- The higher education institution communicates in an organised manner with its environment, and particularly with its stakeholders: representatives of the labour market, social partners and the community.
- The higher education institution collects in an organised manner the data on career development of its former students and makes them available to the public via its website.
- The higher education institution actively supports the establishment of alumni associations (by organising events for them).

Criterion 8.3. Each year before enrolment, higher education institution secures a publication of a guide for future students.

Guidelines:

- The guide for future students should provide guidance in selection of the study programmes. The information should be accurate, impartial, objective and easily accessible and should not be used only as a marketing opportunity.
- The guide could include:

- a.) Titles of the programmes of study and a description of qualifications for each programme enrolling students;
 - b.) Enrolment policy (clear, transparent and consistent enrolment criteria, previous knowledge, information of the place, time and content of the entry exam, the necessary level of knowledge of foreign languages, method of evaluation of previous results – points and ranking of the candidates, etc.);
 - c.) The final number of students enrolled in each programme of study;
 - d.) In case of enrolment or entry exams, detailed content of the exam, along with content and key for the previous one and the reference material for candidates to prepare;
 - e.) Information on the financial commitments of the students, expressed clearly and transparently.
- The guide also lists web pages where potential students may obtain more information on the programmes, the facilities and other information of importance for their decision.
 - It is advisable for the higher education institution to print posters, brochures and other advertising material in order to stimulate young people's interest in pursuing the studies.

CRITERION 9 – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Criterion 9.1. Higher education institution has developed forms of inter-institutional cooperation through European (international) projects, bilateral agreements, joint programmes, etc.

Guidelines:

- The international actions are coherent with the mission, vision and priorities of higher education institution.
- The higher education institution is a member of European and international associations of higher education institutions (EUA, EURASHE, the Danube Rectors' Conference, etc.).
- The higher education institution has cooperation agreements with other higher education institutions. Those agreements are active on the basis of which joint activities take place.
- The higher education institution takes part in Tempus, FP and other European projects.

Criterion 9.2. Higher education institution promotes and secures international mobility of students and teachers, following up on the application of experiences thus acquired in its own activities.

Guidelines:

- In compliance with the international context of the programmes of study, students have the opportunity to accomplish part of their programmes abroad.
- The higher education institution promotes international mobility of its teaching staff.
- The higher education institution has a developed student exchange system (e.g. through the ERASMUS programme).
- The higher education institution has visiting lecturers from abroad.

Criterion 9.3. Higher education institution has procedures in place and secures resources to support its international activities.

Guidelines:

- The higher education institution has an organised service for international cooperation, through which it establishes relations with higher education institutions abroad, organises student exchanges, joint projects, etc.
- In its procedures, the higher education institution may establish benefits in order to promote international relevance (rewards for papers published abroad, stimulation for teachers visiting foreign universities, stimulation for students' international activities, etc.).
- The higher education institution organises international summer schools or allows its students to attend such schools abroad.
- The higher education institution follows up the application of experiences acquired in its international activities and ensures their further dissemination.