

Pursuant to Article 137 paragraph 1 item 2, in connection with Article 156 paragraph 2 of the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 122/25), the Steering committee of the Agency for the Control and Assurance of Quality in Higher Education, at the meetings held on 16 February 2026 and 9 March 2026, adopted the following

**STATUTE
OF THE
AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

I BASIC PROVISIONS

Subject Matter

Article 1

The Statute contains provisions on the name and seat, the seal and stamp, organisation of work, duties, manner and procedure of decision-making, adoption of documents, exercise of public character of work and other provisions of relevance for the work of the Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

Name and Seat

Article 2

The name of the agency is “Agencija za obezbjeđivanje kvaliteta visokog obrazovanja” (hereinafter: the Agency).

The acronym of the Agency is AKVO.

The name of the Agency in the English language is Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The acronym of the Agency in the English language is HEQA.

The seat of the Agency is in Podgorica.

Founder

Article 3

The founder of the Agency is the Government of Montenegro (hereinafter: the Government).

Legal Entity

Article 4

The Agency has the status of a legal entity with rights, obligations and responsibilities determined by the Law on Higher Education and it performs tasks of public interest.

The Agency shall be registered in the Central Register of Commercial and Other Entities.

Seal and Stamp

Article 5

The Agency shall have a round seal with 30 mm in diameter, with two concentric circles, spaced 2 mm apart. The seal contains the coat of arms of Montenegro, the inscription "Crna Gora" and the name and seat of the Agency: "Agencija za obezbjeđivanje kvaliteta visokog obrazovanja"

- Podgorica". The text of the seal shall be inscribed in the inner concentric circle around the coat of arms of Montenegro.

The Agency shall have two rectangular stamps measuring 23 x 59 mm, containing the name and seat of the Agency: "Agencija za obezbjeđivanje kvaliteta visokog obrazovanja - Podgorica". The text of the stamp shall be printed horizontally, and below the text there shall be an empty space for entering the document number and the date of its recording.

The seal and the stamp shall be used within the premises of the Agency.

The seal is affixed beside the signature of the person authorised to sign documents.

The stamp is affixed in the header of the document.

The director of the Agency or an employee authorised thereby shall be responsible for the use and safekeeping of the seal and stamp.

Independence of the Agency

Article 6

The Agency shall perform the tasks entrusted to it as public authorities.

In performing the public authorities referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, the Agency shall act as an autonomous organisation which does not pursue profit, legally and functionally independent from state bodies and higher education institutions, as well as other entities, in accordance with the Law.

Letterhead and Logo

Article 7

The letterhead of the Agency shall contain the name and seat of the Agency, and may also contain other information or a sign.

The Agency shall have a logo for the purposes of promotion and visual identity.

The letterhead and logo shall be established by the Council of the Agency (hereinafter: the Council) on the proposal of the director.

The letterhead of the Agency shall contain the name of the Agency in Cyrillic and Latin script and in the English language.

Use of Gender-Sensitive Language

Article 8

Expressions used in this Statute for natural persons in the masculine shall be taken to include the corresponding expressions in the feminine.

II DUTIES

The Agency

Article 9

The Agency shall perform duties of assurance and enhancement of the quality of higher education, in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter: ESG standards)

The Agency shall:

- conduct the accreditation procedure and issue a certificate of accreditation for a study programme on the basis of an accreditation report;

- conduct the reaccreditation procedure of a higher education institution (hereinafter: institution) and issue a certificate of reaccreditation of the institution on the basis of a reaccreditation report;
- establish standards and criteria for internal and external evaluation, in accordance with the ESG standards;
- conduct periodic quality assessment of the work of licensed institutions at the request of the authorised body of the institution or the state administration body competent for education affairs (hereinafter: the Ministry);
- determine the methodology on the basis of which it performs classification of institutions;
- establish the list of experts for accreditation or reaccreditation on the basis of a public call;
- cooperate with institutions and the economy in assuring and enhancing the quality of higher education;
- propose measures for the enhancement of the quality of higher education on the basis of analysis of internal and external evaluation reports and submit them to the Ministry;
- maintain the register of accredited study programmes and reaccredited institutions;
- provide an opinion on a foreign study programme in the procedure of recognition of a foreign educational document for the purpose of employment, in accordance with a special Law;
- perform other tasks in accordance with the Law and this Statute.

III ORGANISATION

Bodies

Article 10

The bodies of the Agency are the Council of the Agency and the Director.
The Council of the Agency is the governing body, and the Director is the executive authority responsible for managing the Agency.

Expert Bodies

Article 11

The expert bodies of the Agency are the Accreditation Board and the Complaints Commission.

Document on Internal Organisation and Job Classification

Article 12

The Agency shall, by a separate document, determine internal organisation, job positions, job descriptions, the number of employees and specific conditions required to establish employment relationships.

Regulations on civil servants and appointed officials shall apply to the rights, obligations and responsibilities of employees of the Agency.

IV GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1. The Council of the Agency

Composition of the Council

Article 13

The Council of the Agency shall have seven members, including:

- three representatives of institutions;
- two representatives of the Ministry;
- one representative of the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro (hereinafter: the Chamber of Economy);
- one student representative.

Competence

Article 14

The Council of the Agency shall:

- elect members of the Accreditation Board;
- announce a public call for members of the Complaints Commission for complaints on the Accreditation or Reaccreditation Report;
- constitute the Complaints Commission on the basis of a public call;
- on the proposal of the Accreditation Board, adopt standards for internal and external evaluation, in accordance with the ESG standards;
- adopt the Statute of the Agency on the proposal of the Director;
- adopt the document on internal organisation and job classification in the Agency on the proposal of the Director;
- on the proposal of the Accreditation Board, adopt the document on the procedure for accreditation of study programmes, and on the content and form of the certificate of accreditation;
- on the proposal of the Accreditation Board, adopt the document on the procedure for reaccreditation, and on the content and form of the certificate of reaccreditation of an institution;
- adopt a decision on announcing a call for the selection of the Director, or the Deputy Director;
- appoint and dismiss the Director, or the deputy director on the basis of a public competition;
- on the proposal of the Director, adopt the annual work programme of the Agency;
- on the proposal of the Director, adopt the annual financial plan of the Agency;
- on the proposal of the Director, adopt the annual report on the work of the Agency, no later than 31 March of the current year for the previous year;
- on the proposal of the Director, adopt the annual financial report of the Agency, no later than 31 March of the current year for the previous year;
- decide on the complaint of an institution in all phases of the external evaluation procedure until the Report is delivered to the institution;
- decide on the complaint of an institution against the decision of the Accreditation Board on the constitution of an accreditation or reaccreditation commission;
- decide on the amount of remuneration for the work of the chair and members of the Accreditation Board, and of the chair and members of the Committee;
- propose internal audit of financial operations;
- adopt rules of procedure for its work;

- adopt documents for the purpose of exercising the rights of the Director, and, where necessary, may authorise a person from among the employees of the Agency to adopt such documents;
- perform other duties in accordance with the Law and this Statute.

The Council shall constitute permanent and temporary committees and other working bodies, determine their composition, scope of work and other matters of relevance for their work.

Appointment **Article 15**

The members of the Council shall be appointed and dismissed by the Government for a period of four years, upon the proposal of the Ministry.

The Ministry shall determine the proposal referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article in such a manner as to:

- designate one representative from three institutions;
- designate two representatives of the Ministry;
- designate one representative of the Chamber of Commerce, upon the proposal of that institution;
- designate one representative of the students for a period of two years, based on the principle of rotation, upon the proposal of the student parliaments, for the purpose of ensuring equal representation of students from public and private universities.

The order of rotation referred to in paragraph 2 indent 4 of this Article shall be determined in relation to the total number of students at the institutions.

A person from the governing and managerial structure of an institution may not be appointed as a member of the Council of the Agency.

The Ministry shall issue a public call to the competent bodies referred to in paragraph 2 indent 1 of this Article for the submission of applications.

The Ministry shall establish a Commission composed of representatives of the Ministry and the Agency to assess the applications referred to in paragraph 5 of this Article.

The list of candidates who meet the conditions prescribed by the public call shall be drawn up by the Commission referred to in paragraph 6 of this Article and submitted to the Ministry for the purpose of establishing the final proposal.

Duties of a Council Member **Article 16**

The members of the Council shall perform their duties independently, autonomously, to the best of their own knowledge and according to their conscience, for the purpose of pursuing the public interest, in compliance with the Law, this Statute, and other general documents of the Agency.

Chairperson **Article 17**

The Council shall have a Chairperson.

The Chairperson of the Council shall be elected from among the members of the Council at the first session of the Council.

The term of office of the Chairperson of the Council shall be four years, or until the termination of his or her duty as a member of the Council.

The Chairperson of the Council shall:

- convene the sessions of the Council, propose the agenda, and preside over the sessions;
- ensure the organisation of the work of the Council;
- implement the decisions and conclusions of the Council;
- sign the documents adopted by the Council;
- perform other duties in accordance with the Law and the documents of the Council.

In the event of the Chairperson's inability to act, the duties of the Chairperson of the Council shall be assumed by the member of the Council designated by the Council.

Sessions **Article 18**

The Council shall operate at sessions.

The Council shall validly decide at a session attended by more than half of the members of the Council.

The sessions of the Council shall be held as necessary, and at least once every three months.

A session of the Council shall be convened at the request of at least four members of the Council or the Director.

Decisions shall be adopted by a majority vote of the total number of members of the Council.

The Director shall have the right to participate in the session of the Council, without the right to vote.

The manner of work of the Council and the participation of other persons in the work of the Council shall be regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

Administrative and technical tasks for the needs of the Council shall be performed by an employee of the Agency designated by the Director.

Conflict of Interest **Article 19**

The members of the Council must not be in a conflict of interest within the meaning of the Law prescribing measures for the prevention of conflicts between public and private interests.

Should a member of the Council have a conflict of interest in connection with deciding on a particular matter, he or she shall be obliged to inform the other members of the Council thereof, for the purpose of being excluded from deciding on that matter.

If a member of the Council participated in the work while a conflict of interest existed, the other members of the Council shall be obliged to review the decisions adopted, which they may declare null and void.

Remuneration **Article 20**

The members of the Council shall be entitled to remuneration for their work in accordance with the Law governing the salaries of employees in the public sector.

Termination of Term of Office **Article 21**

The term of office of a member of the Council shall terminate:

- upon personal request;

- by dismissal;
- upon the expiry of the period for which he or she was appointed;
- if he or she ceases to perform the role based on which he or she was appointed as a member of the Council.

A member of the Council whose term of office has terminated upon personal request shall be obliged to inform the Council and the proposer thereof within eight days from the date of termination of the term of office.

Dismissal

Article 22

The Government shall dismiss a member of the Council and appoint another one, should:

- he or she fail to perform the duties of a member of the Council;
- he or she be unjustifiably absent from the sessions of the Council more than twice consecutively;
- other circumstances prescribed by Law occur.

2. Director

Scope of Duties

Article 23

The Director shall:

- represent the Agency and act on behalf of the Agency;
- manage the work and operations of the Agency and be accountable for the legality of the Agency's work;
- implement the decisions of the Council;
- propose to the Council the Statute, annual work programme, annual financial plan, annual performance report, annual financial report, the document on internal organisation and systematisation of jobs, and other general documents of the Agency;
- adopt a decision on initiating the procedure for filling all jobs in the Agency, in accordance with the Law;
- adopt a decision on the selection of a civil servant and state employee, in accordance with the Law;
- adopt a decision on commencing employment;
- adopt a decision on the assignment of a civil servant and state employee;
- adopt a decision on the termination of employment of a civil servant and state employee;
- be accountable for the implementation of the annual work programme and the annual financial plan;
- make decisions on the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the employees of the Agency;
- conclude contracts and cooperation agreements with other agencies for quality assurance in higher education and with other institutions;
- manage the budget funds of the Agency;
- ensure occupational safety and health in accordance with the Law;
- ensure the maintaining and safeguarding of records in accordance with the Law;
- adopt the list of categories of registry records;

- perform other duties in accordance with the Law, this Statute, and other general documents of the Agency.

By power of attorney, the Director may authorise one or more employees to conclude a legal transaction or undertake another legal activity in the name and on behalf of the Agency, in accordance with the Law.

Requirements

Article 24

A person who meets the general and special requirements for employment may be elected as the Director of the Agency.

The general requirements include that this person:

- is a citizen of Montenegro;
- is at least 18 years of age;
- has the prescribed level of educational qualification;
- is medically fit to perform the duties of the post;
- has passed the professional examination for work in state authorities;
- has not been convicted of a criminal offence rendering him or her unworthy of work in a state authority.

The special requirements include:

- at least VIII sub-level of the National Qualifications Framework;
- at least five years of work experience in the field of higher education;
- active knowledge of the English language at a minimum level of B2;
- computer literacy.

Election

Article 25

The decision on filling the post of Director by means of a public competition shall be adopted by the Council of the Agency.

The public competition for the selection of the Director shall be published and conducted by the state administration authority competent for human resources management (hereinafter: the Authority), in accordance with the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees.

Should no person apply to the public competition, or should none of the applicants be selected, the competition shall be repeated.

The Council of the Agency shall elect the Director for a term of five years, based on the list for the selection of candidates, in accordance with the Law.

Termination of the Director's Term of Office

Article 26

The Director's term of office shall terminate:

- upon the expiry of the period for which he/she was appointed;
- upon personal request;
- by dismissal;
- upon termination of employment;
- in the event that his/her work is evaluated twice consecutively with the performance rating "unsatisfactory";
- should the state authority be abolished;

- should a part of the activities that does not fall within the competence of another state authority be abolished; and
- should the scope of the Agency's activities be substantially changed, to the extent that the tasks within the Agency's core activity, as well as the conditions for performing those tasks, remain changed.

Dismissal of the Director

Article 27

The Council shall dismiss the Director should:

- he/she fail to perform work tasks, or commit a breach of work duty;
- he/she abuse his/her position;
- he/she be finally convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment for a term longer than six months, or of a criminal offence rendering him/her unworthy of performing the job;
- the Council establish that the Agency is not implementing the annual work programme;
- he/she fail to act in accordance with a final and enforceable decision of the competent authority.

Acting Director

Article 28

In the event of the termination of the Director's term of office, the Council shall appoint an Acting Director until the election of the Director in accordance with the Law, and for no longer than six months.

An Acting Director may also be appointed in the event of temporary incapacity for work, parental leave, or maternity leave of the Director, for the duration of such temporary incapacity for work, parental leave, or maternity leave.

A person who meets the requirements for the position of Director shall be appointed as Acting Director and may be appointed no more than twice.

During the performance of that duty, the Acting Director shall have the powers, rights, duties, and responsibilities of the Director.

Internal Organisation of the Agency's Activities

Article 29

The activities within the scope of the Agency shall be organised within organisational units – departments, which shall be established depending on the activities of the Agency.

Deputy Director

Article 30

The Director of the Agency shall have a Deputy Director.

The Deputy Director shall assist the Director in managing and organising the work of the Agency.

The Deputy Director shall be accountable to the Director for his/her work.

In the event of absence or temporary incapacity, the Director may, by power of attorney, authorise the Deputy Director to conclude a legal transaction or undertake another legal activity in the name and on behalf of the Agency, in accordance with the Law.

The decision on filling the post of Deputy Director by means of a public competition shall be adopted by the Director.

The public competition for the selection of the Deputy Director shall be published and conducted by the Authority in accordance with the Law on Civil Servants and State Employees.

The Deputy Director shall be appointed and dismissed by the Council upon the proposal of the Director of the Agency.

The Deputy Director shall be appointed for a term of five years.

A person who meets the requirements for the Director of the Agency in accordance with the Law and this Statute may be appointed as Deputy Director.

Termination of Term of Office and Dismissal of the Deputy Director

Article 31

The term of office of the Deputy Director shall terminate:

- upon the expiry of the period for which he/she was appointed;
- upon personal request;
- by dismissal;
- upon termination of employment;
- in the event that his/her work is evaluated twice consecutively with the performance rating “unsatisfactory”;
- should the state authority be abolished;
- should a part of the activities that does not fall within the competence of another state authority be abolished; and
- should the scope of the Agency's activities be substantially changed, to the extent that the tasks within the Agency's core activity, as well as the conditions for performing those tasks, remain changed.

The Council shall dismiss the Deputy Director should:

- he/she fail to perform work tasks, or commit a breach of work duty;
- he/she abuse his/her position;
- he/she be finally convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment for a term longer than six months, or of a criminal offence rendering him/her unworthy of performing the job;
- the Council establish that that the Department managed by him/her is not implementing the annual work programme;
- he/she fail to act in accordance with a final and enforceable decision of the competent authority.

V BODIES

1. Accreditation Board

Scope of Duties

Article 32

The Accreditation Board shall:

- appoint expert commissions for accreditation, or reaccreditation;
- propose standards for internal and external evaluation in accordance with the ESG Standards;

- propose the regulation of the procedure for the accreditation of study programmes, as well as the content and form of the accreditation certificate;
- propose the regulation of the reaccreditation procedure, as well as the content and form of the reaccreditation certificate of an institution;
- adopt a decision on accreditation, or reaccreditation, on the basis of the report of the commission for accreditation, or reaccreditation;
- establish the list of experts for the accreditation of study programmes, or reaccreditation of institutions, on the basis of a public call;
- adopt its Rules of Procedure;
- perform other duties in accordance with the Law and this Statute.

Establishment of the Accreditation Board

Article 33

The Accreditation Board shall have 13 members, as follows:

- seven representatives of the University of Montenegro from among the academic staff;
- one representative from among the academic staff from each of the three private universities;
- one student representative of the University of Montenegro, upon the proposal of the Student Parliament;
- one student representative of private universities, based on the principle of rotation, upon the proposal of the student parliaments; and
- one representative of the Chamber of Commerce, upon the proposal thereof.

The members of the Accreditation Board shall be appointed by the Council of the Agency upon the proposal of the entities referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article.

Chairperson and Sessions of the Accreditation Board

Article 34

The Accreditation Board shall have a Chairperson, who shall be elected from among the members of the Accreditation Board.

The Chairperson of the Accreditation Board shall convene sessions, propose the agenda, preside over sessions, and perform other duties in accordance with the Law and the general documents of the Council.

The Accreditation Board shall operate at sessions.

The Accreditation Board shall validly decide at a session attended by more than half of the members of the Accreditation Board.

The sessions of the Accreditation Board shall be held as necessary, and at least once a month.

A session of the Accreditation Board shall be convened at the request of at least seven members or the Director.

If the Chairperson fails to convene a session of the Accreditation Board referred to in paragraph 5, the session shall be convened by the Chairperson of the Council.

Decisions shall be adopted by a majority vote of the total number of members of the Accreditation Board.

The Director shall have the right to participate in the session of the Accreditation Board, without the right to vote.

Should a member of the Accreditation Board have a conflict of interest in connection with deciding on a particular matter, he or she shall be obliged to inform the other members thereof, for the purpose of being excluded from deciding on that matter.

Administrative and technical tasks for the needs of the Accreditation Board shall be performed by an employee of the Agency designated by the Director.

The detailed organisation and manner of work of the Accreditation Board shall be regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the Accreditation Board.

2. Complaints Commission of Higher Education Institutions

Appeal by an Institution

Article 35

An institution shall have the right to lodge a complaint to the Accreditation Report, or the Reaccreditation Report, with the Complaints Commission within 30 days from the date of delivery of the Report.

The Commission shall be obliged to render a decision on the appeal referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article within 30 days from the date of lodging of the appeal.

A member of the Commission may not participate in deliberating on the appeal referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article if he or she participated in the accreditation or reaccreditation procedure at the institution that has lodged the appeal.

An administrative dispute may be initiated against the decision referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

Administrative and technical tasks for the needs of the Commission shall be performed by an employee of the Agency designated by the Director.

Public Call

Article 36

The Complaints Commission shall be established by the Council on the basis of a public call.

The text of the public call referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be drafted and published by the Council.

Composition of the Commission

Article 37

The Complaints Commission shall have seven members, at least one of whom shall be from the field of legal sciences.

The members of the Complaints Commission shall be selected from the list of experts established by the Council following a public call procedure.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Council shall establish the Commission from the list of experts referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article.

The Complaints Commission shall be composed of teachers holding academic titles who have experience in quality assurance in higher education, and who did not participate in the accreditation or reaccreditation procedure at the higher education institution that lodged the appeal.

The Complaints Commission shall validly decide at a session attended by more than half of the members of the Commission.

The detailed organisation and manner of work of the Complaints Commission shall be regulated by the Rules of Procedure of the Commission.

VI FINANCING

Funds for Work

Article 38

The funds for the work of the Agency shall be provided from the Budget of Montenegro and from its own revenues.

Audit

Article 39

The Agency's annual financial statements shall be subject to an independent audit.

The independent auditor shall be appointed by the Council upon the proposal of the Director.

The annual financial report with an independent auditor's opinion shall be adopted by the Council and submitted to the Ministry and the Government.

VII PUBLIC INFORMATION

Informing the Public

Article 40

The Agency shall make available to the public information about its work by issuing press releases and information, publishing reports on the Agency's official website and social media accounts, issuing official publications, holding press conferences, and the like.

Data and information concerning the work of the Agency shall be provided by the Director, and may also be provided by other employees authorised by the Director.

Website

Article 41

The Agency shall have its own website.

The content and appearance of the website, as well as the manner of presenting data and information, shall be approved by the Director.

Cooperation with Other Agencies and Institutions

Article 42

The Agency shall cooperate with other agencies and associations for quality assurance in higher education, as well as with higher education institutions.

VIII GENERAL DOCUMENTS

General Documents of the Agency

Article 43

The general documents of the Agency shall be the Statute, rulebooks, rules of procedure, and other documents of general nature adopted by the bodies of the Agency in the performance of their duties, in accordance with the Law and this Statute.

The general documents of the Agency shall be published on the Agency's notice board and website.

The general documents shall enter into force on the eighth day following the date of their publication on the Agency's notice board.

Statute Article 44

The Statute shall be the foundational general document of the Agency.

Other general and individual documents of the Agency may not be contrary to the Statute.

Procedure for Amending Documents

Article 45

As necessary, amendments may be made to the Statute and other documents of the Agency.

The initiative for amendments to the Statute may be submitted by the Director or the members of the Council.

The Statute and other documents of the Agency shall be amended in the same manner and according to the same procedure prescribed for their adoption.

The Statute and other documents of the Agency shall be binding on all employees of the Agency.

The Director shall be obliged to ensure transparency in the procedure for the adoption of the Statute and other documents of the Agency and to ensure that they are accessible to the employees of the Agency.

Interpretation of Documents

Article 46

The interpretation of the provisions of the Statute and other general documents of the Agency shall be given by the body that adopted that document.

IX TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Cessation of Validity

Article 47

Upon the entry into force of this Statute, the Statute of the Agency for Control and Quality Assurance of Higher Education No. 01-4/2018 dated 11 January 2018, No. 01-5/2018 dated 29 January 2018, and the Decision on Amendments and Supplements to the Statute No. 01-012/19-4/3 dated 5 July 2019 and No. 05-078/22-341/17 dated 21 September 2022 shall cease to be valid.

Entry into Force

Article 48

This Statute shall enter into force on the eighth day following the date of their publication on the Agency's notice board, after having obtained the consent of the Ministry.

Number: 05-078/26-90/10
On 09 March 2026

Steering committee
Chair

Professor Nada Jauković, PhD