

The Regulation on Higher Education Quality Assurance and the Higher Education Quality Council

SECTION ONE

Purpose, Scope, Basis and Definitions

Purpose and scope

ARTICLE 1 – (1) This Regulation sets out the principles regarding internal and external quality assurance in higher education system, the evaluation of quality levels of education, research and social contribution activities as well as administrative services of higher education institutions by the Higher Education Quality Council according to national and international quality standards, recognition and authorization of independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies, the organizational structure and working principles of the Higher Education Quality Council, and organization of quality commissions within higher education institutions.

Basis

ARTICLE 2 – (1) This Regulation was prepared on the basis of the additional provision 35 of the Higher Education Law dated 4/11/1981 and numbered 2547.

Definitions

ARTICLE 3 – (1) In this Regulation;

- a) Independent External Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies shall mean the institutions and organizations engaging in external evaluation and accreditation activities at home or abroad,
- b) President shall mean the President of the Higher Education Quality Council,
- c) Vice President shall mean the Vice President of the Higher Education Quality Council,
- ç) External Evaluator shall mean person authorized to conduct external evaluation process assigned within the institutional external evaluation program by the Higher Education Quality Council,
- d) External Evaluation shall mean the evaluation process of the quality of higher education institutions or programs by independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies,
- e) Secretary General shall mean the Secretary General of the Higher Education Quality Council
- f) Self-Evaluation shall mean evaluation of the quality of higher education institution or program carried out by the institution or program itself,
- g) Quality Evaluation Registration Certificate shall mean the certificate approved by the Higher Education Quality Council and indicating that the independent institutions or organizations are authorized to evaluate the external evaluation and quality assurance process that assesses whether or not the higher education program meets the predetermined academic and field-specific standards in a specific field,
- ğ) Council shall mean the Higher Education Quality Council,
- h) Institutional Self-Evaluation Report shall mean the report annually prepared by a higher education institution with an aim to monitor the quality assurance processes pertinent to the institution's education, research and social contribution activities as well as administrative services,
- ı) Institutional External Evaluation Program shall mean the external evaluation process of the quality of education, research and social contribution activities and administrative services of higher education institutions periodically conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council at least once every five years,

i) Institutional Feedback Report shall mean the report prepared by the external evaluators on the higher education institution evaluated as part of the institutional external evaluation program that comprises the strengths and areas open to enhancement of the relevant institution,

j) Performance Indicators shall mean the instruments employed to assess, monitor and evaluate to what extent higher education institutions accomplish their objectives and targets,

k) Program Evaluation shall mean evaluation of study programs as a component of internal quality assurance system in higher education institutions,

l) Program Accreditation shall mean the external evaluation and quality assurance process measuring whether or not a higher education program meets the predetermined academic and field-specific standards in a specific field by independent external evaluation or accreditation agencies,

m) Turkish Qualifications Framework shall mean the national qualifications framework designed in line with the European Qualifications Framework that sets out all the principles of qualifications acquired with vocational, general and academic study programs and other channels of learning that include primary, secondary and higher education levels,

n) Higher Education Quality Assurance Situation Report shall mean the annually prepared report submitted for relevant stakeholders' information, including the Council of Higher Education, taking into account institutional evaluation reports of higher education institutions that have gone through external evaluation within the relevant year,

o) Higher Education Quality Assurance System shall mean the principles regarding the processes of internal and external quality assurance and accreditation processes of the education, research and social contribution activities and administrative services of higher education institutions as well as the authorization and recognition of independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies.

SECTION TWO

Organizational Structure, Duties and Authorities of the Higher Education Quality Council

Bodies of the Higher Education Quality Council

ARTICLE 4 – (1) The Higher Education Quality Council consists of the Council and the President.

The Council

ARTICLE 5 – (1) Higher Education Quality Council shall comprise;

- a. Three members elected by the Council of Higher Education General Board,
 - b. Three members elected by the Inter-University Council,
 - c. One member elected by the Ministry of National Education,
 - d. One member representing the Vocational Qualification Institution,
 - e. One member representing the Turkish Accreditation Agency,
 - f. One member representing the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey,
 - g. One member representing the Health Institutes of Turkey
 - h. One member representing the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey,
 - i. One student representative,
- with thirteen members in total.

(2) Members elected in accordance with the clauses (a) and (b), each of whom works in different higher education institutions, shall be designated amongst faculty members who are experienced in the organization, operation and administration of higher education as well as in quality evaluation and improvement practices, have worked at higher education institutions at home or abroad for at least ten

years, and specialized in different fields. The member elected in accordance with the clause (c) shall be a faculty member in a higher education institution who is experienced in the organization, operation and administration of higher education system as well as in quality evaluation and improvement practices with minimum ten years of work experience in higher education institutions at home or abroad. Members representing the institutions in accordance with the clauses (ç), (e) and (f) shall at least be at the level of Vice Presidency, whereas members representing the institutions in accordance with the clauses (d) and (g) shall at least be at the level of Deputy Secretary General. The student representative shall be assigned within the principles and procedures to be determined by the Council.

(3) The Council members shall fulfill the general conditions stated in Article 48 of the Law No. 657 on Civil Servants.

(4) The Council shall elect a president and a vice president with absolute majority of the total number of members. Term of office for the Council members shall be one year for the student representative and four years for the rest of the members. Membership cannot last more than two terms. In the event that a member completes his/her term of office or leaves the Council due to any reason, the relevant institution/organization shall elect/assign a replacement for the missing member through the same procedure within one month at latest. The elected/assigned member shall serve until completing the missing member's remaining term of office.

(5) The Council shall convene at least once a month on the dates determined by the President and any given time upon President's call or written request of one third of Council members.

(6) The Council shall convene with at least two third majority of the total number of members and take decisions with the absolute majority of the total number of members. In the event of an equality of votes, decision shall be considered in favor of the President's vote. Members shall not participate in the meetings where issues related to institutions, they represent or work for or are affiliated with, are discussed.

(7) Membership shall be terminated before the term of office is completed for those who failed to attend a total of four meetings in one year without a valid excuse and those who are unable to work for more than six months due to illness, accident or another reason.

(8) Administrators and faculty members of senior higher education bodies or higher education institutions may attend the Council meetings upon invitation. Those invited are obliged to conform to the confidentiality of the information they have learnt during their assignments. The travel allowances and unavoidable costs of the assigned ones shall be met from the budget of the Council. Those attending meetings upon invitation do not have voting rights except for Council members.

Duties and Authorities of the Council

ARTICLE 6 – (1) Duties of the Higher Education Quality Council are as follows:

- a) To define national policies and strategies for quality assurance in higher education system and publicly announce them,
- b) To organize activities for the improvement and dissemination of quality culture in higher education system,
- c) To support building internal quality assurance systems in higher education institutions and provide higher education institutions with guidance on the issue,

ç) To monitor activities regarding quality assurance systems in higher education at national and international level, and organize joint activities at national and international level,

d) To set out the principles, quality indicators and rules applied in external evaluation and accreditation,

e) To conduct an external evaluation of higher education institutions regarding the quality levels of their education, research and development, social contribution and administrative services at least once every five years and evaluate higher education programs when deemed necessary.

f) Evaluate and monitor activities of the higher education institutions within the mission differentiation and specialization program and submit their results to the Council of Higher Education,

g) To organize activities and issue publications for informing higher education institutions on the procedures to be applied in external evaluation and accreditation,

ğ) To annually prepare and publish Higher Education Quality Assurance Situation Report that comprises recommendations for quality enhancement by evaluating the institutional feedback reports in the aftermath of the external evaluation process of higher education institutions, and submit it for the relevant stakeholders' information, including the Council of Higher Education,

h) To issue decisions by examining registration applications of private law legal persons applying to the Council to become registered for carrying out activities in the areas of external evaluation and accreditation within the framework of the set principles and rules; to monitor the activities of the organizations and obtain information, issue warnings, or terminate their registration when deemed necessary,

i) To represent Turkey in international organizations for quality assurance in higher education,

i) To cooperate with Turkish Qualifications Framework Committee on subjects pertinent to quality assurance system in higher education,

j) To evaluate the application levels of the provisions within "the Rules and Procedures on Quality Assurance of Qualifications within Turkish Qualifications Framework" in higher education institutions.

(2) The Council may establish commissions and assign advisory boards, determining their operational principles and procedures, if deemed necessary.

President and Vice President

ARTICLE 7 – (1) The Council elects a president and a vice president among the Council members with four years of term of office for each.

(2) The Vice President acts as a deputy of the President in the event that the President is unable to work due to leave, illness, assignments at home or abroad or another reason.

(3) The President and Vice President shall be appointed on a full-time basis and deemed on leave without pay from their affiliated institutions during their term in office. In the event that their term in office ends or they leave the office before the completion of their term, they shall return to their positions without any requirement for extra proceedings. Subsequent to the end of their term, they shall be paid the salaries of their permanent posts as of the payday of the month following the date they reassume their duty.

(4) The President and Vice President shall not work for any public or private organization, with or without pay, except in the case of exceptional temporary duties assigned by the President of the Republic of Turkey, during their term in office.

Duties and Authorities of President

ARTICLE 8 – (1) The President is the principal administrator of the Council and in charge of the general administration and representation of the Council, provisions of the regulation and the law, and the execution of the decisions issued by the Council.

(2) Duties of the President are:

- a) To determine the agenda and dates of Council meetings, chair the meetings, conduct necessary procedures on the applications not included in the agenda and inform the Council in this respect,
- b) To prepare the annual budget and financial statements in accordance with the strategies, objectives and targets defined by the Council, send them to relevant institutions,
- c) To appoint Secretary-General and Department Chairs,
- ç) To appoint staff upon the recommendation of Secretary-General
- d) To assign duties and authorities of staff, designate staff's service units and places of duty,
- e) To enable the execution and application of the Council decisions,
- f) To enable the highest-level organization and coordination of operations undertaken by administrative units to ensure productivity and coordination, to resolve issues related to duties and authorities that might arise between service units.

Financial Rights of Council Members

ARTICLE 9 – (1) The payments determined as part of financial and social rights to the Higher Education Quality Council President, Higher Education Quality Council Vice President and Higher Education Quality Council Secretary General are in the framework of same principles and procedures with the payments determined for the Council of Higher Education Vice President, Council of Higher Education Executive Board members and Inter-University Council Secretary General respectively. Due to this clause, these payments shall be considered legally equivalent to the payments made to the personnel designated as their equivalent and they shall not be subject to taxes or any other legal deductions if the corresponding payments to their equivalents are not subject to such deductions. The retired members shall continue receiving their pension. With the exception of the President and the Vice President, attendance fees to the Council members shall be paid in the framework of the same methods and principles with Council of Higher Education General Board members. Attendance fees paid to the Council members correspond to the multiplication of the coefficient of their civil service salaries with 4000. Notwithstanding, more than twelve attendance fees shall not be paid within a year.

SECTION THREE

Administrative Organization of the Higher Education Quality Council

General Secretariat

ARTICLE 10 – (1) General Secretariat consists of Institutional External Evaluation and External Evaluation Agencies Registry Unit, Publicity and Stakeholder Relations Unit and Administrative Services Unit.

Secretary General

ARTICLE 11– (1) Secretary General is the head of the administrative organization of the Higher Education Quality Council and accountable to the President for the operation of this organization. The Secretary General is required to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Duties and Authorities of Secretary General

ARTICLE 12- (1) Duties of Secretary General are;

- a) To enable staff in units to serve in compliance with their duties and responsibilities and receive in-service training,
- b) To enable coordination between units, fulfillment of the services in the charge of the Council and their supervision,
- c) To make recommendations to the Council President about staff to be assigned in units,
- ç) To act as rapporteur in Council meetings by abstaining from voting,
- d) To enable writing, signing and preserving of Council decisions,

- e) To enable timely distribution of the Council agenda prepared by the President and arrange procedures in respect to this,
- f) To enable announcement of Council decisions to relevant parties,
- g) To provide all kinds of administrative services needed by the Council,
- ğ) To engage in legislative activities,
- h) To fulfill other duties assigned by the President.

Institutional External Evaluation and Registry of External Evaluation Agencies Unit

ARTICLE 13 – (1) Duties of Institutional External Evaluation and Registry of External Evaluation Agencies Unit are;

- a) To implement principles, quality indicators and rules determined to be applied in external evaluation by the Council,
- b) To prepare documents to inform higher education institutions on methods and instruments to be employed in external evaluation,
- c) To enable timely submission of self-evaluation reports that are annually prepared by higher education institutions,
- ç) To enable execution of procedures and works on the external evaluation program of higher education institutions,
- d) To apply principles and rules determined by the Council regarding the recognition and authorization of independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies,
- e) To examine applications of private legal entities applying to the Council for authorization to operate in the fields of external evaluation and accreditation within the framework of designated principles and rules, issue preliminary assessment reports on applications,
- f) To monitor activities of private legal entities established to operate in the fields of external evaluation and accreditation, receive information from them when deemed necessary and make recommendations to the Council for the issue of warning or cancelation of their registries when necessary,
- g) To prepare a report on the field of activity at the end of every year,
- ğ) To perform other duties assigned by the President.

Publicity and Stakeholder Relations Unit

ARTICLE 14 – (1) Duties of Publicity and Stakeholder Relations Unit are;

- a) To plan and organize publicity, information and education activities in order to foster and disseminate quality culture,
- b) To enable the implementation of the articles stated in the “Rules and Procedures on the Ensuring Quality Assurance of Qualifications to be included in the Turkish Qualifications Framework” in higher education institutions,
- c) To monitor activities on higher education quality assurance systems at the national and international levels, to make recommendations to the Council for the organization of joint works at the national and international levels,
- ç) To prepare printed and visual materials of the Council, conduct activities for the preparation and publication of the Council’s official media organs or periodicals,
- d) To perform other duties assigned by the President.

Administrative Services Unit

ARTICLE 15 – (1) Duties of Administrative Services Unit are;

- a) To perform procedures on the employment and personal rights of the Council’s staff,

- b) To perform technical services on construction and undertake tasks related to maintenance, repair, lighting, heating, cleaning etc.,
- c) To undertake works related to civil defense, security and environmental control,
- ç) To enable information and document management of the Council,
- d) To maintain documentations and correspondences,
- e) To establish information infrastructure required for the Council services, follow technological advancements, take necessary measures on information security and reliability,
- f) To transfer publications and documents on data processing environment, preserve them and put them into service when necessary,
- g) To undertake print and graphic works,
- ğ) To manage legal consultancy services for the Council, follow the lawsuits and execution proceedings concerning the Council,
- h) To coordinate strategic planning activities and their monitoring process,
- ı) To perform other duties assigned by the President.

SECTION FOUR

Establishment, Duties and Authorities of the Quality Commission of Higher Education Institution

The Quality Commission of Higher Education Institution

ARTICLE 16 – (1) A higher education institution shall establish a Quality Commission to conduct quality assurance activities within the institution.

(2) The Commission shall be chaired by the rector of the relevant higher education institution, or by the vice-rector assigned by the rector in the absence of the rector.

(3) Commission members shall be assigned by university senates, or by administrative committees of universities in the absence of a senate, on condition that no more than one member shall be included from the same faculty, institute, school, vocational school, and they are from different disciplines. Amongst commission members shall also be included the secretary general of the higher education institution, student representative as well as head of the department of strategy development in public higher education institutions and unit manager responsible for relevant processes in foundation higher education institutions. The number of members, membership duration, which shall not be shorter than two years for the members assigned by the senate, and operation principles and procedures of the commission shall be determined by university senates, in the absence of which they are set out by administrative committees of relevant higher education institutions, and shared publicly on the website of the higher education institution. Student representative shall be assigned within principles and procedures to be defined by university senates and shall serve for one year.

(4) Support services on office and staff for the commission shall be carried out by the department of strategy development or other relevant unit of the relevant higher education institution.

Duties of the Quality Commission of Higher Education Institution

ARTICLE 17 – (1) The Commission shall be responsible for:

a) Establishing the internal and external quality assurance system of the relevant institution for evaluation and follow-up of education, research and social contribution activities as well as administrative services and improvement of their quality, identifying key performance indicators of the institution, conducting program evaluation in line with the strategic plan and objectives of the institution

and the principles and procedures set out by the Higher Education Quality Council, and submitting these activities to the approval of the Senate, or to the administrative committee in the absence of a senate,

b) Planning and conducting internal evaluation activities, preparing an annual institutional self-evaluation report comprising the results of institutional evaluation and enhancement activities, submitting it to the senate, or to the administrative committee of the institution in the absence of senate, and sharing publicly the approved annual institutional self-evaluation report on the official website of the institution in an easily accessible way,

c) Making necessary preparations for institutional external evaluation program and informing internal and external stakeholders on the process,

ç) Supporting the Council's activities as part of the external evaluation process.

SECTION FIVE

Internal and External Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Institutions

Establishment of quality assurance systems in higher education institutions

ARTICLE 18 – (1) Higher education institutions shall be required to ensure the establishment and operation of internal and external quality assurance systems to be applied in their own institutions and the maintenance of internal and external evaluation processes of the institution and programs in the scope of the code of practice set by the Council.

Institutional self-evaluation process and schedule

ARTICLE 19 – (1) Higher education institutions shall maintain their self-evaluation processes in integration with their strategic plan, annual performance program and activity report. Foundation higher education institutions that do not have the obligation to prepare the stated reports shall maintain their self-evaluation processes in integration with their vision, mission, strategic objectives and quality assurance systems; encompassing education, research and social contribution activities as well as the administrative services supporting these activities.

(2) Higher education institutions shall upload their self-evaluation reports comprising their self-evaluation activities on the web-based system formed by the Council in January-March every year.

(3) Self-evaluation reports shall be published on the official websites of relevant higher education institution and the Council.

Scope of self-evaluation reports

ARTICLE 20 – (1) Higher education institutions shall annually submit self-evaluation reports that include enhancements in internal quality assurance system.

(2) The self-evaluation report of the higher education institution shall be required to include remarks on how quality assurance processes are defined and conducted in the institution, how achieving the targeted qualifications in study programs is guaranteed, how performance indicators are monitored and how continuous improvement cycles are completed, all of which shall be corroborated.

(3) Self-evaluation reports to be prepared by higher education institutions to encompass the institution's education, research and social contribution activities as well as administrative services shall include:

a) The institution's quality policy, adopted methods and processes in line with the institution's mission, vision and strategic objectives identified in the light of national strategies and objectives of higher education,

b) The administrative/organizational processes and activities applied by the institution to realize its mission and objectives,

c) Internal quality assurance system that evaluates the measurable objectives of academic and administrative units with key performance indicators to ensure the realization of mission and objectives and their periodic reviews,

ç) Enhancement activities related to areas realized during previous internal and external evaluations and in need of enhancement.

Institutional external evaluation program

ARTICLE 21 – (1) Higher education institutions shall be evaluated as part of the Institutional External Evaluation Program conducted by the Council periodically at least once every five years. The schedule of external evaluation of higher education institutions is arranged and announced by the Council.

(2) Institutional External Evaluation Program comprises the evaluation process that involves pre-review of the institution on the basis of the institution's self-evaluation report, site visit and drafting of institutional feedback report by means of the external evaluators assigned by the Council.

(3) External evaluators shall be chosen by the Council among the academic and administrative staff, students and sector representatives within higher education institutions who have filed external evaluator application. Those assigned as external evaluators are deemed on leave from their institutions during site visit.

(4) Institutional external evaluation of higher education institutions shall be conducted to encompass the scope and subjects stated in the Article 20 of this Regulation and within the framework of the procedures and principles regarding the institutional external evaluation defined by the Council.

Scope of institutional feedback report

ARTICLE 22 – (1) An institutional feedback report is prepared by external evaluators assigned by the Council for each higher education institution included in the Institutional External Evaluation Program at the end of the evaluation process.

(2) The institutional feedback report prepared for a higher education institution comprises the institution's education, research and development activities, regional/national social contribution activities if any, quality assurance system employed in the institutional decision-making processes and administrative services as well as the institution's strengths and areas open to enhancement .

Higher Education Quality Assurance Situation Report

ARTICLE 23 – (1) Higher Education Quality Assurance Situation Report, which includes the problems encountered and recommendations for quality improvement process and aims to contribute to higher education quality assurance activities, is annually prepared by the Council on the basis of feedback reports of higher education institutions evaluated by the Council within the relevant year, and presented to all relevant stakeholder institutions and organizations, including the Council of Higher Education.

(2) Higher Education Quality Assurance Situation Report shall be published on the official website of the Council.

Public announcement of internal and external evaluation results

ARTICLE 24 – (1) Results of internal and external evaluations conducted in higher education institutions shall be made public. Annual institutional self-evaluation reports and the institutional

feedback reports regarding external evaluation program shall be published on the official websites of the Council and relevant institutions.

Expenses in the scope of quality improvement and quality assurance activities

ARTICLE 25 – (1) In the scope of this Regulation, all expenses related to activities conducted by higher education institutions shall be met by the allowance allocated to the budgets of higher education institutions under the relevant item. Foundation higher education institutions shall also allocate adequate allowance in their budgets for activities to be undertaken in the scope of this Regulation.

SECTION SIX

Program Accreditation, Authorization and Recognition of Accreditation Agencies

Program accreditation

ARTICLE 26 – (1) The external evaluation services on the basis of program accreditation in higher education institutions are conducted by independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies recognized or authorized by the Council in the area of program accreditation.

Process of recognition and authorization of accreditation agencies

ARTICLE 27 – (1) National independent accreditation agencies shall be authorized by the Council and hold a Quality Evaluation Registration Certificate, whereas international independent accreditation agencies shall be recognized by the Council for the approval of program accreditation by the Council.

(2) The procedures and principles regarding the authorization of national independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies shall be designated by the Council.

(3) The procedures and principles regarding the recognition of international independent external evaluation and accreditation agencies shall be designated by the Council.

SECTION SEVEN

Miscellaneous and Final Provisions

Financial Structure of Council

ARTICLE 28 – (1) All expenses needed within the services of the Higher Education Quality Council shall be met by the budget of the Council.

Revenues of Council

ARTICLE 29 – (1) The revenues of the Higher Education Quality Council consist of:

- a) Treasury grants,
- b) Operating revenues,
- c) Donations and grants,
- d) Other revenues.

Enforcement

ARTICLE 30 – (1) This Regulation shall be enforced on the date of its publication.

Execution

ARTICLE 31 – (1) Provisions of this Regulation shall be executed by the President of the Higher Education Quality Council.