

O R D E R  
OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**ON APPROVAL OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION AND  
QUALIFICATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACQUIRED UNDER  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF FOREIGN STATES AND INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANISATIONS**

28 May 2012 No V-48  
Vilnius

In observance of Article 11 of the Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations approved by Resolution No 212 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 29 February 2012 (*Official Gazette*, 2012, No [29-1290](#)), I

approve the Methodology for Assessment of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations (enclosed).

DIRECTOR

ARTŪRAS GREBLIAUSKAS

APPROVED BY

Order No V-48 of the Director of the  
Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher  
Education of 28 May 2012

**METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS CONCERNING  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACQUIRED UNDER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES OF FOREIGN  
STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

**I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Methodology for Assessment of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations (hereinafter referred to as the 'Methodology') shall govern identification of the value and level of education and qualifications concerning higher education and acquired under educational programmes of foreign states and international organisations (hereinafter referred to as 'qualifications') in the country of origin and the comparison of general and specific requirements for a qualification with respective requirements established in the Republic of Lithuania.

2. The Methodology has been developed in accordance with the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (*Official Gazette*, 1998, No [110-3025](#)) (hereinafter referred to the 'Lisbon Recognition Convention') ratified by the Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 October 1998 (*Official Gazette*, 1998, No [110-3022](#)), the Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Education and Qualifications Concerning Higher Education and Acquired under Educational Programmes of Foreign States and International Organisations approved by Resolution No 212 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 29 February 2012 (*Official Gazette*, 2012, No [29-1290](#)) (hereinafter referred to as the 'Description'), the provisions of documents adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee, ENIC/NARIC network, the Council of Europe or other competent institutions aimed at application and implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

3. In accordance with the Description, the Methodology shall be used by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the 'Centre') and higher education institutions of the Republic of Lithuania entitled to carry out academic recognition of qualifications (hereinafter referred to as 'authorised higher education institutions').

4. The purpose of the Methodology is to ensure that when several authorities carry out academic recognition the same principles and criteria are applied in assessment of qualifications, clear procedures are secured, decisions are consistent and authorities carrying out academic recognition of qualifications cooperate.

5. In accordance with the Description and the Methodology, the authorities specified in Article 3 of the Methodology are recommended to develop and approve the Rules for Assessment of Qualifications that define the assessment procedure and criteria in greater detail.

6. The Methodology summarises the fundamental provisions and principles for assessment of qualifications embedded in the legal acts specified in Article 2 of the Methodology as well as the best practice in assessment of qualifications which must be built upon. The terminology used in the Methodology is equivalent to the terminology used in the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Description.

## **II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ASSESSMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS**

7. In assessment of qualifications, no discrimination shall be made on the grounds of gender, race, language, religion, political beliefs, national, ethnic or social origin, or other reasons unrelated to the academic qualification.

8. In defining the procedure for assessment of qualifications, requirements for the documents submitted by the applicant and assessment criteria, the diversity of educational traditions and systems should be taken into consideration.

9. The procedure for assessment and criteria shall be transparent, clear, coherently applied and reliable. Information on them shall be publicly available.

10. The procedure for assessment and requirements for documents submitted by the applicant should be periodically reviewed and improved depending on the need.

11. In academic recognition of qualifications, the holder of a qualification shall be granted the same rights as in the country of origin unless substantial differences are identified. Decisions concerning academic recognition shall be grounded.

12. During assessment of an individual qualification, the practice of assessment of comparable qualifications shall be taken into consideration and thus coherence in the practice of assessment of qualifications is ensured. The practice shall be summarised and accumulated as well as taken into consideration in making decisions concerning academic recognition of foreign qualifications. Any substantial changes in the practice of assessment and recognition of qualifications shall be grounded.

## **III. INFORMATION FOR ASSESSMENT**

### **I. ENTITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVISION AND/OR RECEIPT OF INFORMATION**

13. Information about a qualification acquired, a study programme completed, an institution having issued the qualification and the educational system in the country of origin is required for decision-making concerning academic recognition of qualifications.

14. Information available shall be sufficient, i.e. enable to complete all assessment stages.

15. The following entities shall be responsible for provision and/or receipt of required information:

15.1. The applicant who shall submit the main documents specified in Article 29 of the Description and, at the request of the authority carrying out academic recognition, additional documents required for objective assessment of the qualification;

15.2. The authority carrying out academic recognition which collects and/or organises information required for assessment, samples of education documents, previous decisions on recognition, etc.

16. In performing its functions as a Lithuanian ENIC/NARIC, the Centre shall additionally collect and submit available information on foreign educational systems, consult higher education institutions and provide recommendations concerning assessment.

### **II. DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED BY APPLICANTS**

17. As stipulated by Article 15.1 of the Methodology, the applicant shall submit the main and additional documents specified in Article 29 of the Description for assessment of a qualification. Information to

applicants on documents to be submitted should be clear and publicly available. When possible, such information should be adapted to holders of particular qualifications, i.e. titles of specific documents to be submitted should be listed.

18. Documents submitted by the applicant shall be formal, i.e. issued by competent and authorised authorities and/or persons.

19. The applicant should submit document originals or their copies certified in accordance with the established procedure. E-documents attesting education (for example, e-transcript of record) may be accepted only when such documents are signed by an e-signature.

20. When possible, the authority carrying out academic recognition should consider education documents in their original language. When it is not possible, the applicant should be asked to submit an official translation of documents into the language indicated by the recognition authority. Nevertheless, education documents in the original language should be a primary source of information for decision-making concerning academic recognition (because they enable to identify the place and level of a qualification faster and more precisely in the country of origin, etc.).

21. As stipulated by Article 29.6 of the Description, the authority carrying out academic recognition of qualifications may request to submit additional documents provided they are required for assessment of a foreign qualification. It is recommended that documents attesting previous education are requested, in particular in the cases when assessment of qualifications acquired in the second study cycle is conducted. Other additional documents could be the descriptor of the study programme completed, the final thesis written, information about the mode of studies, etc. The applicant should be notified in writing about the necessity to submit additional documents.

22. In establishing requirements for documents and their submission, account should be taken of the differences between educational systems and/or extraordinary circumstances (for example, in case of refugees) without setting requirements which are impossible to meet.

23. The authority carrying out academic recognition should ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that a decision concerning academic recognition is taken only on the basis of authentic documents. Where information is available that the submitted documents attesting a qualification acquired have been forged, the assessment shall be terminated and the applicant shall be notified thereof in writing.

24. The decision concerning academic recognition of a foreign qualification may not be taken on the basis of documents attesting a partial completion of a study programme or documents attesting only a partial compliance with the requirements for completion.

### **III. REQUIREMENTS FOR INFORMATION COLLECTED BY RECOGNITION AUTHORITIES**

25. Although, in accordance with Article 8 of the Description, responsibility for provision of true, correct and clear information is primarily born by the applicant, some information (as stipulated by Article 15.2 of the Methodology), for example, on the status of the institution having issued the qualification, the foreign educational system, etc., may be collected and organised by the authority carrying out academic recognition.

26. The authority carrying out academic recognition should build upon reliable (provided by competent institutions), relevant (related to the period of the applicant's learning/studies), precise (regularly updated) and impartial (provided by disinterested institutions) information.

27. The authority carrying out academic recognition, wishing to receive information related to the studies of a particular person, should receive a written consent of the person concerned in a respective foreign language. The above consent is required when contacting schools or other competent institutions.

28. The Centre, which performs not only the role of the authority carrying out academic recognition but also the role of a member of ENIC/NARIC networks in Lithuania, shall submit collected and organised information which is relevant for recognition of qualifications to other authorities carrying out academic recognition.

### **IV. ASSESSMENT STAGES**

29. Assessment of qualifications shall consist of the following stages:

29.1. Identification of the value of a qualification in the country of its origin;

29.2. Identification of the level of a qualification in the country of its origin;

29.3. The comparison of a qualification with the most comparable qualification issued in the Republic of Lithuania, i.e. the comparison of requirements for qualification content, profile, workload, learning/study quality and learning outcomes with respective requirements established in the Republic of Lithuania;

29.4. Identification whether differences detected between the qualification and the qualification issued in the Republic of Lithuania are substantial by taking into account the purpose of assessment.

30. In performing assessment of an individual qualification, the stages may overlap or their sequence may change depending on data provided in information sources or other circumstances.

31. The Centre shall provide higher education institutions with information available, methodological assistance and recommendations on all stages of assessment.

## **V. IDENTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATION VALUE**

32. This stage is aimed at identification whether the qualification is recognised in the country of its origin, i.e.:

32.1. Whether the qualification issued belongs to the formal education system of that country;

32.2. Whether the institution having issued the qualification is authorised to issue such qualifications;

32.3. Whether a document in the form certified in accordance with the established procedure has been issued (where applicable).

33. In cases when the qualification does not comply with the provisions stipulated in Article 32 of the Methodology, pursuant to Article 33 of the Description further assessment of a qualification shall not be carried out and the applicant shall be notified thereof in writing.

## **VI. IDENTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATION LEVEL**

34. The purpose of this stage is to identify:

34.1. Whether the qualification concerns higher education;

34.2. Which most comparable qualification or qualifications concerning higher education issued in Lithuania at the time of assessment a foreign qualification should be compared with.

35. In identifying the level of a qualification, account should be taken of the educational sector to which the qualification belongs and the relation of the qualification with other qualifications issued in the same educational sector (for example, entrance requirements and further rights).

36. In cases when a qualification does not comply with the provisions stipulated by Article 34.1 of the Methodology, pursuant to Article 33 of the Description further assessment of the qualification shall not be carried out and the applicant shall be notified thereof in writing.

37. In cases when after taking the action provided for in Article 34.2 of the Methodology it is identified that a comparable qualification is not issued in Lithuania (for example, short-cycle qualifications are usually related to level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework), further assessment of the qualification shall not be carried out and the applicant shall be notified thereof in writing. At the applicant's request, in cases specified in the present article, the Centre may issue an information statement about the value and level of a foreign qualification, the rights granted in the country of qualification origin and further possibilities in Lithuania. The applicant should be notified of such a possibility by the authority carrying out academic recognition.

## **VII. COMPARISON OF QUALIFICATION**

38. At this stage, a qualification is compared with a comparable qualification/qualifications issued in the Republic of Lithuania which is/are identified in the course of the assessment stage specified in Article 34.2 of the Methodology in accordance with the following criteria:

38.1. The content criterion encompassing requirements for the structure and content of the completed programme;

38.2. The profile criterion encompassing the purpose of the completed study programme and further professional and/or academic rights granted by qualifications;

38.3. The workload/duration criterion encompassing formal and actual workload as well as duration of learning;

38.4. The learning/study quality criterion which also encompasses organisation and implementation of studies;

38.5. The criterion of learning outcomes encompassing knowledge, understanding and competences that the holder of a qualification intends to acquire (provided learning outcomes were defined).

39. The comparison of general requirements in accordance with the criteria laid down in Article 38 of the Methodology shall encompass general requirements for the level or cycle, qualification, its profile or the area and field of studies.

40. The comparison of specific requirements in accordance with the criteria laid down in Article 38 of the Methodology shall be carried out in authorised higher education institutions and encompass specific requirements for access to a particular study programme or its completion.

41. In any case, account should be taken of both established and actually fulfilled requirements in comparing a qualification because established requirements may differ from the ones actually fulfilled.

### **VIII. IDENTIFICATION OF SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES**

42. Differences identified at the stage laid down in Article 29.4 of the Methodology are analysed to determine whether they are substantial.

43. A substantial difference concerning the content may be identified when one or several main structural elements of the programme (the final thesis, practice, key target parts of the content, etc.) that are provided for in respective programmes of the Republic of Lithuania and prerequisite for further studies or professional activities are missing in the programme completed. For example, in cases when the completed master programme did not include writing of the final thesis, this usually should not prevent the holder of the qualification from performing professional activities, however, it may be deemed a substantial difference when the holder of a qualification seeks access to a PhD programme where research competences are among admission requirements.

44. A substantial difference concerning the profile may be identified in cases when the completed study programme was not intended to train the person for the activities sought. For instance, a first-cycle bachelor programme which prepares for professional activities rather than further studies was completed and the person seeks access to master studies or a secondary education programme intended to prepare for studies in study programmes in the area of humanities was completed and the person seeks access to a study programme in the area of technologies.

45. A substantial difference concerning workload/duration may be identified when the duration of the study programme intended to acquire a foreign qualification or expression of its workload in learning/study years differs more than in one year from the workload/duration requirements in Lithuania and when it differs from the workload established for the cycles of the European Higher Education Area in Bergen Declaration, i.e. is lower than 180 credits for first-cycle qualifications and lower than 60 credits for second-cycle qualifications.

46. The substantial difference concerning quality of studies may be identified in cases when:

46.1. The completed study programme was delivered/implemented unlawfully and/or was not accredited (if it was identified);

46.2. The identified factual circumstances pertaining to organisation and delivery of studies differ from formal established circumstances on the basis of which an institution was recognised or the programme was accredited or learning outcomes were established. For instance, in fact studies did not take place in a recognised higher education institution but were delivered in its representation or another institution which was not entitled to perform such activities or the learning completed in a non-recognised educational institution was recognised as a part of the study programme without any verification;

46.3. The circumstance of organisation and delivery of studies could not enable to achieve intended aims and learning outcomes of the programme. For instance, the programme was offered in a distance mode without any contact work in classrooms or laboratories when it is required for the achievement of intended learning outcomes (e.g.: bachelor degree in nursing awarded), etc.

47. A substantial difference concerning learning outcomes may be identified when the intended learning outcomes of the completed study programme substantially differ from the intended learning outcomes in respective programmes in Lithuania. Information about intended learning outcomes may be provided in the descriptors of the completed programme. It is worth noting that descriptors of education levels or study cycles as well as areas and/or fields often contain information about learning outcomes. It is noteworthy that

formulation of learning outcomes is quite a new phenomenon; therefore, substantial differences in these cases may be identified only after making sure that a substantial difference is not a consequence of inappropriate formulation of learning outcomes.

48. Substantial differences are identified for each foreign qualification individually by taking into account the purpose of the holder of a qualification and on the basis of information available as well as previous academic recognition practice. The substantial differences referred to in the present Chapter of the Methodology, identified by using the criteria established in Article 37 of the Methodology, may be also be identified in other cases of qualification assessment practice not specified herein.

49. Experts may be involved in identification of substantial differences or knowledge and abilities may be tested respectively in accordance with Articles 13, 14 and/or 25 of the Description.

## **IX. DECISION-MAKING CONCERNING ACADEMIC RECOGNITION**

50. After completion of assessment, one of the decisions concerning academic recognition referred to in Article 30 of the Description shall be made.

51. Pursuant to Article 6 of the Description, a foreign qualification shall be recognised as comparable provided it is not possible to demonstrate any substantial differences between general requirements of the country where a foreign qualification was issued and such requirements in the Republic of Lithuania.

52. In cases when recognition, referred to in Article 30.1 of the Description, may not be granted due to substantial differences identified, a possibility to recognise by granting only some rights to the holder of a qualification (as per Article 30.2 of the Description) or to recognise upon fulfilment of additional requirements (as per Article 30.3 of the Description) should be considered. The decision established in Article 30.4 of the Description shall be made only in cases when none of recognition types is possible.

53. Pursuant to Article 35 of the Description, a decision concerning academic recognition shall be formalised in accordance with the procedure established by the authority.

54. The decision concerning academic recognition should specify the purpose of recognition.

55. Decisions concerning academic recognition shall be based on information available to authorities carrying out assessment and recognition at the time of assessment.

## **X. COOPERATION OF AUTHORITIES CARRYING OUT ACADEMIC RECOGNITION**

56. To ensure transparency and clarity of processes of academic recognition of qualifications and quality of decisions taken as well as cooperation of authorities carrying out academic recognition of qualifications and development of competences of authorities in the area of academic recognition of qualifications:

56.1. in providing methodological assistance and monitoring of decisions concerning academic recognition of qualifications taken by authorised higher education institutions (as per Article 16 of the Description) the Centre shall:

56.1.1. Provide recommendations on decisions concerning recognition of qualifications. The above recommendations may be distinguished into two types: general recommendations for assessment of qualifications specified in Article 15 of the Description that are published on the website of the Centre and recommendations concerning assessment of particular qualifications specified in Article 17 of the Description with regard to which higher education institutions directly contact the Centre by submitting copies of documents and specifying the purpose of academic recognition;

56.1.2. Disseminate the best international practice in academic recognition of qualifications by informing about the most recent trends in the area of academic recognition, tools designed for assessors of qualifications or international documents adopted;

56.1.3. Consult higher education institutions on introduction of the recognition procedure and application of improvement and assessment criteria;

56.1.4. Respond to inquiries concerning foreign educational systems from higher education institutions by sharing information available;

56.1.5. When required, organise training for staff of higher education institutions on issues relevant for assessment of qualifications;

56.1.6. Collect information related to decisions concerning recognition of foreign qualifications taken by authorised higher education institutions;

56.1.7. Consider appeals against decisions concerning academic recognition of qualifications taken by higher education institutions;

56.1.8. Perform general analysis of information related to academic recognition of qualifications which is submitted by higher education institutions and on the basis of which the Centre provides recommendations concerning improvement of academic recognition of qualifications to higher education institutions as well as summarised information about academic recognition of qualifications by authorised higher education institutions to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania .

56.2. Authorised higher education institutions shall:

56.2.1. Take into consideration recommendations of the Centre referred to in Article 56.1(1) of the Methodology in decision-making concerning academic recognition of qualifications. In cases when general recommendations concerning assessment of qualifications specified in Article 15 of the Description are not published, a higher education institution shall, in accordance with Article 24 of the Description, contact the Centre with regard to provision of recommendations on assessment of particular qualifications specified in Article 17 of the Description;

56.2.2. Submit to the Centre information on decisions taken on academic recognition of qualifications (as per Articles 18 and 28 of the Description) within the timeframe and according to the criteria identified by the Centre as well as, at the request of the Centre, submit documents on the basis of which the recognition decision was taken.

57. The Centre shall respond to inquiries of higher education institutions within five working days after the day of their receipt, and if the Centre does not have the required information, it shall notify institutions that information is being collected.